

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CHADWELL HEATH FOUNDATION SCHOOL

Chadwell Heath

LEA area: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102863

Headteacher: Mr K Wilkinson

Lead inspector: Mr D Roberts

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th March 2004

Inspection number: 259303

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1220
School address:	Christie Gardens Chadwell Heath Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM6 4RS
Telephone number:	(0208) 252 5151
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Herbert

Date of previous inspection: 27th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has over 1200 pupils and students on roll, 300 of whom are in the sixth form. It is oversubscribed. Some 15 per cent of pupils, who would normally fall outside its catchment area, are selected using a non-verbal test. The profile of standards which pupils have reached before starting at the school is broadly in line with or a little above the national average. There is a low rate of mobility of pupils in and out of the school. The pupil population comprises a rich ethnic mix, the largest groups being from British Asian or white UK origin. About 60 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Fifteen pupils are at a relatively early stage of learning English. A very high proportion of others are bilingual, and many continue to develop their English language and literacy skills as they progress up through the school. There are about 30 refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils entitled due to their economic circumstances to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including the ten pupils who have statements, is below the national average. Forty pupils have extra help provided from outside the school. A further hundred have extra support provided by the school, in the form of especially adapted learning materials and support from teaching assistants. The most common SEN relate to social, emotional and behavioural needs. The school operates a relatively open access sixth form and a high proportion stay on after Year 11. The school achieved specialist Media Arts College status in 2002, an Arts Mark Gold in 2001 and is certified as an Investor in People.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7582	Mr D Roberts	Lead inspector	
9511	Ms A Longfield	Lay inspector	
2447	Mr F Mikdadi	Team inspector	Post-16 law
8530	Mr J Adams	Team inspector	Design and technology
10160	Mr R Bagguley	Team inspector	Science
12179	Mr L Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education Post-16 business studies English as an additional language
12408	Mr A Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
15163	Mr E Deeson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Business studies 11-16
15312	Ms K Lord	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
17530	Ms M Cureton	Team inspector	Post-16 drama, history and media studies Special educational needs
22590	Mr R Castle	Team inspector	Geography
22958	Mr T Bailess	Team inspector	English
24026	Ms C Holland	Team inspector	Music
31685	Ms V Girling	Team inspector	Art and design
33996	Ms A Walker-Fraser	Team inspector	History 11-16
30699	Mr A Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The school is well established in its community and rightly popular with parents and its pupils and students. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Results in GCSE examinations are well above the national average and are very high compared with those of similar schools; results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average and with similar schools.
- Good teaching, taken overall, with the proportion of good or better lessons highest in the sixth form and the lowest in Years 7 to 9.
- Attendance is well above average and pupils have very positive attitudes to school; good behaviour and relationships are strengths of the school - all helping to secure high achievement.
- Pupils are generally very well supported personally and academically, although they do not know well enough how to improve in some subjects.
- Whilst there have been a number of appropriate curriculum innovations, a number of omissions (some of them statutory) restrict its breadth.
- The absence of a school library and the under-use of computers restrict the learning strategies open to pupils, but this does not hinder the progress they make.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils' views and ideas to be heard.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership, characterised by high aspirations for all pupils and high expectations of all staff; the leadership group displays strong commitment and teamwork.
- There is very good leadership and management of a number of departments but inconsistencies in line management leave weaknesses in others.
- Governors play a key role in determining the school's priorities, give strong support to the headteacher, but have not ensured compliance with statutory curriculum requirements.

The school's improvement from the strong starting point of the last inspection has been satisfactory. GCSE results have improved significantly and the sixth form has developed further. The very good attendance, attitudes and behaviour have been maintained, as has the high quality of care and guidance. Teaching remains good overall. Strategic planning has improved and there have been a number of welcome improvements to the accommodation. A number of other issues identified for improvement by the last inspection have not been adequately tackled.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

School performance compared with:		All schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	B	A	A*
Year 13	A/AS-level and VCE examinations	D	E	D	

Key: A – very high; A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9. In making the national comparisons at sixth-form level, account should be taken of the relatively open access sixth form.*

Standards achieved by pupils overall are well above average. The substantial majority of pupils make good progress during their time at the school, building well on what are often modest foundations to achieve very considerable success by the end of their statutory schooling. The majority who stay into the sixth form continue to achieve well. The most capable pupils achieve very well; those with special educational needs make good progress, too. Pupils from all ethnic heritages achieve as well as each other, supported by the school's highly inclusive approach. There are inconsistent patterns in the relative success of boys and girls; boys do not achieve as well as they should in French. The quality of pupils' language and literacy skills improves greatly as they move up the school, especially among those for whom English is not the first language. Their well-developed literacy and mathematical skills support good achievement by Years 10/11. Whilst their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are often good, pupils have too little opportunity to use them to support their learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal qualities are good taken overall. A high rate of attendance is sustained and pupils bring positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour is good in all but a very few lessons, as well as around the school. However, there are weaknesses in the range of experiences that can foster pupils' personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is broadly satisfactory, although their spiritual awareness is underdeveloped.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education, taken overall. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but better in Years 10 to 13 than in Years 7 to 9. The very few unsatisfactory lessons occur in these latter years. The quality of the assessment is generally satisfactory, although pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve. There is good provision for those who need additional literacy support in the lower years. An appropriate range of pathways has been opened up for pupils in Years 10/11. However, the curriculum is unsatisfactory because there are too many gaps in pupils' entitlement to a broad curriculum. Teachers are generally well qualified, with a strong command of their subject, but recruitment difficulties have led to shortages in some areas. Accommodation has been significantly improved, and most is now good, but there remain some weaknesses. The continuing lack of a school library restricts the ways in which pupils can learn in some subjects, although this does not hinder the progress they make. Staff know the pupils well and the support, advice and guidance made available to pupils is very good. The school cares well for its pupils and ensures their health and safety. Links with parents are good and those with the community are developing well in the context of the school's status as a Media Arts College.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory taken overall, with good leadership by the headteacher focusing on maximising the achievement of all pupils. He is well supported by the leadership group and other key staff. There is some variability in the quality of management across the school due to inconsistencies in the approach to their line management. Forward planning is based on an appropriate set of priorities. The school's approach to reviewing the impact of its practices has strengths and weaknesses. Governance is unsatisfactory, taken overall, because, although governors give clear direction to the school and are highly supportive to management, they have not ensured that the full statutory curriculum is made available to pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the quality of education and care and the progress their children make, about which they are kept well informed. Pupils are generally positive about the school. Both they and their parents reveal inevitable concerns about behaviour and bullying, but the inspection indicates these are generally unfounded. Pupils are critical of the lack of interest in their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 to ensure it is good in all subjects.
- Extend the curriculum experience of pupils to ensure their broader development as citizens, including through improved provision for religious education, personal, social and health education and citizenship, as well as more opportunities for active learning.
- Ensure that pupils and sixth-form students have full access to the expected range of learning and research strategies, including the use of computers and a wide range of book material.
- Ensure that pupils know how to improve their achievement in all subjects.
- Secure consistent line management practices which will ensure rigorous self-evaluation.
- Take better account of the views and ideas of pupils and students in developing the school.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide for a daily act of collective worship, including in the sixth form.
- Ensure that statutory curriculum requirements for Years 7 to 11 are met in design and technology, ICT, citizenship and, including in the sixth form, in religious education.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth-form provision is good. Its cost effectiveness is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Overall achievement is good. It is very good in English literature, drama, law, and media communications and production. Results in A-level examinations in 2003 were broadly in line with the national averages for those attaining pass grades. Attainment at the higher grades was well below the national average.. Particularly high levels of attainment were seen in English literature, mathematics, art and design, drama, information and communication technology, law, media communications and production, and physical education. Leadership of the sixth form is very good. Management is good and continues to improve. Subject leadership is mainly good, except in music.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good overall and it is very good, among the subjects inspected, in English, drama, media studies and law.
- Attainment is high in most of the subjects inspected.
- A very large number of students go on to universities.
- Students have good attitudes to work.
- The lack of a library diminishes students' already limited opportunities to work independently and to carry out research.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Support, guidance and links with the community are very good and links to other institutions, including universities, are excellent.
- Statutory requirements to provide religious education and a daily act of collective worship are not fulfilled.
- Standards in design and technology are unsatisfactory.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is very good . The very good teaching leads to students achieving very well and above average standards, although opportunities for independent learning for private research are limited. Provision in French is good . Good teaching leads to students achieving well and above average standards, although students still lack sufficient opportunities to gain confidence in the use of the language.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . Good teaching leads to good achievement and above average standards, although the number of students taking mathematics onto the next stage is small.
Science	Provision in biology is good . Teaching and learning are good and teachers also support students well outside the classroom. Students are achieving well and standards are above average.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is good . Good teaching leads to good achievement and above average standards. However, other students lack sufficient opportunities to use

ICT in the subjects they study.

Humanities

Provision in history is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although students rely too heavily on the teacher. They achieve average standards.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although insufficient emphasis is placed on teaching design and graphical skills, and on providing exemplification of the standards of work required. Students' achievement is satisfactory, although standards are below average.
Visual and performing arts and media	<p>Provision in art and design is good. Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement and above average standards. The use of information and communication technology is limited.</p> <p>Provision in drama is very good. Teaching and learning are very good, and students are highly motivated to succeed, and they reach well above average standards.</p> <p>Provision in media communications and production is good. Teaching and learning are good, and achievement very good, although long-term staff absence and the lack of technical support have a negative impact.</p> <p>Provision in music is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. The continued lack of subject leader hampers the further development of this subject but students support each other's learning well.</p>
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision for physical education is good . Teaching and learning are good. Students are confident in displaying and using their skills and they achieve well, reaching above average standards.
Business	<p>Provision in business studies is good. Teaching and learning are good, although the use of ICT and links with businesses are limited. Students achieve well and reach average standards.</p> <p>Provision in law is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Students enjoy their course and have a good knowledge base of law. Whilst they lack a full understanding of the application of law, their achievement is very good and they reach well above average standards.</p>

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

Support, advice and guidance for the students in the sixth form are very good. There is excellent support for students applying to study at university and for those who want to go on to further study or a career. The monitoring of academic performance is very good. The school listens to students' views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The overall leadership of the sixth form is very good. This leadership is effectively supported by the school's senior management. The day-to-day management of the sixth form is good and it is fast improving further with the recent appointment of two very effective administrative assistants. Overall, the sixth form is cost effective. The governing body shows a keen interest in the work of the sixth form. They do not ensure that the statutory requirements of providing religious education and a daily act of corporate worship for all are fulfilled.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The majority of students interviewed enjoy being sixth-formers. They genuinely appreciate the opportunities offered to them. They like their teachers and speak highly of them. They feel valued and

genuinely respected. Students would like to see further opportunities to influence decision making as well as opportunities to work independently.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The overall standards achieved by pupils in this school are very good. In examinations, particularly GCSE examinations at age 16, pupils reach well above national average standards and achieve well to reach these levels. Achievement by pupils in all year groups is at least good. Girls performed better than boys in mathematics and science in national tests at the end of Year 9 compared to the national profile. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and well from Year 10. Those pupils in all years for whom English is not their first language achieve well in all subjects and courses in all year groups. There is very good achievement by the most capable pupils. Standards of work seen during the inspection were in line with the national average by the end of Year 9 and above the national average in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form. Standards in English, mathematics and science were above average in Years 7 to 11 and well above average in English and mathematics in Years 10/11. In ICT discrete courses, standards are below the national average in Years 7 to 9, but have improved to a level above the national average by Year 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average standards have been achieved in GCSE examinations in the past two years, with significantly good results in 2003 in science, design and technology, drama, English, ICT, mathematics and physical education.
- The school adds very good value to pupils' achievement during Years 10/11 after a relatively slow start in Years 7 to 9.
- Examination results in the sixth form show good achievement by the full range of students who are catered for, whilst attainment at higher grades is below the national average.
- Well above average standards of work were seen in English and mathematics in Years 10/11, and in drama in all years 7 to 11.
- Above average current standards were seen in most other subjects, although standards were below average in religious education, design and technology, and citizenship in Years 10/11 as well as in a number of subjects in Years 7 to 9
- Above average literacy skills by Years 10/11 and above average competence in mathematics.
- Good achievement in all years, and particularly from Year 10, by pupils for whom English is not the first language and by those with SEN.
- Very good achievement by the most capable pupils.
- Underachievement by boys in modern foreign languages.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.0 (32.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.3 (36.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	34.1 (34.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 186 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In the 2003 tests at the end of Year 9, pupils' performance was in line with the national average profile in English and science, and above average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, results were in line with the average in mathematics and science, and below in English. The proportion who achieved the highest levels was below the national average in English and above in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, the proportion gaining the highest levels was well below average in English, well above average in mathematics and in line with the average in science. The trend of improvement in results over recent years has been above the national trend, particularly due to improvements being sustained in mathematics and science since 2000, whereas English results have dipped slightly since 2001.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	67.0 (65.0)	52.0 (50.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	99.0 (97.0)	91.0 (91.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (98.0)	96.0 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	39.2 (38.6)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 180 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In GCSE examinations in 2003, results were well above the national average and excellent when compared with similar schools. This pattern has been established now for four years. Results were significantly good compared with the national picture in science (boys more so than girls), design and technology, and drama (in both, girls more so than boys), English, ICT, mathematics and, for boys only, physical education. Overall, the distribution of higher grades (A* to C) was above the national average, except in French and history. Since 1999, there have been fluctuations in the relative performance of boys and girls compared with the national picture, while overall both boys and girls have performed better than the national medians for their gender.
3. The better achievement found and higher standards attained in Years 10/11 than in Years 7 to 9 is due to the more complete development of the English language and literacy skills of pupils, as they mature, for whom English is not the first language. The standard of these skills is average by Year 9 and above the national profile, taken overall, by the time pupils reach Year 11. Their mathematical skills are above average and they use them well in subjects which require them, including design and technology, science and art and design. Their competence in ICT across the curriculum is below the national average in Years 7 to 9, improving later to become in line with the average in Years 10/11. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress in years 7 to 9. Progress is good in years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
4. Where standards are disappointing, this is due to a variety of factors. In design and technology, pupils have too little experience of working with resistant materials and in computer-aided design and making, due to deficiencies in accommodation and resources, as well as an insufficient number of teachers with this expertise. In both religious education and citizenship, it is due to the unsatisfactory curriculum and the lack of any specialist teachers. In some subjects, disappointing attainment by the end of Year

9 is due to the relatively low levels of attainment by pupils on arrival at the school, for instance, in geography, music and ICT.

5. Pupils' good levels of achievement at this school are in response to:
- The good teaching, particularly in Years 10/11 and in the sixth form.
 - The very strong ethos of the school, which emphasises high achievement by all, regardless of their background and starting point.
 - The very good advice and guidance which pupils receive.
 - The effective use of pupil performance data to identify pupils in need of additional support and to inform parents regularly of their children's progress, so that they too can support them.

Sixth Form

The inspection focused on 15 subjects out of the full range offered. They were English literature, mathematics, biology, art and design, business studies and economics, design and technology, drama, French, history, information and communication technology, law, media communications and production, and music.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	88.4 (91.1)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	22.1 (18.2)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	188.0 (165.3)	261.4 (232.9)

There were 106 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. In making the national comparisons shown in this table, account should be taken of the relatively open access nature of this sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is above average in English literature, mathematics, art and design, drama, information and communication technology, law, media communications and production, and physical education.
- Achievement is very good in English literature, drama, law, and media communications and production.
- The quality of teaching is good with some very good features and this results in students making at least good progress.
- Achievement is such that a very large number of sixth-form students go on to university.
- Standards seen in design and technology were below average.

Commentary

6. The combined results for GCE A/AS-level in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average for those attaining a pass grade. The number of students attaining the higher grades was well below the national average. Almost every student entered for an A-level subject obtained a pass grade. Results in chemistry, physics, drama, history and vocational studies were particularly good, with a higher than the national average number of students gaining higher grades.
7. In 2003, the AS-level results varied, with the best results occurring in biology, art and design, design and technology, English literature and information and communication technology. The standards of the work seen during the inspection were good. The

students use of English and their mathematical skills are good. Students' competence in the use of ICT is good. Overall, the achievement of all students in the sixth form is good, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Gifted and talented students make very good progress. Standards seen were below average in design and technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Provision for the development of pupils' personal development, and pupils' attitudes and relationships, are all good. Pupils benefit from the good learning atmosphere that pervades the school. Attendance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is well above the national median.
- Good behaviour and relationships are strengths of the school.
- The spiritual life of pupils is underdeveloped.
- A very small number of pupils present challenging behaviour.

Commentary

- Attendance last year was well above the average for secondary schools and unauthorised absence was below average. Good procedures for monitoring attendance and absences are in place. Punctuality is satisfactory; some pupils show no urgency to arrive at school on time. There is a slippage of time as pupils move around the site, with the majority of lessons starting between five and ten minutes late.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.7
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and respond well to good teaching. Teaching helps pupils to gain confidence in their capacity to be successful. In the best lessons, pupils make a lively contribution to discussion. They do so with quiet respect for their peers and members of staff as they comment and express their opinions. Pupils want to learn and respond well in most lessons to the challenges provided. As a result, they develop well as emerging adults as they move through the school.
- Behaviour overall is good. Pupils behave well around the school and the vast majority behave well in lessons. There are some instances of inappropriate behaviour in lessons, mainly among the boys in Year 9. There is little bullying or harassment at the school and the school has effective systems in place to deal swiftly with any incidents and to provide effective support. When exclusions occur, they are fully justified. The school monitors carefully the incidence of exclusion and is aware of the relatively high proportion of some ethnic groups who are excluded. The school has very effective strategies for securing the re-entry of such pupils, many of whom go on to achieve very well. By the time they leave school, most pupils have developed into mature and responsible young adults.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	457	25	4
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	33	0	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	27	7	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	20	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	5	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	375	13	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	75	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	23	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	39	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	53	1	0
Black or Black British – African	25	1	2
Black or Black British – any other Black background	40	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	0	0

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

11. The school misses opportunities to engage pupils in exploring spiritual values and reflection on non-material aspects of life. Many of the issues in the last report have not been addressed. On those mornings when pupils are not in assembly, the opportunities for an act of worship, for example, using a 'thought for the day', are rarely taken and tutor time each morning, whilst sometimes involving useful activities, tends to be wasted. However, opportunities are taken in some subjects, with art providing good opportunities to explore emotions in an 'expressions in clay' module, and throughout Years 7 to 13 there are many opportunities in English for reflective learning.
12. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, taken overall. There are good examples of the representation of different cultures in the work in several subjects, for instance, in art and design, and history.
13. There is a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct, which results in the good attitudes and understanding. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop responsibilities; individual pupils can propose 'one off' events, usually for charity, but there are no regular opportunities. There is no school council and pupils feel that their views are not valued.

Sixth Form

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also good. Students' attendance is good and their punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good attitudes to their work. These attitudes are strongly exemplified by the large number of students that go on to study at university.
- Students' behaviour is good.
- Occasionally, students do not appear willing to take full responsibility for their work and attitudes, and they rely too much on being spoon fed by good teachers.

Commentary

14. Sixth-form students are polite, pleasant, courteous and welcoming. They take their studies seriously, although they do not always take full responsibility for their studies and for their action. The result is that there is a significant minority of students who are spoon fed by their teachers. Students clearly enjoy attending the sixth form and they take part in the enrichment activities with some enthusiasm. Students with special educational needs are well integrated into the sixth form and they receive good support.
15. Relationships are very good and there is racial harmony. Teachers devote a great deal of time and energy helping students settle in and make the best of their sixth form. Students feel that they are treated with respect and that teachers listen to their views. Their relationship with the head of the sixth form is excellent.
16. Students are happy to take up the opportunity of running their own affairs, such as the sixth-form committee. They successfully organise social events. They have clear views on what they want from their sixth form and these are listened to and, where practical, acted upon by the school. Although students' concerns are listened to, their role in influencing sixth-form decisions is somewhat limited.
17. Attendance is good and the sixth-form office staff do a very good job in chasing any absence promptly and effectively. Attendance is carefully monitored and parents are involved in maintaining good attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is **good**, taken overall, and pupils learn **well**. The curriculum has some statutory omissions but otherwise provides an appropriate breadth. The lack of a school library restricts the learning strategies available to pupils but does not hinder the progress they make. Staff provide very good support, advice and guidance for pupils. Links with the community and other schools are good, and very good in the sixth form. The school's arrangements for seeking and acting upon pupils' views are unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, best in the sixth form and with a lower proportion of good or better lessons in Years 7 to 9. Assessment is satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 181 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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6 (3%)	43 (24%)	65 (36%)	56 (31%)	9 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
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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 and weaknesses

- Teaching is good taken overall, and is better in Years 10/11 (particularly English, drama and physical education), and best in the sixth form.
- The successful insistence by teachers on high standards of behaviour in lessons helps ensure an appropriate atmosphere for learning.
- The good use made of the support offered by teaching assistants in the core subjects ensures that pupils with additional needs make good progress.
- Pupils' positive response when provided with opportunities to learn independently or in collaborative groups, although such occasions are too rare in some subjects.
- Literacy skills are promoted well in a good range of subjects, including opportunities for extended writing in Years 10/11.
- Under-use by pupils of ICT to support their learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

18. Teaching quality is better in Years 10/11, where two thirds is at least good, than in Years 7 to 9, where nearly a half is at least good and where one in ten lessons is unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, whilst teaching and learning are good in English, German, mathematics, science and history, and very good in drama, they are predominantly satisfactory in other subjects. The teaching of the reading programme to younger pupils who need to catch up is very good. In Years 10/11, teaching and learning are mainly good, and very good in English, drama and physical education.
19. Strengths of the good teaching are the teachers' command of their subjects and their planning of good lessons based on this. The good and very good teaching successfully engages pupils' interest and attention – very good examples of this were seen in Years 10/11 in English, mathematics, physical education, business education and drama. The methods which teachers use and the amount of challenge which lessons present to pupils are generally well judged, and better in Years 10/11 than lower down in several subjects. Teachers' use of resources and the time available are generally satisfactory; however, there is too little use of computers to support learning in most subjects and the lack of a library, or compensatory provision in many classrooms and departments, does restrict the range of learning strategies open to pupils. Teachers are effective in their insistence on high standards of behaviour in lessons – this is very effective in English, German, science and particularly drama. Where teaching assistants are available, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, teachers make good use of the additional support. The effectiveness of the use of homework is variable – examples of good practice are found in English, German, science and drama. It is unsatisfactory only in ICT in Years 7 to 9.
20. Teaching successfully promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils and this is done particularly well in English and science. Teaching of small groups of pupils with SEN is consistently good. The needs of pupils for whom English is not the first language but who are at an advanced stage of learning the language are well met and they progress well with their learning across the curriculum.
21. Pupils acquire the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding well in most subjects as a result of this good teaching. They do so better in Years 10/11, by which time any language or literacy weaknesses have generally been overcome. However, largely due to the restricted curriculum in these subjects, pupils do not learn and progress adequately in

religious education, citizenship, and design and technology. Pupils apply themselves well to their work in most subjects (only citizenship is an exception) and make good use of lesson time, particularly in English, drama and physical education in Years 10/11. In not all subjects are pupils given adequate opportunities to work independently or in collaborative groups, but they respond well when such opportunities arise and do so particularly well in English, drama, music and physical education in Years 10/11.

Assessment

22. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is very good in physical education and good in English, science, history and in art and design for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The school has recently developed a comprehensive record keeping system which it uses to set targets for pupils in each subject. Teachers regularly assess and record pupils' performance, which enables the progress of all pupils to be carefully monitored throughout the year. Where assessment is good, teachers make good use of the new system. However, where staff have recently joined the school, or have been slow to adapt, assessments are less accurate, causing inconsistencies within subjects.
23. Good use is made of data to identify where teaching groups are not doing as well as expected and, in most subjects, this leads to successful strategies to aid improvement. Form tutors and heads of year also make good use of the data to identify where a pupil is underperforming and may need help. Where assessment is good, teachers mark the pupils' work regularly with clear guidance on how to improve. The pupils are also clear what they need to do to reach the targets set for them.
24. However, in mathematics, ICT, French, design and technology, citizenship, and art and design in Years 7 to 9, pupils are often unsure of what they need to do to reach their target and are unable to tell when they have done so. Consequently, these pupils do not always make the progress that they could. Assessment in citizenship is not yet fully developed and makes little contribution to the pupils' learning in lessons.
25. Assessment of SEN pupils' progress is satisfactory, but lacks clarity and sharpness, and there is no strategic overview of how well all pupils with SEN are making progress and why.

Sixth Form

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is **good**, and this leads to good learning and to good assessment. A higher number than ever before go on to a successful higher education at university level.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in English literature, drama, law, and media communications and production is very good.
- Teachers' planning, subject knowledge and their insistence on high standards of behaviour are all very good.
- Students do not get sufficient opportunities to work independently, which limits their research skills.

Commentary

26. The quality of teaching was very good in English literature, drama, law, and media communications and production. It is good in mathematics, biology, art and design, business studies and economics, French, information and communication technology and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology, history, music, and personal, social and health education.
27. The good teaching results in good learning, with the students making good progress and achieving well. Teachers do not always encourage students to work independently. This, as well as the lack of comprehensive research resources, means that students often expect to be spoon fed by their teachers. Having said that, the teachers' very good subject knowledge, coupled with their high expectations and very good planning, leads to students fairly consistently making good progress.
28. Assessment is good overall. Students get clear advice on how to improve their work. Teachers use the results of assessment to plan further lessons and to extend students' learning further.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **unsatisfactory**, as it fails to meet the broad statutory requirements. Provision for enrichment is **satisfactory**. The match of teachers to the curriculum is **unsatisfactory** and the match of support staff is **good**. The provision of resources is **satisfactory**, as is accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is inclusive and students receive good advice to ensure they make appropriate choices from within the range of courses available.
- The school has developed the curriculum in innovative ways.
- The school does not meet the statutory requirements for the provision of a broad curriculum in Years 7 to 9 or in Years 10 and 11; nor for a daily act of collective worship.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory.
- Three vocational courses are offered in Years 10 and 11 and all students undertake work experience, but there are no curricular links with other institutions.
- The match of teachers to the curriculum is unsatisfactory in design and technology and religious education.
- The absence of a library or effective compensatory provision inhibits learning, as does the under-use of computers across the curriculum.

Commentary

29. The school is prepared to be innovative in developing the curriculum to suit the needs of all its pupils. It has started to develop a modular curriculum across all subjects in Years 7 to 9, which seeks to improve pupils' learning by providing short-term goals and frequent information for parents. This approach has the potential to improve the attainment of all pupils and particularly of boys. It is already proving effective, for instance, in physical education and history.
30. The school has introduced some flexibility into the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, including vocational courses. Pupils have an open choice of subjects outside the core curriculum at this stage and a good programme of guidance and support is provided to

guarantee an inclusive approach and ensure their options are appropriate. The school encourages those who will continue into higher education to take a range of GCSE courses, including a modern language. All pupils will follow an ICT course. By introducing general national vocational qualifications and vocational GCSE courses for older pupils, the school is opening relevant pathways for certain groups. However, an arrangement for enabling some in Years 10 and 11 to study at a local college has been terminated and the school does not currently seek to broaden its curriculum by linking with other institutions. Most students progress successfully to study after the age of 16, where many benefit from opportunities provided within the school, and subsequently to further and higher education.

31. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 fails to include satisfactory provision for religious education, information and communication technology, citizenship, and design and technology. In Years 10/11, statutory requirements are not met in religious education, citizenship, design and technology and, for students in Year 11 this year, in ICT.
32. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is unsatisfactory. Staff do not have a clear understanding of the National Curriculum framework, and the confusion caused by delivering the citizenship curriculum within the PSHE programme has diluted content. Staff have had no training to deliver this aspect of learning and rely on their teaching skills gleaned from their subject specialism. Pupil experiences are therefore patchy and lessons are very knowledge driven, with limited opportunities to reflect on learning and consider what this may mean to them now or in the future. Opportunities to develop skills and consider attitudes are limited. Visitors contribute to lessons in different year groups, but there is no clarity of purpose for these visits, especially where contributions are to whole year groups.
33. There are school policies for sex and relationships education and drug education but these do not give sufficient support to teachers to plan a developmental programme of learning. There is no drug incident policy showing a repertoire of responses but there have been several drug-related exclusions.
34. Literacy lessons to support the curriculum include supervised group reading during form time, and an excellent standard of additional reading provision for some pupils who are regularly withdrawn from PSHE. Provision of ICT resources within the department, which would further support literacy skills, is unsatisfactory.
35. Provision for bright pupils is very good and they do very well. They are identified early and their performance is carefully tracked in Years 7 to 9. Heads of year keep an effective overview so that there is no underachievement. Pupils are informed of their status and this effectively raises their sights and increases their motivation. After Year 9, target grades of these pupils are very high and they rise to the challenge. A relatively high proportion proceeds from the school to university.
36. Good opportunities exist for all students to participate in sport and the able and motivated to train after school, competing successfully in competitions. Regular clubs are offered in art and design, and design and technology. Occasional visits to museums and galleries for some students are available in design and technology, and art and design, to the theatre in drama and English, and to France and Germany in modern foreign languages. Few opportunities occur to support students' learning outside lessons, as access to computers is limited and there is no library.

37. The match of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum in the main school is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient specialist teachers in design and technology and religious education, which constrain standards and the achievement of students. In other subjects (music, science and physical education) a few posts are covered by temporary staff all of whom are subject specialists. The curriculum is well supported by a good range of technicians, office staff and learning support assistants, and this allows teachers to focus on teaching.
38. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the absence of a school library inhibits learning. Since the previous inspection, the governors have invested a large amount of time and money to improve the school's accommodation, together with an on going programme of refurbishment. Improved facilities in media and drama, a new science/technology laboratory and refurbishment in technology and science have supported learning. However, there are still subjects where unattractive accommodation constrains learning, as seen in physical education, business education and design and technology. In design and technology, there is a lack of accommodation appropriate for using resistant materials. There are new facilities for computer-aided design and making.
39. Overall, resources are satisfactory. There are strengths in English, mathematics, science, and art and design, as pupils have good access to textbooks. However, limited access to computers in some subjects constrains investigative learning. A major deficiency is the absence of a school library, despite small library facilities in some departments. The absence of a school library, according to Year 10 and 11 pupils, does inhibit learning, as they have to make arrangements to visit libraries and this is often inconvenient, and they frequently do not have suitable resources for their work.

Sixth Form

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, are good. The quality of accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for later stages of education and employment is very good.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for religious education does not meet statutory requirements.
- There is no daily act of collective worship.
- There is some lack of access to information and communication technology.
- The lack of a centralised resource centre impedes students' independent research capabilities.
- Provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

40. The breadth of the sixth-form curriculum is satisfactory. The statutory requirement for religious education is not met. Sixth-form students do not receive their statutory entitlement of a daily act of collective worship. Provision is very good in English literature, biology, drama, law, and media communications and production. It is good in mathematics, art and design, business studies and economics, French, information and communication technology, and physical education. Provision is satisfactory in history and music, and unsatisfactory in design and technology. In the subjects sampled, such as chemistry, geography, physics, politics, psychology and sociology, provision is never less than satisfactory and often better.
41. Sixth-form students benefit from visiting theatre groups who show dramatisations of Shakespeare and Chaucer, and the science department take students to universities and conferences. A comprehensive programme of enrichment provides opportunities for sixth-form students to experience a range of activities, including yoga, salsa, philosophy, knitting, art and interview skills. The lack of trips to France restricts students' opportunities to use French within a realistic and normal context.
42. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum in the sixth form is at least satisfactory. This is a consequence of improved deployment of teachers. Staffing is currently unsatisfactory in media studies.
43. The sixth form makes use of specialist accommodation similar to that of the main school. Year 12 students reported that the lack of a central well-resourced library constrained some of their work. Accommodation for design and technology, and physical education, is unsatisfactory.
44. Resources for the sixth form are similar to those of the main school. Some subjects do not have sufficient access to information and communication technology. In design and technology, students do not have access to computer-assisted design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacture (CAM).

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that pupils get good care. Very good support, advice and guidance are available to all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well supported personally and academically.
- The staff's knowledge of the pupils ensures that every pupil is encouraged to achieve their best ability.
- There are good procedures in place for child protection.
- Opportunities for pupils' views to be heard are too limited.

Commentary

45. There is an ethos of care, order and structure which is emphasised in the school's expectations. Procedures for child protection are good. Members of the staff, including new staff to the school, are made appropriately aware of these procedures and are alert to concerns or changes in pupils' attitudes. There are good arrangements for administering first aid and dealing with accidents. Fire drills are carried out regularly. There are some minor health and safety issues, mainly regarding the state of decoration and flooring in some classrooms. All curriculum areas monitor appropriately the health and safety risks associated with their subjects. The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils are aware of the dangers posed by the Internet are suitable.
46. The pastoral teams, including form tutors, who remain with the same form each year, provide continuous and very effective ongoing care. The school has satisfactory induction arrangements for pupils joining in Year 7, although pupils commented that they would have liked to have known sooner which form they would be in when starting school. Pupils' academic progress is carefully monitored through the school's data programme, which identifies low achieving pupils to give them appropriate support and guidance for their future education.
47. Support and guidance for pupils with SEN, and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. The inclusion team deals with a very wide range of cultural, physical, sensory and emotional difficulties. There are lessons in social skills for some pupils. One pupil is on a speech and language programme. Counselling is at hand for those who require it. Pastoral support of behaviour, particularly for those at risk of exclusion, is a strong feature of provision. Support in lessons is good, although lesson planning for pupils with SEN is a weakness in some subjects.
48. In interviews and questionnaires, the older pupils say that they feel their opinions and ideas are undervalued. There are no opportunities, for instance through a school council, for pupils to air their views or make suggestions, and this is unsatisfactory.

Sixth Form

The provision of support, advice and guidance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receive very good support, advice and guidance.
- Students are successfully encouraged to go on to a university education.

Commentary

49. The provision for support, advice and guidance is very good. The school offers impartial guidance on further as well as higher education or career opportunities. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good. Students feel listened to, although they would like to be more involved in making decisions about aspects of their sixth-form life.
50. The school gives excellent support for those students expressing a wish to go on to university. Very good relationships have been established with many universities, allowing the head of sixth form and other staff to keep regularly in touch and to facilitate their students' applications. The result has been a very large number of students going on to higher education. This is a particular strength of the school and it is already transforming aspirations in the local community. Students who wish to go on to a career are given very good advice, as well as opportunities to sample their chosen career, where practical.
51. Academic monitoring is very good. Students know how well they are doing and what they should do to improve further. Teachers also give significant support on a one to one basis, using their assessment of individual students' work.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

These partnerships are of **good** quality.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through its status as a media arts specialist college, the school has developed good links with the community and with other schools.

Commentary

52. Parents are right to be pleased with the quality of education and care provided by the school. They are justified in believing that their children make good academic and personal progress. Some parents feel that some pupils' behaviour is not good. The inspection found that the majority of pupils are well behaved in lessons and throughout the school day, although there are some pockets of immature behaviour in lessons and around the school.
53. A few parents felt they were not sufficiently informed about progress. The school provides five interim reports, a full written report and a parents' meeting, and this is more than most schools. The quality of the documentation that the school provides for parents is satisfactory. Pupils' annual reports are generally well written and a consistent format is used between subjects. However, targets for pupils' improvement are often vague and insufficiently specific to the subject. Parents of pupils with SEN are usually present at annual reviews. There are appropriate links with health professionals.
54. The termly newsletter provides a celebration of the life of the school, although some parents would like to be kept informed more frequently. The school prospectus and governors' annual report provide suitable overviews and meet requirements.

55. Through its status as a Media Arts College, the school has developed good links with the local community by introducing art therapy sessions to the local hospital. There are good relationships with the local residents, who inform the school of any inappropriate behaviour by pupils outside school. Similarly, the school's links with other schools has benefited from the expertise that is taken into the local primary and special schools and a joint project with the nearby secondary school.

Sixth Form

Links with the community are **very good**. Links with other schools, colleges and universities are **outstanding**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good links with the community.
- There are outstanding links with other schools, colleges and universities.
- Students are given very good support on entering the sixth form, as well as on transfer to other institutions.

Commentary

56. Years 12 and 13 have very good links with the community. Links with other institutions, including many universities, are outstanding. These help facilitate both students' applications as well as their transfer from the sixth form.
57. The head of sixth form keeps very close contacts with parents. The result is that punctuality is satisfactory and attendance is generally good. Parents are also kept informed of their sons' and daughters' progress. There are also useful links with many local persons which allow the students to benefit from visiting speakers, advisers and teachers. In business studies and economics, links with businesses are limited.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school, judged overall, are satisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good; that of other key staff is variable, with many good examples. It is very good in the sixth form. Management is satisfactory, taken overall, and is good in the sixth form. Governance is unsatisfactory, despite strengths, due to a number of statutory breaches.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good system for tracking the performance of individual pupils and identifying those in need of additional support and encouragement, although the application of the system across the school is still variable.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership, based on his high aspirations for the success of all pupils and high expectations of staff, and the cohesive leadership group strongly supports these aspirations.
- The chair of governors and other governors play a key role in shaping the school's priorities and in holding the headteacher to account, and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governance does not ensure compliance with statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and in a number of curriculum areas.
- Leadership and management of a number of departments are very good, but weaknesses exist in a minority, due to inconsistencies in the line management of department heads; some very effective department managers are becoming overloaded with responsibilities.
- Management systems do not ensure the effective and efficient use by pupils of computers to support learning across the curriculum.
- Unusually high financial balances have been amassed over recent years.

Commentary

58. Governors have a clear influence on the school's philosophy and direction, with a particular focus on the academic achievement of all pupils and a sixth-form provision which is accessible to all. They have a good working relationship with the headteacher and high regard for the school's leadership team. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well as a result of the headteacher's regular and straightforward reports. However, few governors have any first hand knowledge of issues from personal visits to the school. Governors meet relatively infrequently but, through their extensive range and

depth of professional and business expertise, they give good support to the school. They also have very high expectations of performance of all staff.

59. Governors have not ensured, however, that the full range of statutory curriculum requirements are met. There is no provision of a daily act of collective worship, which is a requirement for all year groups 7 to 13, and the intended reliance on a 'thought for the day' has not materialised. In ICT, arrangements do not secure for all pupils in Years 7 to 11 their full entitlement to the learning opportunities in the National Curriculum. In religious education, the scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 does not properly reflect the requirements of the LEA's Agreed Syllabus. Provision in Years 10/11, within the personal, social and health education programme, is poor. The design and technology curriculum currently offered with reduced staffing does not meet National Curriculum requirements. The citizenship curriculum, a statutory requirement since September 2002, has yet to become established in the school. These omissions from pupils' entitlements, coupled with the lack of library provision in the school and the under-use of the computers, suggest the need for governors to review their committee structure to ensure that curriculum matters receive their adequate attention. Currently, the only committees are finance and health and safety.
60. The headteacher's leadership is firm and strongly orientated around ensuring that all pupils and students achieve their full potential academically. He has high expectations of the performance of staff and high aspirations for the achievement of all pupils. His leadership makes very clear the curriculum priorities of the school, which are strongly focused on developing the core skills which will secure success in examinations. However, this emphasis sometimes leads to a lack of breadth of curriculum experience for pupils and a somewhat narrow range of learning styles.
61. The leadership of other key staff is variable and is satisfactory taken overall. The leadership group of senior staff work well together in support of the school's priorities. Year teams are generally well led. Leadership of individual departments is variable, with some good and very good practice and a small minority which is unsatisfactory. In multi-subject departments (visual arts and design, and particularly humanities), the range of responsibilities held by the head of department are very onerous.
62. The best leadership, for instance, in English, art and design, and drama, is characterised by high aspirations for pupils' success, amply transmitted to effective teams of teachers, both through the role-modelling of the leader and through high quality strategic planning. Across the school, leaders have a high and successful commitment to ensuring the interests of all pupils are met. There is no overall co-ordination of literacy development across the curriculum.
63. The leadership of SEN provision is unsatisfactory. Due to lack of confidence and drive, the department is not yet taking a central role in the work of the school and its impact on subject departments is too limited. The management of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and his deputy is satisfactory. The specialist SEN staff are well managed and deployed, and there is up-to-date management of performance. The department has supported new staff well. Statutory requirements are met, except for the evaluation and costing of SEN provision, which needs to be included in the governors' annual report to parents to meet the requirements of the code of practice.
64. The aims reflected in the current school improvement plan are broadly appropriate to the stated high achievement goals of the school. They give relatively little emphasis to the broader

personal development of the pupils. There is little direct reference to strategies for improving the quality of teaching, where this is found to be necessary, despite the clear signals given by the reports of an external consultant who observed lessons across the school and discussed his recommendations with key staff.

65. The quality of planning at department level is variable - many plans are fully appropriate and helpful to the continuing developments identified; others are insufficiently focused and some lack success criteria or incorporate criteria against which it would be hard to evaluate improvement. These inconsistencies reflect those in the quality of line management provided by leadership group members for heads of department. These reflect the inexperience and lack of appropriate training and guidance for those senior managers who are new to this role, and who are not included as full members of the leadership group. Self-evaluation within the school is patchy. It is underdeveloped in that, despite the improvement targets identified by the headteacher for each department, too little attention is given in a number of departments to the systematic monitoring of teaching quality or to the quality of leadership and management to secure those improvements.
66. In September 2002, the school was successful in attaining designation as a specialist Media Arts College at the second attempt. The three specialist subjects are media arts, visual arts and ICT, and the school is also aiming to extend 'visual literacy' across the school. Inspectors, in their subject paragraphs, report varying degrees of success in meeting the academic subject targets and the arts college manager has reported that, while visual literacy is embedded in the new modular curriculum in Years 7 and 8, it is still in its infancy. There have been some delays in implementing the development plan: the new building came in on budget, although it was late in completion. The appointment of the community manager was also delayed and there have been some changes in the schools involved in the community plan. The school feels that it is now over the initial delays and that it is making good progress on all the targets – particularly those in the community.
67. The school has developed a secure system for monitoring pupil performance. The outputs from this system are now helping to ensure even more effectively that pupils are set appropriately challenging targets for performance in national tests and examinations. Teachers use the system to identify those pupils who may need additional encouragement and guidance, and to report on pupils' progress to their parents. In Years 7 and 8, and shortly to be extended to other years, these reports are provided at short intervals, enabling parents to play a key role in keeping their children on track to meet ambitious targets. There is currently still some inconsistency in the quality of marking between teachers, sometimes even within a subject, which can restrict the reliability of the data on pupil performance. However, in general, the system is helpful in developing teachers' skills in marking and assessing pupils' work. As yet, the data generated are not being widely used to identify how approaches to lesson planning and teaching might be developed.
68. Performance management is satisfactory. It has been successfully established for all teaching and support staff. However, the impact varies. In subjects like English, drama, science, and design and technology, performance management has led to improvement in pupils' learning, whereas, in physical education and religious education, it has not yet been effective in generating improvement.
69. The school operates a sound induction programme for both new staff and newly qualified teachers. Experienced teachers, new to the school, follow the programme, enabling them to settle quickly into the life of the school. Within departments, there is a varied range of practices to induct staff.

70. Professional development is satisfactory. A reduced allocation of funding for professional development inhibits the amount of professional development that can take place, both away from school and during school time. Some departments share good practice, for example, ways of using an interactive whiteboard. In some departments limited professional development has taken place and some staff are somewhat isolated from mainstream educational developments elsewhere.
71. The school has good links with three initial training agencies. Teachers and pupils benefit from students working in school as they bring new ideas to departments. This is a good feature of the school.
72. The school works hard to retain its staff and is largely successful, especially in English, mathematics and science. However, there have been recruitment problems in music, design and technology, physical education and religious education.
73. The school has a very well co-ordinated approach to financial planning, which is strongly scrutinised by the finance committee of governors. At the end of the last financial year, the school was holding very considerable balances. These are earmarked for improvements to the accommodation. Governors need to keep under review whether holding balances at this level and increasing them further, as was the case in 2002/03, is the most appropriate way of ensuring current pupils obtain value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,451,620	Balance from previous year	493,246
Total expenditure	4,287,793	Balance carried forward to the next	657,073
Expenditure per pupil	3,646		

74. Budget construction does not fully take account of the costs of development priorities, as these are not always sufficiently well indicated in the planning. However, there is clarity in the school as to which developments are to be funded and which are not a current priority, given budgetary constraints. The school is not particularly advanced in its use of benchmarking data, which is now freely available from national sources, to assess the patterns of expenditure. The adoption of best value principles is at a relatively early stage, but there is a good consciousness of this type of approach which stems from many of the governors having developed their budgetary responsibilities in the school's early days as a grant maintained school. The latest auditors' report (2002/03) is indicated in governors' minutes as being very positive about the school's financial arrangements.

Sixth Form

The leadership of the head of sixth form is **very good**. Overall management is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the sixth form is very good.

- The governing body supports and challenges the leadership of the sixth form very effectively.
- The head of sixth form's commitment to inclusion and to the promotion of equality is outstanding.

Commentary

75. The head of the sixth form is a hard working, totally committed and charismatic person who is very popular with both staff and students. She has a clear vision, of where she wants the sixth form to go and she has realised some of this vision as is seen by the very high number of students who go on to study at university level. She has very high expectations of every student and has a very strong belief in equality of opportunities for all. The result has been a largely successful sixth form. She is very well supported by the school's senior management, who have strong aspirations for their sixth-form students. Governors take a very keen interest in the work of the sixth form.
76. Leadership and management in subjects are at least satisfactory and often good in almost every subject. They are unsatisfactory in music. Leadership is very good in English, art and design, drama, media communications and production, law and physical education. It is good in mathematics, science, business studies and economics, history, and information and communication technology.
77. Day-to-day management is effective. Clear office routines mean that paper work and telephone communications are always prompt and up-to-date. Students feel comfortable approaching staff for support and advice, and they speak highly of their services.
78. Provision for students with special educational needs is good. There is effective support for a statemented student, who is doing very well. Students with special educational needs are specially monitored to provide additional support for their coursework. They are referred to a homework club if deadlines are not likely to be met. Students with special educational needs have special arrangements made for them, as necessary, when they sit their examinations. Their literacy development continues to be monitored in their individual education plans.

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 **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is very good, and teachers work well as a team.
- Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 because of very good teaching.
- GCSE results are well above average.
- Best practice in assessment and target setting is not found consistently.
- Extended writing is not well developed in Years 7 to 9, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- ICT is underused in lessons to improve literacy skills.

Commentary

79. Year 9 test results in 2003 were average, as they have been consistently in recent years. More pupils gain higher levels in mathematics and science. GCSE results were well above average, however, both in English and English Literature. Results were similar to the previous year in English, but literature results improved significantly. All pupils were entered for the latter examination. Boys did better in literature work than seen nationally.
80. Current standards are above average in Year 9. Achievement is good and better without the pressure of timed test conditions, particularly for those pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers support pupils well in class work. Most pupils are good readers. An interest in wider reading is encouraged through the use of class libraries and home-school diaries. Good extra help is provided in Years 7 and 8 for lower attaining pupils through supported and reading recovery sessions. Pupils are able to adapt their writing for different purposes and make a good effort to develop ideas, for example, using imagery and sensory detail well in descriptions. Errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation hold back overall standards for many middle and lower attaining pupils, however. There could also be more challenge in the written work expected in some classes, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Homework should be used more regularly to develop extended writing throughout Years 7 to 9. Access to ICT equipment is limited during lesson time, and there are inconsistencies of approach between classes. Pupils could use new technology more effectively to improve literacy skills.
81. Teachers have high expectations for GCSE work. Standards are well above average by Year 11. Pupils are well motivated by the demands of coursework essays. Extended personal and creative writing is well structured and expressive. Higher and middle attaining pupils also write

intelligently about literature studied. Essays are developed in sufficient depth, with good use of textual detail to support arguments. Very good practice was seen in Year 11 lessons to develop a close analysis of the dramatic interplay of characters in Miller's '*A View from the Bridge*'. Speaking skills are well above average throughout the school. Pupils give reasoned answers to teachers' questions and make constructive contributions to whole class and small group discussions. They listen very well to teachers and their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make equal progress alongside other pupils in mixed ability classes. Teaching assistants provide effective support.

82. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9; very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers manage pupils very well, and positive relationships are formed. They know their subject well and the best lessons are suitably varied, with a range of methods and resources used to engage pupils actively. As a result, pupils' learning is very good overall during their time in the school. They acquire skills and knowledge well. Most try hard to improve their work. There is very good practice in the assessment of pupils' work in Years 10 and 11. It could apply more consistently in Years 7 to 9, however, and be further developed through greater involvement of pupils in setting subject-specific targets for improvement. The department has already identified this as a priority, as part of work to develop the modular curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Achievement is limited in some lessons when teachers do not judge pace and timing of activities well. More emphasis could also be given to evaluation of learning against overall objectives at the end of lessons.
83. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department shows a strong commitment to further improving standards. Senior staff provide very good role models in their own work. Subject planning is well organised and kept under continuing review. A programme of lesson observations, and checking of work set, is carried out systematically. There has been good improvement in standards of teaching and learning since the last inspection. GCSE results are also better.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

84. Literacy skills are average when pupils join the school, but above average by the time they reach Year 11. This improvement reflects a range of effective teaching strategies, developed in training for the whole staff in recent years. The high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language also use words more confidently as they progress through the school and they achieve well, and often very well, in Years 10/11. Effective practice to promote high standards of speaking and listening was seen in several subjects, including science, history, and drama. Reading is also well developed by coming to terms with a variety of texts, with an increasing focus on analytical and evaluative skills in English, design and technology, and geography. Pupils write regularly for different purposes and have good opportunities to produce more extended writing in a range of subjects in Years 10 and 11, including science, modern foreign languages and history. Key words for subjects are displayed in many classrooms, including art and design, physical education, mathematics and music, though their use is not always reinforced sufficiently within lessons. There are literacy catch-up sessions for pupils who need them in Years 7 and 8. Successful literacy summer schools have also been held for selected new entrants to Year 7 for the last two years.
85. This year, however, there has been no overall co-ordination of work to improve the teaching of literacy in the school. If standards are to improve further, a new literacy co-ordinator should be appointed to build on past work and continue systematic monitoring to ensure that best practice applies consistently.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are weaknesses in leadership and management, which lead to inconsistent practice and a lack of continuity in planning.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are some examples of very good and excellent teaching.
- The attainment of boys is not as good as it should be, even taking national average differences between boys and girls into account.
- Assessment data is not analysed in sufficient detail or followed by sufficient action.

Commentary

86. French GCSE results were slightly above average in 2003, but the proportion of pupils who are entered for the examination is much lower than nationally and includes a relatively high incidence of higher attaining pupils. Those entered in 2003 achieved similar results in French as they did in the average for all their other subjects. Results at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average, with boys' results much further below the boys' national average than girls'. Standards seen in lessons are average overall in all year groups. The achievement of pupils varies considerably and is satisfactory overall.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In some lessons, it is very good or excellent, and it is never unsatisfactory. All teachers speak very good French, but in some lessons, pupils fail to take part in all the tasks, copying solutions from others or waiting for the teacher to announce the answers. Marking is inconsistent, especially with older pupils, with some teachers limiting their comments to one or two words. Teachers rarely write pupils' National Curriculum level or potential GCSE grade and, whilst most pupils are aware of the level they should reach, few can describe how they could improve their performance and exceed their target. Pupils do not use ICT in their own learning, though classrooms are well equipped with facilities for teachers to use. Pupils who do not have access to the Internet at home undertake little independent reading, as there is no library provision.
88. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Forward planning for the development of the subject takes place and the school has just introduced new arrangements for supervising the department's work. However, there is little continuity from one plan to the next, teachers rarely share good practice by monitoring lessons and there is no evidence of a vision for the development of language teaching in the school.

The head of department does not monitor pupils' exercise books and the quality of marking is inconsistent across the department. The department does not analyse assessment data to see how different groups are achieving and sometimes, when action is taken, as with boys' attainment, no attempt is made to evaluate how successful it has been. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, with higher standards at the end of Year 11 and examples of better teaching.

GERMAN

Provision in German is **satisfactory**, with signs of improvement.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in last summer's GCSE examinations were below expectation, having been affected by frequent changes of teaching staff.
- Teaching is now consistently at least good.
- The classroom environment and the range of resources available are very good.

Commentary

89. In 2003, the proportion of GCSE candidates who gained grade C or better was well below the national average, but the average points score was the same as that nationally. The proportion of pupils entered for the examination was much lower than nationally and included many higher attaining pupils. Results at the end of Year 9 were below the national average in 2003, with boys and girls achieving equally. Current standards seen in lessons are higher: average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve satisfactorily in lessons, indicating that work is improving, and those currently in Years 10 and 11 have made a positive choice to learn German and achieve well.
90. Teaching has improved recently because of reduced turnover of staff, which accounts for the current higher achievement. It is good in Years 7 to 9 with well-planned, well-paced lessons, supported by colourful, relevant resources. It is very good in Years 10 and 11, where these strengths are even more evident. Teachers are very good at their subject and make extensive use of German, as do some pupils. Classrooms are well equipped with facilities for teachers, who make good use of the interactive whiteboard, but pupils do not make use of ICT in their own learning. Pupils take regular tests but the results are not systematically analysed in order to spot patterns of attainment amongst different groups. Pupils have low awareness of their own attainment and ways they might improve.
91. Leadership and management of German are the responsibility of the head of modern languages, so the comments in the French report apply and overall judgements are the same. Management of the schemes of work, assessment tasks and support for new teachers are the responsibility of the teacher in charge of German, who handles it well and initiates creative ideas. The departmental development plan is the same for both languages, but does not identify separate strands for French and German. The planned monitoring of lessons has not been undertaken, nor has a schedule for observation been prepared. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, with recent strong improvements in teaching.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Very good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment by the end of Year 11 is well above the national average.
- The challenge and expectation by staff is very high.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology by pupils to assist with their learning.
- There is little variety in the range of teaching and learning strategies used.

Commentary

92. The recent results in the GCSE examinations were well above national averages and continue a rising trend. The Year 9 National Curriculum results are consistently above average. Mathematics is a subject where pupils do better than in their other subjects.
93. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 9 are above average, which continues to reflect recent results, and pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Pupils are clear when explaining their work, making good use of mathematical vocabulary. Year 8 pupils in a lower set are able to identify the meaning of factors, multiples, prime numbers and can mentally calculate differences. Those with special education needs make good progress: work is matched to their ability and the quality of classroom support is very good. By the end of Year 11, the overall achievement is clearly very good and standards remain well above average. Pupils in Year 11 are very aware of their current performance and predicted grades, but less specific about how to secure improvement. Many pupils show confidence in using a range of techniques and more able pupils were competent in understanding compound interest, Pythagoras theorem, standard form, use of cosine rule and factorisation. Preparations for examinations are rigorous.
94. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide highly structured lessons, which challenge pupils to work hard; as a result, expectations are consistently high across all the ability range. Relationships are good and student attitudes are overwhelmingly positive. The good use of interactive whiteboards enhances lesson presentation, but student use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. Teaching is closely linked to textbooks and there is little variety in the range of teaching and learning strategies, and resources, adopted. Teachers are particularly well informed about examination requirements and constantly emphasise these details to pupils. Some teaching fails to capitalise upon the contribution pupils can make in open dialogue in sharing and offering their opinions. In all years, teachers follow the lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy. Particular features of all lessons are the starters with a variety of tasks; this sets a positive tone to the lesson and is an anticipated aspect of pupils' work.

95. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The mathematics team works cohesively well and the head of department presents a good role model within and without the classroom. Strategic planning and some aspects of documentation would benefit from increased amplification and analysis. The department has made outstanding improvements in attainment at GCSE since the last inspection, which is in part a clear reflection of their focus upon examination preparation. The department may well consider that a future development could include a fast track teaching programme for the increasing numbers of high attaining Year 10 and 11 pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

96. Standards in use of mathematics and number are above average in the subjects where mathematical skills are required. In science, equations are used to derive solutions; data logging, use of ratio and competent interpretations of graphs all form part of the teaching programme. In art and design, scale and proportion are an effective part of pupils' work with an appreciation of tessellations linked to the work of Escher. In design and technology, mathematics is stronger in Years 10 and 11. Pupils use scales, conduct surveys, make formal drawings and use spreadsheets well. Scatter diagrams are used in geography and positioning on maps accurately employ grid references. The school has yet to complete its work on mathematics across the curriculum by publishing an all-embracing policy.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers work hard and well as a team that has a desire to raise standards and a capacity to succeed.
- Good use is made of homework to reinforce and extend work done in lessons.
- Pupils are not often challenged to make predictions, to design, and to form hypotheses, and teachers' questions are not sufficiently directed to keep all pupils on task.
- Not enough use is made of assessment data in planning lessons so as to meet the needs of individual pupils and to involve pupils much more in self-evaluation.

Commentary

97. The Year 9 results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests were overall close to the national average, and above average for both the expected Level 5 and the higher Level 6, when compared with those in all schools. The results were average when compared with those of similar schools and meet challenging targets set for science. Results for the GCSE dual award examination were significantly above the national average, with the proportion gaining

higher grades A and B well above average, when compared with results in all schools. Boys did better than girls, and both did better than boys and girls nationally.

98. In most lessons observed, pupils achieve well. They respond well to being challenged. Most pupils achieve their learning objectives. Little difference between the achievements of girls and boys was apparent. Most pupils make accurate observations during practical work and record their work well. They use their text books well to support their independent learning. By the end of Year 11, most pupils are confident speakers when answering questions. Higher attaining pupils work accurately, ask good questions and answer questions in depth. They bring very good prior knowledge to new situations and complete extension exercises well. They are not well practised at design, making predictions and forming hypotheses. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in response to the good support they get from their teachers and support assistants, despite there being insufficient joint pre-planning by these parties. They are uncertain when practising number skills and some leave work unfinished. Overall, very positive attitudes to work and good behaviour are helping pupils' achievements, as are their good levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT capability.
99. In a good lesson in Year 7, focused key words were practised when pupils were challenged to do a piece of writing about fertilisation of the embryo. When volunteers read their passage aloud, all pupils listened intently and were moved to spontaneously applaud each contribution in turn. During a very good lesson on digestion in Year 10, the teacher was assertive and challenging. This resulted in most pupils making very good progress at very good pace and to them achieving very well. However, the level of questioning was too difficult for one or two pupils. In both of these lessons, the department's teaching and learning policy was employed to great effect. All teachers set and mark homework regularly and pupils find the diagnostic and supportive comments useful. Some excellent assessment data is shared very well with pupils but as yet, pupils are not skilled at self-evaluation.
100. Leadership is clearly focused on raising the achievements of all pupils. There is a very well motivated team that seeks to achieve faculty and school priorities. Rigorous self-evaluation of the work of the faculty triggers appropriate action. Teachers are well deployed and very well supported.
101. Since the last inspection, strategic planning gives a better structure to the development of the department, but success criteria are not yet identified. A better range of learning activities are built into lesson planning, but pupils' spiritual development is still not addressed. Use of ICT is increased well, but the level of resources is insufficient to support curriculum development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Below average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership of department	Good	
Management of department	Good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Not all pupils in Years 7 to 9 will have received their full entitlement to learning opportunities with regard to ICT, and the same is true of many in Year 11. Whilst there is

rapid progress in dealing with the gaps, as yet, the school does not meet National Curriculum requirements in this subject.

- Outstanding GCSE results follow well-focused, motivating guidance from knowledgeable teachers.
- In few other subjects is ICT much seen as a resource for efficient, effective and enjoyable teaching and learning, and its use is not co-ordinated to ensure all pupils become familiar with the relevant skills and understanding.
- While leadership and management of the department are good, and the school's ICT resources are at the national average level, as yet, management systems do not ensure efficient usage in and out of lesson times.

Commentary

102. Each year, around half of the Year 11 pupils enter the GCSE examination in ICT; they obtain outstanding results: the large majority reach or pass the target grade C.
103. Although there is wide variation, the grasp of ICT of the pupils entering the school is below average, often well below. Most reach the end of Year 9 with standards in the subject that are still somewhat below average. In particular, while most have a fair range of basic computer skills (eg with using word processors, typing data into spreadsheets, and accessing the Internet), few can explain the relevance to their lives or to the world of work of what they do or can tailor a product to an audience. Even so, most make good progress – they achieve well and are often determined to learn the skills, if not always the background knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 also make good progress in formal ICT lessons. It is very good in the case of those on the GCSE course, and these gain a good enough understanding of how people work with computers and communications to be able to apply those ideas effectively to solving different problems; most gain an exceptional grasp of ICT in theory and practice – but the others in Years 10 and 11 do not, so standards are not very much above average overall. There is insufficient additional support for pupils with SEN, so that teachers often provide that support themselves at significant cost to the rest of the class.
104. Teaching is overall satisfactory throughout the main school, being sometimes good or very good. There are more experienced specialist teachers on the GCSE course, so there the range of techniques and resources used, and the resulting challenge to the pupils to work and think hard, are greater; there, too, are more opportunities for real independent learning and for working in teams, and the pupils enjoy and benefit from both. Generally, the teachers expect – and get – good behaviour, and the classes' attitudes and concentration are then good, too.
105. The subject is well led in Years 10/11, where the team is rather smaller and the targets are clearer. Not all pupils in Years 7 to 11 are currently in line for enough structured ICT teaching to be able to meet national expectations. However, the department is working hard to develop full coverage of requirements, including plenty of focused opportunities to practise, develop, and consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding, both in their work in other subjects and by using computers outside lesson time. At the moment, neither kind of opportunity exists. Other factors that make the leadership and management of the ICT department more difficult include staff support needs (although support of those who need it is often very good), assessment of pupils' attainment in ICT across the curriculum (to ensure that all pupils have a clear idea how they can improve), and the distance between the three pairs of ICT rooms. Technical support is good and well managed, however, despite communications difficulties.
106. There has been good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in resourcing – though the school's computers are generally under-used.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

107. One of the findings of the previous inspection was that teachers of the other subjects rarely used IT in their teaching, at least partly because of unmet needs for training. Since then, there has been quite a lot of training and more and more teachers have an idea how they can use computers to improve the quality of their work and that of all their pupils. Still, however, in no subject area, apart from media studies and the visual arts, is there much ICT-based work. The school has started to think what could be done, at least in the context of Years 7 to 9, but, as yet, there is no monitoring of the main school's ICT-based work across the curriculum against

subject requirements, or co-ordination of that work against the standards of the National Curriculum for ICT.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership is leading to improving standards and achievement.
- Teaching does not always involve pupils in their learning in order to become independent learners.
- The range of activities and tasks is not sufficient to match appropriately the needs of the wide range of abilities.
- In lessons, there is not enough access to computers for research.
- Teachers have good specialist knowledge and use it successfully in their teaching.

Commentary

108. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were below average. However, this was a small group of ten pupils, which makes any comparisons unreliable.
109. By the end of Year 9, standards in geography are below average. From a low starting base in Year 7, pupils are achieving satisfactorily. In Year 9, pupils begin to improve their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills. Most pupils have a basic understanding of causes and effects of flooding, as exemplified when pupils explore water drainage on different surfaces. However, a minority of Year 9 pupils has difficulty locating continents and the associated hot deserts. Pupils' books show that they are just beginning to make effective use of diagrams, charts and maps in illustrating their work. They learn to use the correct technical words like de-forestation and ecosystem. By the end of Year 11, standards are average, which represents good achievement. Standards of classroom work in Year 10 are reinforced by practical fieldwork from the Weymouth district. Pupils' course work is often enhanced through home computers. Year 10 work starts to show analysis of fieldwork data. Year 11 pupils begin to understand the problems caused by the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. However, only the high attaining pupils understand the implications.
110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a good geographical knowledge and apply it well in their teaching. Long and short-term planning is good. However, the range of activities and tasks is, at times, not sufficient to meet the wide range of abilities. Teaching does not always encourage independent learning. GCSE course work is well presented but lacks a strong evaluative element. In lesson time, lack of access to information and communication technology constrains some of the investigative work that needs to be undertaken. Written work is checked regularly. Marking is not always consistent and evaluated to help pupils improve further. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject, which helps to underpin learning.

111. A decline in standards followed the previous inspection. However, the appointment of a head of humanities to co-ordinate geography has started to arrest this decline. The geography department is now well led and is given good, clear vision and direction. The management of humanities is only satisfactory - a consequence of limited time to undertake the role. Two new geography teachers started to work at the same time as the head of humanities. The team is working well together and has started to raise both the standards and profile of the subject. Monitoring of pupils' work and long and short-term planning have improved recently. Resources are adequate, but limited access to computers restricts the development of investigative skills. Although there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, big strides have been made by a new team to improve standards. As a consequence, geography is now an improving and developing department.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership provides a role model for other teachers and pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and this contributes directly to good learning.
- Assessment informs learning and curriculum development.
- Quality in teaching and learning is inconsistent.

Commentary

112. The trend in GCSE results has, over the past five years, been above the national average, except for the 2003 results that fell close to the national average.
113. Attainment of pupils in history on entry to the school is in line with the national average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 7 to 9. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 9, standards are beginning to rise above those achieved nationally. The upward trend in teacher-assessed levels at the end of Year 9 has been maintained since the last inspection. Satisfactory progress and achievement are maintained by those who continue with the subject through Years 10/11.
114. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is a wide range of effectiveness in the department. A strong feature of the most effective lessons is the teacher's command of the subject, together with the challenge for pupils to give their best. Where good teaching takes place, pupils are fully engaged, enthused and make valuable contributions to discussions. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, pupils are encouraged to achieve well. Where teaching is innovative and experienced, pupils make good progress owing to the teacher revisiting the key points for learning with challenging

tasks to give a sense of urgency to the learning. A range of questioning styles ensures pupils remain attentive throughout lessons. Careful attention is paid to improving pupils' standards of literacy with teachers using clear and concise terminology, ensuring pupils fully understand the meaning and significance of new vocabulary. Pupils show a positive attitude to learning, taking a pride in their work and exhibit enjoyment in their lessons. In unsatisfactory lessons, pupils' learning is hampered because of poor teacher-pupil relationships and the work not being well matched to their ability or needs.

115. Assessment information informs curricular development and is a strong feature of the department's work. The quality of marking of pupils' work is generally good, with teachers providing detailed comments and good guidance to pupils. Regular assessments of progress are made which are fed back to pupils with targets for their future progress. Homework is used effectively to reinforce, if not always to extend, learning. There are limited opportunities for pupils to use information technology and to take part in enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Pupils' skills in independent study are underdeveloped.
116. Leadership of the subject is good. The head of faculty has a clear vision about the future of history. His enthusiasm for the subject results in good collaboration with team members. The head of faculty has worked strenuously, within the time constraint demands of the faculty role, to ensure all staff support and work towards raising the overall attainment of pupils. A good departmental plan has been drawn up and areas for improvement and development identified. Assessment data is used effectively to track individual pupils' progress and inform planning.
117. The department has addressed the issues in the last inspection report, although more work is required in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and raising the attainment of all pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	N/A
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator of religious education has worked hard in trying to improve the department.
- The scheme of work and programme of study in Years 7 to 9 do not properly reflect the statutory requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Statutory requirements are not being met in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form.
- There are no specialist teachers of the subject and this has had a negative impact on some teaching and the leadership of the subject.

Commentary

118. The GCSE examination has not normally been taken by pupils in recent years.
119. The standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are well below average. The subject is taught through the personal, social and health education programme. The religious content is minimal and the work of poor quality. The work bears little resemblance to the requirements indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. The standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are below the standards indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have studied various religions, including Christianity, Buddhism and Sikhism, and they can talk meaningfully about some of their significant aspects, such as festivals and symbols. Their knowledge and understanding of the belief systems and world-views which are the driving forces behind the outward manifestations is not strong. The pupils are often better in exploring the 'facts and figures' of religions than they are in responding to them. Their written skills are satisfactory, as are their reading skills. Overall, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
120. The progress of pupils who have English as an additional language and who have special educational needs is satisfactory. Some is well matched to the general range of abilities in the classes to enable them to make satisfactory progress, but the provision of extension work for the more able is inconsistent and so they do not always make the progress they might.
121. There was no teaching of religious education in Years 10 and 11 during the time of the inspection. Overall, the teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Most lessons have strong content drawn from world religions, and lessons are well planned and include a range of methods and activities. The stronger lessons make significant demands on the pupils and so their learning and achievement is good. At other times, tasks are insufficiently demanding and involve unnecessary repetitive low level work which wastes time. This lack of demand enables some pupils to misbehave. The stronger teaching encourages the pupils to see the relevance of their learning to their own lives and experiences. Some teaching restricts itself simply to processing information about the outward forms of religious traditions without examining the beliefs, teachings and rationale that lie beyond them. The lack of extension work in some lessons restricts the learning of the more able pupils. At times, the management of some pupils is insufficiently firm. Homework is set and there is an active assessment policy. Some lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
122. The subject is led by a non-specialist co-ordinator. He has worked hard to develop the subject. The leadership and management, however, are unsatisfactory as there are limits to what he can achieve. There are no specialist teachers in the department and so the staffing is poor. It is having a detrimental effect on pupils' learning and the progress of the department generally. The scheme of work and programme of study in Years 7 to 9 do not properly reflect the statutory requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Statutory requirements are not being met in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The resources are unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good GCSE results in 2003 reflect improvement since the last inspection.
- Current staffing provides insufficient subject expertise to teach current pupils well; current standards and the progress made by many pupils are therefore unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum fails to meet National Curriculum requirements.
- The accommodation for working with resistant materials, systems and control is unsatisfactory, as are resources for computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM).

Commentary

123. Results in the GCSE examinations were above average in 2003 and had improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards were well above average in textiles and graphic products and below average in food. Girls generally did better than in most of their other subjects.
124. By the end of Year 9, the pupils' knowledge and skills in systems and control are below average, as is their ability to manufacture in resistant materials. Their ability to design and make products that work is also below average. Pupils often show good drawing skills and imagination in their ideas, but often lack sufficient knowledge and skills to design, plan and develop them well. The standards of work are often well above average in textiles, where products are well made from good quality fabrics they have designed and printed. Year 11 pupils are currently achieving standards in resistant materials and engineering that are below average. Their knowledge of the subject is generally average, but their experience of designing and making products in a range of resistant materials is below average. Pupils' expertise in computer-aided design and manufacture in all aspects of the subject is low.
125. In Years 7 to 9, the teaching in lessons is often good, particularly where teachers have expertise in the aspect of the subject they are teaching. Here, teachers stimulate pupils' interest well and they enjoy working creatively with materials. However, most teachers lack the knowledge and skills to teach the full range and depth of the subject well and consequently, standards are low in many respects. In Years 10 and 11, the absence of the one specialist teacher during the autumn term and the need for him to share teaching groups with staff from other backgrounds limits progress and results in underachievement. In addition, there are weaknesses in the accommodation for working with resistant materials and for systems and control, and in resources for CAD/CAM.
126. Within these significant constraints, the subject is well led and managed by the head of visual arts, who has a clear vision for improving provision. However, insufficient subject expertise is currently available to bring these plans quickly to fruition.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

ART AND DESIGN

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Very good	

Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led with the head of department providing a clear vision; department management is also very good.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to study a variety of media.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently well by all teachers to inform pupils how to raise their standard of work in Years 7-9.
- Computers are used but not sufficiently to develop work creatively.
- Good student attitudes contribute positively to their learning.
- Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

127. In 2003 by the end of Year 9 pupils were working at a level above that expected nationally, according to teacher assessments. This was not supported by work seen during the inspection, which was at an average level.
128. The percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades at GCSE in 2003 continues the trend to be above the national average and pupils achieved better in art and design than other subjects they took.
129. By the end of Year 9, pupils' skills are average as a result of a broad-based course offering a range of experiences in a variety of media, including textiles and clay. Due to the varying quality of teaching, achievement varies across the department and is generally satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, pupils are working above the level expected nationally. Pupils' practical skills are well developed and most pupils are confident in handling a variety of materials. High attaining pupils paint extremely well and tonal drawings are very skilful, as is textile work using batik and applied design. Computers are used, but mainly for research.
130. Strengths in teaching lie in clear learning objectives, confident practical demonstrations and good subject knowledge. Lessons are brisk and pupils are focused and productive, encouraged by timed tasks and high expectations. The teaching provides good opportunities for pupils to explore their emotional and spiritual responses. Assessment is used well in Years 10 and 11 where it is linked closely to examination criteria and informs improvement. Pupils' good attitudes contribute positively to learning. Less strong features of teaching in Years 7 to 9 are the marking and assessment. These are not used well to suggest ways in which pupils might improve their work and there is too little reference to levels in the National Curriculum. Outcomes of assessment are not used sufficiently well to inform lesson planning to meet the differing needs of pupils.
131. The dynamic subject leader provides clear vision and direction. Plans for developing the department are inspirational. Staff feel well supported and part of an effective team. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, standards have generally been maintained and achievement has improved.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Very good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching which stimulates pupils to learn very well.
- Both the leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- GCSE examination results are well above the national average.
- The end of Year 9 teacher assessment results are not made available for use in planning teaching and learning.
- Pupils' achievement is very good.

Commentary

132. In 2003, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show pupils to be attaining standards that are well above the national average. In the same year, all pupils entered for GCSE obtained grades A*-C. This outstanding result is the culmination of a rising trend since the last inspection, since when there has been a 20 percentage points improvement.
133. Standards are well above the national expectations in all years. In Years 7 to 9, pupils can plan a performance using music, props and movement well. They are able to evaluate each other's work using drama terms accurately. In Years 10 and 11, pupils develop these skills to a much higher level. They are able to discuss their work and improvise if need be. They use movement competently to convey meaning and to create some fairly complex scenarios. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress. Over time, pupils progress steadily and their achievement is very good.
134. The quality of teaching and learning are very good, with some outstanding features. Teachers invariably start their lesson by setting very clear targets and using effective questioning strategies to check pupils' understanding. Lessons are always very well planned and teachers are equally well prepared. The result is that pupils understand the routines of starting lessons and are quickly focused on their work. Teachers praise pupils consistently and offer them advice on how to improve their work. Pupils are consequently encouraged to strive in order to excel and receive further commendation. Learning is enjoyable within the context of very good relationships. Teachers structure lessons in a way that allows all to participate regardless of individual capability. Talented pupils get opportunities to excel as a result of this.
135. Both the leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department knows her department well through regular monitoring and informal contacts. She has produced an excellent handbook with excellent schemes of work. The newly qualified teacher is very well supported and looked after. She and her colleagues have succeeded in making drama a popular subject. Although the end of Year 9 teacher assessments are in place, these are not centralised and made accessible to allow staff to use them for formal student tracking and planning teaching. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Progress is now consistently very good and the quality of teaching is also at least very good. GCSE examination results have significantly improved.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory/Good
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well motivated and some have developed good independent learning skills which contribute to their good achievement.
- Standards in Year 9 are below national expectations.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have opportunities to develop skills in music technology.
- Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

136. GCSE results in recent years have been just above national levels with group sizes broadly in line with the national average.
137. At the end of Year 9, standards are below national expectations and lower than those seen at the previous inspection. Pupils play simple patterns on the keyboard with one hand and they compose music in different styles. In listening tasks, pupils are able to identify simple stylistic features, but they do not always use terminology accurately. Pupils do not have opportunities to develop skills in music technology and this adversely affects standards in composing. When pupils join the school in Year 7, their musical experience varies widely and standards overall are below the expectation. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is broadly satisfactory for pupils of all levels of ability. Standards in Year 11 are broadly in line with the national average, which represents good achievement for most. Pupils perform in various styles on a variety of instruments, and they use both acoustic instruments and music technology to realise their compositions. Most pupils are well motivated and work hard at their individual tasks, but not all have completed their coursework tasks.
138. Teaching is always sound and some good lessons were observed. Most lessons are planned with a variety of tasks that help to develop all-round understanding of the topic. Good standards of behaviour are expected and most pupils respond well. They enjoy their lessons and listen carefully to performances by others in the group. In Year 7, pupils are less good at listening to the opinions of others and several indulge in background chatter. In the good lessons, teachers use questioning well to consolidate and extend knowledge, and a Year 9 class was particularly responsive. Short, timed tasks in this lesson also help to maintain a good pace of learning, but some tasks are overlong and higher attainers would benefit from more extension tasks. In the large Year 11 group, the teacher supports individuals with their coursework. Many, although not all, of this group have developed good independent learning skills and work with interest and concentration on their tasks. This makes a considerable contribution to their good progress in the current situation where the department has no subject leader.
139. The inspection came at a difficult time for the department as there has been no subject leader in place for the last five terms and some difficulties in staffing last year. A new subject leader will join the school next term. Lack of subject leadership has adversely affected the organisation and sense of direction of the department. Unlike all other subjects, the music

department does not yet contribute to the new modular curriculum. A wider variety of cultural styles is needed to fully deliver the National Curriculum. Work in Years 7 to 9 is not always marked regularly and pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work. Teachers' assessment of standards at the end of Year 9 last year were over-generous.

140. Instrumental lessons are offered in a variety of instruments and the school supports the pupils following music examination courses by providing these lessons free of charge. This admirable system needs better monitoring as several of these pupils rarely attend these lessons and public money is wasted. The music teachers are working hard to maintain a programme of extra-curricular music and a variety of groups rehearse regularly. Numbers attending the groups are small. The department has ten computers but has chosen to site these in practice rooms where they are only used by Years 10/11 and in the sixth form. Resources, described as inadequate in the last inspection, still need improvement. Keyboards are satisfactory, but there are no headphones, so pupils cannot hear their work clearly when practising in pairs, which slows their progress. Several percussion instruments are in a poor condition and more tuned percussion instruments are needed. Accommodation is adequate but the practice rooms are in a poor state of repair.
141. Not all criticisms from the previous report have been addressed and improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. With a new subject leader in place next term and the necessary support, the department should be able to move forward again.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	YEAR 9	YEAR 11
CURRENT STANDARDS	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE
ACHIEVEMENT	GOOD	GOOD
TEACHING AND LEARNING	SATISFACTORY	GOOD
LEADERSHIP	VERY GOOD	
MANAGEMENT	GOOD	
IMPROVEMENT SINCE PREVIOUS INSPECTION	GOOD	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership provides a clear vision for the development of the subject.
- Standards in Years 10/11 are well above average in the examination course.
- Pupils achieve well through inclusive teaching.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

142. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above average and numbers are rising. Boys performed better than girls.
143. By the end of Year 9, standards are average. Pupils enter the school below average and make good progress in acquiring basic skills. Boys make particularly good progress, becoming very skilful in games, passing and receiving with fluency. By the end of Year 11, basic skills are embedded and pupils can apply their previous learning to more difficult skills and tactics. Some pupils are achieving above national expectation, in both the GCSE examination course and the non-examination core course, showing high levels of accuracy, control and good team play, especially in volleyball. Standards in the GCSE course are well above average, showing deepening understanding of theory.
144. All pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers who are animated and enthusiastic. This creates a climate for participation. Differentiated tasks challenge the more able and support those with special learning needs, although learning in some lessons could be improved by a better match of activities to the age and aptitude of the pupils. Pupils participate well in lessons, have a positive attitude to learning and gain confidence from their success.
145. The department is managed well, with efficient organisation. There is a strong vision within the department and clarity of the contribution to the personal development of pupils. There is insufficient specialist accommodation to support a full range of activities for all and the gymnasium is not well maintained. Improvement has been good. A GCSE course has been established since the last inspection. This has proved popular with pupils, who achieve well.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

BUSINESS STUDIES

Provision in business studies, taught only in Years 10/11, is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	N/A	Above average
Achievement	N/A	Good
Teaching and Learning	N/A	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good, caring teaching ensures the pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well motivated and stretched.
- The department's level of resourcing is unsatisfactory - particular concerns being reference material, working links with local firms and computers.

Commentary

146. GCSE success has been above average for several years. Last year, almost two-thirds of the many Year 11 pupils who entered reached Grade C. These results are better than nationally and, unusually, show little difference between boys and girls.

147. Pupils join the course in Year 10 with below average knowledge of the subject. Most catch up quickly, achieving well or very well, and gain a good grasp of:

- Knowledge, for instance, of the ways and types of business and how business interacts with community and state, including moral and cultural aspects.
- Understanding, for instance, the ability to see patterns and extend them, and to apply business knowledge to new contexts.
- Business skills, for instance, working with accounts and economic models - but not of their business skills with computers.

Boys and girls achieve equally well, as do pupils with additional learning needs.

148. That the pupils learn well and quickly is due to the teaching, which is at least good in all lessons seen, and in nearly half, very good. Particular strengths of lessons are:

- Effective planning, although not all teachers use clear, specific learning objectives - making assessment harder.
- Challenge and encouragement, although this is less effective for those pupils who find the subject particularly easy.
- Variety of activities and high pace, although lessons tend to start late.
- Thorough, thoughtful marking, although pupils often do not know specifically how to improve.

149. Work in business education is well led, and the enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers form a good team - sharing understanding of how to achieve the vision and caringly supporting new, part-time and trainee teachers. The courses are well tailored to pupils' needs and school resources. Resource management is good, even in the significant shortage areas – reference material (teachers develop their own as there is no school library); working links with local firms (despite great effort by the subject leader, the only significant link at the moment is with the Bank of Ireland, and Young Enterprise can no longer run); pupil access to computers in and out of lesson time; and data projectors to allow computer use in lessons.

150. Since the previous inspection, teaching has improved and therefore so too have standards, but concerns with resources remain.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Current standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since previous inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An audit of the curriculum has been undertaken to identify where components of citizenship can be covered in other subjects.
- Pupils like and respond to the active learning strategies.
- There is no clear understanding of what citizenship is amongst staff and pupils.
- Leadership is unclear and there is no detailed action plan.
- There has been no staff training to support teaching of this new curriculum area.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is poor.

Commentary

151. Pupils lack understanding of the nature of citizenship, but are keen to take advantage of opportunities to develop skills of enquiry and to express their views. Pupils' written work is of unsatisfactory quality; it does not show evidence of the development of skills, attitudes or active participation. They do not take pride in their work in this subject.
152. Pupils have a mixed experience of citizenship. Some subjects contribute significantly to learning in this area, but explicit learning opportunities are not evident in planning. In form tutor time, coverage is patchy and uneven. Having had little or no training in this new curriculum area, teachers rely on their generic teaching skills and this is unsatisfactory. Learning focuses on knowledge and there are limited opportunities for developing the skills of enquiry and less still for active citizenship. There is no school council or any planned opportunities for hearing the 'pupil voice'. There is a lack of a clear whole school vision of what citizenship is and how it can contribute to the personal development of the pupils and aid achievement.
153. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Roles and responsibilities for the subject are unclear and, as a result, there is no development plan to move the school from the early stages of development. There is fragmentation and a lack of coherence, especially as some teaching is part of the personal and social education programme. Much of the responsibility falls to form tutors, who are not well prepared for this new role.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 15 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 2003.

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	11	100.0	98.6	36.4	50.2	87.3	87.5
Biology	11	100.0	96.4	18.2	39.2	67.3	78.6
Business studies	14	100.0	98.7	21.4	36.8	62.9	80.1
Chemistry	7	100.0	97.6	57.1	49.0	82.9	84.9
Communication studies	33	100.0	99.4	33.3	37.8	81.8	82.1
Drama	7	100.0	99.5	57.1	40.1	94.3	83.6
Economics	4	100.0	98.8	0.0	52.0	70.0	88.3
English literature	46	100.0	99.5	37.0	46.5	85.2	86.5
Design and technology	5	100.0	97.8	20.0	35.0	68.0	77.9
French	1	100.0	98.8	100.0	51.5	100.0	87.6
History	5	100.0	99.0	60.0	44.6	84.0	84.6
Information and communication technology	34	100.0	95.6	5.6	24.6	66.5	69.5
Mathematics	8	100.0	96.7	25.0	55.6	77.5	88.8
Music	5	100.0	98.8	0.0	38.9	60.0	81.1
Other social studies	70	97.1	97.4	21.4	42.7	72.3	81.8
Physics	6	100.0	96.7	50.0	44.6	86.7	81.7
Vocational studies	6	100.0	91.4	33.3	25.8	70.0	66.5

AS-level results

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	8	87.5	80.1	12.5	23.7	26.3	29.9
Biology	4	75.0	65.2	25.0	11.1	25.0	20.6
Business studies	17	70.6	76.4	11.8	16.3	24.1	26.2
Chemistry	3	33.3	72.7	33.3	13.9	20.0	24.1
Communication studies	13	69.2	86.4	7.7	23.8	23.1	32.0
Economics	6	50.0	73.6	16.7	20.1	21.7	26.4
English literature	7	100.0	85.9	42.9	19.1	42.9	30.2
French	3	33.3	78.2	0.0	18.9	10.0	27.6
Design and technology	7	85.7	74.9	42.9	15.1	37.1	25.3
Geography	1	0.0	74.3	0.0	19.8	0.0	26.5
German	1	100.0	81.5	0.0	19.3	20.0	28.9
History	8	75.0	80.7	12.5	19.5	28.8	28.6
Information and communication technology	28	78.6	67.0	7.1	10.9	22.1	21.4
Mathematics	6	50.0	61.9	0.0	17.1	18.3	22.1
Other social studies	17	64.7	69.7	5.9	16.7	18.8	24.1
Physics	8	37.5	68.6	0.0	14.4	8.8	22.7
Vocational studies	14	64.3	62.8	21.4	12.3	23.6	20.8

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature

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

	Year 13
Current standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their subject very well and communicate an enthusiasm for literature.
- Leadership and staff teamwork are very good.
- Students are well motivated. Their achievement is very good.
- Resources to support independent learning are not sufficiently developed.
- Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are limited.

Commentary

154. A-level results were above the national average in 2003. There has been a consistent pattern of 100 per cent success at grades A-E in recent years, but this year some 40 per cent gained the highest grades of A-B. This was a significant improvement. The great majority of students reached or exceeded their target grade in the examination. Results at AS-level were also above average, with over half gaining A and B grades. Again, results were better than in 2002.
155. Achievement is very good for current students. They contribute well to fluent and mature class discussions, showing high levels of interest in the moral, social and spiritual issues raised in literature studied. Standards in Year 13 coursework are above average. Students take the opportunity to reflect on and revise essays, so that final drafts represent their best work. Writing by higher attaining students, for example, studies of character and motivation in *Othello* and analysis of modern poetry, is informed by a sensitive personal response and well supported by detailed textual reference. Essays show a good awareness of the historical and cultural background to set texts. The work of lower attaining students shows less capacity to evaluate style and technique, and is sometimes marred by poor expression. Students make good use of word processing skills to present their coursework to a high standard.
156. Teaching is very good. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and characterised by positive working relationships between staff and students. A range of effective teaching methods is used to create a successful balance between teacher input and student contribution. Above all, teachers know their subject very well, and are able to communicate their own enthusiasm for literature. This clearly enhances students' response to the subject overall. In the best lessons, learning is highly interactive, with many opportunities for whole class and group discussions. Coursework is assessed promptly, with detailed written comments that evaluate achievement constructively against examination grade criteria. Teachers are also prepared to give additional personal help and guidance where it is needed. Teachers expect students to read widely and research topics, but they often find adaptation to sixth-form study challenging. Some students feel disadvantaged by limited study materials and lack of a school library. Guidelines and resources to support independent learning could be further developed, particularly to help students at the beginning of their courses. There are also relatively few opportunities to broaden students' horizons through theatre trips, and other external visits or study days.
157. Leadership and management of English in the sixth form are very good. Planning for the subject is thorough. Teachers collaborate closely to share good practice and are committed to continuing improvement. New A and AS-level courses have been introduced successfully since the last inspection. Examination results have improved in recent years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

158. Students' communication skills are above average in most sixth-form subjects. Teachers provide good support, making many opportunities for debate and discussion in English literature, drama, history and modern foreign languages. Students reach high standards in written coursework in science, law, history and psychology, in particular. Essays are well supported by effective research and use of detailed evidence. The systematic approach adopted in law to developing understanding of technical terms and reasoned analysis is very helpful to students in presenting and exploring arguments in essays. Standards are satisfactory in economics and business studies, though there could be higher expectations for the development of written work and exploration of ideas in these subjects. Lack of library provision affects standards of learning in history. There is not enough classroom discussion in mathematics, art and design, and music. Students for whom English is an additional language, and who now have advanced knowledge of the language, by now have all the skills needed to achieve well across the curriculum.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by Year 13, in line with the abilities of the students.
- Teaching is good and students progress well, especially those who continue to Year 13, although not enough help is always given in Year 12 to develop students' confidence in speaking the language.
- The department has very good resources.

Commentary

159. Comparisons with national standards cannot be made because very few students have taken French A-level in recent years. Only four candidates have entered in the past three years, one of whom gained a grade A, one B and two D. The number choosing to continue with French in the sixth form is rising, with seven in the current Year 12, a majority of whom are male. Currently, there are three candidates for the subject in Year 13 and their standards are above average. Students' achievement is good overall. In Year 12, they listen carefully, but lack the confidence in lessons to make oral contributions that last more than a few words. In Year 13, students speak confidently and work to capacity during lessons.
160. Teaching and learning are good. Students speak highly of their teachers, who use a range of interesting materials. Most are from the Internet, so they are up-to-date, relevant and appeal to the interests of students. The resources available, which include satellite television, are very good and have the potential to improve students' learning. Teachers respond well to the students' work, providing guidance and support on an individual basis when required, helped greatly by the small group sizes. A weakness is that in some lessons not enough attention is paid to strategies for enabling students to develop confidence in expressing themselves in French. This applies particularly to students in Year 12, who have less experience of travelling to France and communicating with native French speakers.
161. The leadership and management of the course are satisfactory. The course is planned to ensure coverage of all the necessary topic and vocabulary areas. Care is taken to ensure that each member of staff, who teaches the course, is aware of the areas they have to cover. There is no development plan for the sixth-form course and no plans for taking students to France. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, including those who start the course from modest GCSE grades.
- Teachers' subject expertise and support are well received by students.
- The use by students of information and communication technology is underdeveloped.

Commentary

162. Results in the 2003 A-level examinations were below the national average and below the previous year's well above average results. Low numbers make comparisons difficult. All eight students gained pass grades A-D.
163. The department exercises an inclusive recruitment policy at A-level and students are also attracted from neighbouring schools. Students' overall needs are well met, including some with modest GCSE grades. As a result, achievement is good. The written work of students in Year 13 indicates full coverage of work, with note taking forming a prominent feature of their work. This provides a very good resource for revision and reflects the positive attitude students have to this subject. Competent work was seen in books using the binomial theorem and functions, which were well explained, applied and clearly understood. Year 13 students are currently well placed with grades already obtained to secure above average results at A2-level. The use of information and communication technology does not feature in any work seen.
164. Teaching is good, it is well planned with good subject knowledge and explanations begin from first principles. Teachers are well respected. The additional support that they give is well received and inspires confidence. As a result, the climate for learning is positive. Students introduced to scalars displayed a secure grasp of the lesson objectives with very clear use of prior learning. Some students in Year 12 identify difficulties with elements of their work and some acknowledge that they need to work hard in order to achieve respectable results. Nevertheless, the majority agree that their decision to study mathematics was an appropriate one. They recognise the support it gives to their study of other subjects.
165. The leadership and management are good with a competent core team of committed teachers. The head of department is anxious to provide a teaching programme to meet the needs of all students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

166. There is no specific policy for mathematics across the sixth form, though individual subjects help students improve their technical language and higher-level analytical and evaluative skills

in the range of numerical work required for A-level work. This is particularly seen and identified by students in accounts, biology, business studies, chemistry, economics and physics.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was on biology. Chemistry and physics were sampled.

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge contributes significantly to students achieving well.
- Very good relationships and very positive student attitudes to learning support good teaching and learning.
- Insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning to share good practice and to secure consistency of agreed practice across the department.

Commentary

167. The 2003 A-level results for both male and female students were below average when compared with the results for all students in maintained schools. AS-level results were above average, which represents an improvement on the results achieved over recent years. Students did not do as well in biology as they did in their other subjects, but their examination results represent good achievement.
168. Most students in Year 12 are achieving the higher expectations of the AS-level course, with higher attaining students designing and carrying out investigations well, though practical skills for lower attaining students are not sufficiently developed. In Year 13, most students are achieving well. They use text and ICT well to support their independent learning. Very positive attitudes to learning and good relationships prevail. Students support each other very well and are confident that they will achieve their ambitions.
169. Very well qualified and experienced teachers plan their lessons well, making very good use of time and resources so that all students are challenged to do their best. The support they give to individual students during lunchtimes is significant to their achievements and is much appreciated.
170. The biology team works hard to raise standards. Leadership provides a good role model for students. The use of assessment data in planning is well developed. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning does not happen as a part of the drive to improve standards so there are inconsistencies in practice and in teacher expectations of students within the department. Students do not have access to a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities specific to biology.

Chemistry

171. The 2003 A-level results were average. During the inspection, a scrutiny of student files and coursework was completed and one Year 13 lesson was observed. Good teaching, and the fact that most students are competent mathematicians, result in students achieving well and reaching standards in line with expectations.

Physics

172. A scrutiny of student files was completed and one Year 12 class was observed. Good teaching, and very good attitudes to learning, result in students achieving well and reaching standards in line with expectations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-focused, motivating guidance from knowledgeable teachers leads to above average standards.
- Not all students have the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding to the expected level because there is insufficient use of ICT across subjects.

Commentary

173. In recent years, increasing numbers have studied an A-level course in ICT. Most have passed, though few have reached the top grades of A and B. Results have been above the national average, especially at the end of Year 12, and most students have achieved well.
174. There is open access to the traditional and new (vocational) A-level GCE courses and, because of this, the students' grasp of the subject when they join is below average. However, the majority, who work hard and with good will, achieve well, learn quickly, and reach good standards by the end. Their skills in developing ICT-based systems for solving real life problems are often of professional quality. Most gain a solid knowledge of the uses and abuses of ICT in the outside world, as well as a reasonable understanding of why ICT users work the way they do.
175. The students' good learning is because their teachers have a deep and up-to-date understanding of computing, challenge them to work hard and thoughtfully, and use a variety of techniques and resources in lessons to keep them thinking. The teachers also encourage the students to work effectively on their own (including with high quality "home made" textbooks) and also to collaborate when appropriate.

176. The subject is well led and managed; the tightly knit team of teachers has a clear vision of what students at this level need and how to achieve that. The students receive good support as they pass through the course and good career guidance. Since the previous inspection, progress has been good as regards developing and resourcing sixth-form courses. Students do not make much use of the school's facilities outside of lesson time.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

177. As in the main school, students of few other subjects in the sixth form make much use of computers and digital communication as tools for better learning and better presentation of work; nor do most teachers use them much to improve the quality of teaching in lessons. The ICT teachers are prepared to help students to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum on request, but requests are apparently rare. As in the main school, there are, as yet, no systems for monitoring, co-ordinating and developing such work across the school.

HUMANITIES

Courses are offered in geography, history, law, politics, psychology and sociology. The focus of the inspection was on history and law. Sociology was sampled.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is good.
- Teaching quality is uneven.
- There is not enough access to book resources or information and communication technology.

Commentary

178. A-level results reached the national average in 2003, showing a significant improvement on the previous year, when results were well below average.

179. In Year 12, students' achievement is satisfactory in response to teaching, which varies widely in quality. Standards are average. In a very good lesson, students progressed very well in analysing how individuals affected the outcome of the Crusades. They had plotted the ups and downs of Richard the Lionheart, Philip of France, Saladin and Frederick Barbarossa and marshalled their arguments effectively to take the part of these individuals, enjoying the cut and thrust of debate. Writing is of an average standard, mainly directed to gaining marks in the examination. The students continue to be heavily reliant on standard school texts, printouts and worksheets for their sources, which constrains their achievement.

180. In Year 13, students make satisfactory progress overall. Standards continue to be satisfactory. In a lesson on Ireland from 1785 to 1881, students looked at the figure of Parnell and at Gladstone's second ministry. In this lesson, they learned references by heart, so limiting their knowledge of sources and inhibiting further reading. Students took

effective notes in the lesson to provide a scaffold for the examination answers to which writing in the subject is reduced. Skills of historical inquiry and historiography are still seriously restricted by the lack of ready access to a library on-site and to information and communication technology.

181. Teaching and learning vary widely but are satisfactory overall. In the best lessons seen, the teacher's excellent knowledge allowed him to make good use of a range of resources. These were used to support his imaginative use of a range of active learning techniques. His enthusiasm, brisk pace and high expectation provided a counterbalance to a weaker lesson in which reliance on spoon feeding information limited historical inquiry, debate and conceptual understanding.
182. Leadership is good. There is a drive for improvement with good ideas on how this can be effective. Management is satisfactory. Teachers are well supported. A complete curricular review has been monitored effectively. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and in developing a range of teaching and learning styles, including a house style for lesson delivery to aid lesson planning and help students' learning. However, thus far, improvement has not been sufficient, with teaching not consistently good and standards having declined.

Law

Provision in law is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The GCE A-level results in 2003 were well above the national average.
- The leadership of the department is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students respond very well and fully enjoy studying law.
- Applying knowledge of the law is relatively weaker than the students' knowledge of the law.

Commentary

183. In 2003, the GCE AS-level results were above the national average. The GCE A-level results were well above, with the overwhelming majority of students gaining a pass grade.
184. Standards are well above the national expectations in both the AS- and A-level. The recent modular results for the AS-level show over two thirds of the students gaining a pass grade with a significant number gaining the higher grades. Currently, the A-level candidates are all targeted to attain a pass grade in 2004. One further measure of the subject's success is that several students from last year's cohort have gone on to read law at university.

185. Students have a high level of knowledge of the law. They are able to talk about Parliamentary Acts and to cite cases to support their knowledge. They are slightly less secure in applying the law that they know. Students enjoy debating issues of law and they get quite passionate about case law. Overall, students can write well and accurately using their knowledge of the law and the more capable can write about how the law is applied in real life.
186. The quality of teaching is very good. Law lessons are rigorous, enjoyable and productive. Teachers invariably start their lesson with a proper recap that then naturally moves on to setting the lesson targets. Each lesson is structured in such a way as to allow students to build slowly on to what they already know. Teachers use interesting and often amusing scenarios to encourage students to apply their knowledge of the law. The result is that students are interested and keen to debate issues. Relationships are outstanding. The teachers' subject knowledge is outstanding. This results in students receiving very good support in moving their argument and their essay writing forward. Teachers encourage students to look carefully at their work and to evaluate it. Assessment is very good with clear advice given on how to improve each piece of work. This leads students to improve their essay writing considerably. Students are given opportunities to take part in visits to magistrates' courts as well as to the Old Bailey.
187. Both the leadership and management of the subject are very good. The person in charge of the subject is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and innovative. She has produced outstanding documentation. The law area is attractive and displays are colourful and often eye catching. Students feel that they can approach the two law teachers about any aspect of their work. Examination results are carefully analysed and modular schemes of work have been amended to take into account the students' need to focus on the application of law. All aspects of the subject performance are regularly and effectively monitored.

Sociology

188. One year 12 lesson was sampled. This was a good lesson because the teacher motivated the students well and provided high levels of support for the individual learning needs of students. Working relationships between students and teacher were very positive and were a contributory factor to good progress being made in the lesson. Standards are below the national average reflecting the relatively low entry standards required of students on this course.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Courses are offered in graphic product design, product design and textiles. The focus was on the Product Design course. Provision is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- AS-level results in 2003 were poor.

- There are comparatively low standards of graphical communication and insufficient rigour in design work due to an insufficient emphasis on teaching design and graphical skills.
- Progress in making is good.
- The use of the work of other designers as a stimulus for developing ideas is good.
- There is insufficient use of self-assessment to raise standards and improve progress.

Commentary

189. The A-level results in 2003 were below average and the students did not maintain the standards they had achieved at AS-level in 2002. Results at AS-level in 2003 were low, with many students not achieving an A-E grade.
190. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are currently below average, but most students are doing as well as in their other subjects. Standards are best in manufacturing, where students are well motivated and work with confidence. They mix materials sympathetically when developing and detailing ideas and draw well on their knowledge of twentieth century designers. However, their design work is often of below average standard with insufficient rigour in their evaluation, development and detailing of ideas. Graphical work is also of below average standard and most students are not as far ahead in their coursework as they should be.
191. Teaching has been disrupted by changes in staff and the absence of the school's one subject specialist for a significant part of last term. Good support is provided for individuals in lessons and very good written feedback is provided for students with clear guidance on how to improve their product study. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on teaching design and graphical skills and on providing exemplification of the standards of work required to reach the students' target grades.
192. The leadership and management of the course have recently improved, but course planning needs more structure. There is insufficient access to computer-aided design and manufacture and accommodation is currently unsatisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Courses are offered in art and design, drama, media studies and music. All were focused upon in this inspection.

Art and design

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The students' very good attitudes contribute positively to their learning.
- There is a wide variety of courses available to suit a range of students' needs.

- A good level of challenge is provided, encouraging more diverse responses to themes.
- The quality of research is sometimes more exciting than the final pieces.

Commentary

193. In 2003, A-level results were average, an improvement on 2002 when results were well below average. Students achieved much as expected and as well as they did in their other subjects.
194. By the end of Year 13, students' work is above average. Many achieve better than expected, as do high attaining students in Year 12. Drawing and painting are generally of a high quality and sketchbooks are used well to record, develop and evaluate ideas. Recent fresh approaches have led to exciting new concepts, challenging more traditional themes and resulting in perceptive, thought provoking work.
195. Strengths in teaching lie in the ability to challenge preconceptions, encouraging students to be adventurous and innovative, resulting in unusual and dynamic final pieces and enabling students to relate their own work closely to that of artists. Skills of painting, drawing, sculpture, graphics and textiles are taught well. In some cases, however, the quality of research is more exciting than the final piece. Computers are used, but not enough to develop ideas creatively.
196. Courses are co-ordinated very well. An effective teaching team has been created, building on their strengths to ensure a breadth of experience in approach, as well as in a variety of media. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

197. A-level results are consistently well above the national average.
198. In Year 12, standards are well above average. Students' achievement in collaborative skills and in their capacity to work independently is very good. Their ensemble work is of a high standard and this helps them to learn the skills of theatrical performance. They define naturalistic acting, and apply some of the philosophies of Stanislavsky to their

work. They make effective notes on rehearsal techniques. In their study for performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, they realise that when learning lines they should be experimenting with inflections and other vocal techniques to come to an interpretation.

199. In Year 13, standards are also well above average. Achievement continues to be very good. In a lesson in which students were rehearsing a scene from *Kindertransport*, they achieved very well in the literary analysis of the script and in adapting and cutting it to better illustrate the theme of secrets implicit in the play. They readily translated the words into the physical realities of moving dramatic performance.
200. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. Lessons are informed by the teacher's very good knowledge and professional standards are evident in all dramatic activity. Teachers provide good, specific tuition on all aspects of the subject, from limbering up the voice to improve articulation to making important directional decisions with regard to representation. Physical drama, especially, is particularly well taught and managed. Very good opportunities for collaboration and independent work continue to be offered to students, who make very good use of them in their planning, rehearsal and presentation. Students are highly self-motivated. Drama teachers provide an ambient, evocative, highly constructive atmosphere for the very good promotion and development of drama skills.
201. Leadership is very good, dedicated to ensuring students reach the highest possible standards. It is reflective, highly self-critical and provides clear vision. Management, which is confident and well informed, is very good. The skills of all teachers are developed very well and student teachers are welcomed and supported.

Media: communications and production

Provision in A-level media: communications and production is **very good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	N/A	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good.
- Achievement is very good.
- Resources are excellent and well used by a wide range of students.
- A very high level of technical competence is available to students, both in and outside lessons.
- Staffing is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

202. A-level results reached the national average in 2003, an improvement on the previous year, when standards were below. Girls have outperformed boys for a good many years.
203. In Year 13, standards are average, although students have made progress, and continue to achieve very well. Students show that they are media literate in their sound knowledge of textual analysis, although their writing skills do not always show this to best effect. Their oral work is good. In their study of media censorship, for example, they showed a good knowledge of censorship organisations and were able to build key arguments in the censorship debate, eventually coming to a personal opinion, which they were able to express.
204. Standards are good in Year 12. Students' level of achievement is very good, some of it from a very low base, in response to good and very good lessons informed by an excellent level of technical competence. Collaborative and independent learning was very well promoted in one lesson as students worked successfully in small groups to create the opening sequence of a thriller. They translated their initial ideas, by means of capable use of a storyboard, into a treatment which synchronised theme, characterisation and sequence of images very well, showing a very good level of achievement. They made very good use of some excellent resources to create the finished film. This lesson was rigorous in its emphasis on the need for the students to plan their work and set targets for production, and on the necessity of understanding the techniques of film narrative and the conventions of the genre.
205. Teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes very good. Teachers' knowledge is of a high order and they have up-to-date technical knowledge. Careful planning, very clear objectives which are shared with the students and a high level of individual attention, both in lessons and at other times during the school day, are key to student success. Long-term staff absence, unresolved during the week of inspection, is, however, having an adverse effect on continuity, with an inevitable decline in the quality of

students' learning. There is, as yet, no technical support, which would free teachers to give a yet higher level of individual attention to students.

206. Leadership is very good. There is a drive for improvement and a strong sense of direction, particularly in the development and use of resources and the enrichment of the curriculum. There are strong links with the community and professional media organisations. Numbers taking the subject have risen significantly. Management is good and has resulted in improved teaching since the last inspection. The present staffing difficulties have been well managed to minimise the effect on students' progress. Enrichment of the curriculum is a significant strength.

GNVQ course in media and production

207. There is good provision. Standards are high and achievement is very good, with a significant number of students doing better than their targets predict. Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and have clear aims and objectives. The teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good and resources are appropriate to the learning needs of the group.

Music

Provision in music technology is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are well motivated, enjoy the course and all pass the examination.
- Resources for music technology are very good.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

208. In recent years, a 100 per cent pass rate has been sustained at both AS and A-levels of examination although most students do not achieve the highest grades.
209. Students' recording skills are satisfactory and they understand how to position microphones for different instruments and how to achieve panning and other effects. The finer details of the mixing desk, 'patching-in', for example, are not understood by all. Skills for using the sequencing programme vary from satisfactory to good and most students produce balanced compositions and cover versions. Not all details of the editing functions are securely known. Composing skills vary. Some ideas are imaginative, but a few students are limited by their knowledge of harmony and structure. Logs to accompany the practical work need more detail. Standards are average and achievement in both Years 12 and 13 is satisfactory.

210. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and a good lesson was seen. Students enjoy the courses and spend a great deal of time working on their arrangements and compositions. Students support each other very well, sharing knowledge and technical understanding, and this contributes to their progress being better than expected during the current staffing difficulties.
211. The inspection came at a difficult time for the department as there has been no subject leader in post for the last five terms, which has affected organisation and development of the subject. A new subject leader will join the school next term. Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory. Both music and music technology courses were offered at the time of the last inspection, but only music technology is offered now. Nine boys are studying AS- and A2-level courses. Training for the subject teacher will shortly take place. The music technology course is very well resourced and students have access to the equipment in their private study time. They do not have an opportunity to develop skills in music technology before Year 10, which affects their skill levels. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Courses are offered in leisure and tourism and physical education. The focus of the inspection was on the latter.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 12
Current standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- AS-level has been established with a buoyant number of students.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Students achieve well through animated teaching.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

212. This is the first year that the advanced level examination course has been run. Students have entered the course with good standards at GCSE.
213. Students are working to an above average standard. Written work is detailed and they show good understanding of the complex physiological aspects of the course and the political influences of sport. They work well together in pairs, pooling their knowledge, and have made good progress during the year. The absence of a designated classroom is hindering progress as students have no central learning resource for reference or a stimulating environment with good quality displays. The nomadic nature of classes to

access whiteboards is unsatisfactory for work at this level. Standards in practical lessons are very good, with some talented sportspeople showing high levels of skill, control and tactical awareness.

214. Teachers are very knowledgeable and plan their lessons very well to include a variety of teaching and learning styles. In theory lessons, they use whiteboards and computers confidently, providing detailed resources for the students. Students are confident to make contributions, to express their views and support each other well. In practical lessons, pace is very good and students show a high level of skill and accuracy.
215. Leadership is very good and the two staff delivering the course work well as a team, delivering the aspects of the course with which they feel the most confident, so that the learning experiences of the students are of the highest quality that they can provide.

BUSINESS

Courses are offered in accounts, business studies and economics. The focus of the inspection was on business studies, with the other two courses being sampled.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Current standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students often continue with business related courses on completion of their course here.
- Contacts with businesses are not as extensive as they might be.
- Lack of access to information and communication technology is having an effect on students' learning.

Commentary

216. Standards of attainment in the A-level examinations in 2003 are in line with national standards. All students achieved pass grades, with a significant percentage achieving the higher grades of C and above. The results show an upward trend. Many of the students achieved better than their predicted grades.
217. Overall, the standards of attainment seen during the inspection are broadly in line with standards expected. Students show a sound awareness of many aspects of business, including recruitment and production. Many can talk with fluency about human resources, taxes and the economy. Some students are able to make presentations in lessons, though some are better at it than others. Students who have English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. The achievement of the students is good, and often very good, due to the demands made on them in much of the teaching.
218. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All lessons are well prepared and the objectives of the lessons are clear to the students as well as the teachers. The teaching is done with conviction and a high degree of expertise. The teachers are clearly confident in the subject matter and this provides a solid basis for learning. Occasionally, the teaching is insufficiently simplified for the less able students. Sometimes, resources such as information and communication technology, whiteboard and texts are not used to their best advantage and there is too much reliance on the teacher doing a verbal presentation. Contacts with businesses are limited and so students do not always have the opportunity to put their learning into real-life contexts. Otherwise, the high demands which are made in the teaching ensure that the learning and achievement are good and, often, very good. Students respond positively to their learning and they are attentive and well behaved. Some information and communication technology is used in the AVCE

course, but lack of access to information and communication technology is limiting the student learning in the A-level courses.

219. The leadership and management are good. The staffing is good. The accommodation is satisfactory. The resources are unsatisfactory. No particular issues were raised at the last inspection.

Economics

220. Provision is very good. All students passed the public examination last year. The teaching is very good and is characterised by strong subject knowledge. Significant demands are made on the students in the lessons and so their learning and achievement are strong.

Accountancy

221. Provision is very good. In the one lesson sampled, standards were in line with the national average. The very good teaching engenders very positive student response, contributing to good achievement.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

No courses are offered in this curriculum area.

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

