

INSPECTION REPORT

BINGLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Bingley

LEA area: Bradford

Unique reference number: 107439

Headteacher: Mr John Patterson

Lead inspector: Mr George Knights

Dates of inspection: 29th September to 3rd October 2003

Inspection number: 259351

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1853
School address:	Keighley Road Bingley West Yorkshire
Postcode:	BD16 2RS
Telephone number:	01274 807700
Fax number:	01274 807749
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr James Britton
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bingley Grammar School is a Beacon School situated in West Yorkshire. It is a mixed 11 to 18 comprehensive school catering for over 1800 pupils, making it much larger than average. Its pupils live in Bingley and surrounding villages and most are able to walk to school. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average. The school is popular and is over-subscribed. Many pupils come from homes with above average socio-economic circumstances with above average employment levels in the area. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low when compared with the national average. Around 5 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but only four pupils have English as an additional language. The number on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number with Statements of Special Educational Need. Over two thirds of pupils remain in the sixth form on completion of compulsory schooling. Pupil turnover is low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3286	George Knights	Lead inspector	
10173	Catherine Hinds	Lay inspector	
33160	Natalia Power	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics
32289	Tony Lydon	Team inspector	Science; biology
18854	Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Design and technology
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages; French
8070	Joe Haves	Team inspector	Geography
32211	Brendan Geoghegan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
8360	Frederick Peacock	Team inspector	Music; citizenship education
3534	Ann Braithwaite	Team inspector	Physical education; sports studies
22458	Gilbert McGinn	Team inspector	History; business education
15940	Norman Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design
21971	John Glennon	Team inspector	Religious education
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Special educational needs; psychology
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Chemistry
3266	Peter Baker	Team inspector	Media studies

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited

102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bingley Grammar School is a **good and rapidly improving school**. Standards are **well above average and are improving at a faster rate than nationally**. The school offers a satisfactory education for all its pupils, with many good features. Leadership of the school is **very good** and management is **good**. The school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils achieve very good standards in national tests and examinations;
- the headteacher's outstanding leadership, strongly supported by the governing body, ensures a clarity of vision and sense of purpose in the school;
- successful management of growth and change has ensured continuity of learning for pupils and students;
- teaching is good in most of the school but is not good enough in modern foreign languages or personal, social and health education;
- levels of consultation and communication throughout the school community are not good enough;
- not enough attention is currently paid to developing pupils' personal development;
- because pupils like coming to school, attendance levels are very good;
- the assessment of pupils' work and the use made of assessment information are not good enough;
- financial management to support the school's growth and development is very good.

The school has changed significantly in character and size since the previous inspection and so comparisons between now and then are unreliable. Since the school became an 11 to 18 comprehensive in 2001, standards have risen and a sharp focus has been placed on improving the quality of teaching and learning. A strong culture of self-review is being put into place as a means of bringing about further improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils at the end of Year 9 gained results in national tests in 2003 that were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. These results were well above what would have been expected, given pupils' attainment on arrival in the school. Pupils build well on their prior attainment in Years 10 and 11 to gain impressive results at the end of Year 11. Sixth form students make good progress and gain well above average results at A/AS level. Results in 2003 at all stages show that the school has maintained its trend of improvement over recent years. In GCSE and GCE A level examinations, girls do better than boys, with differences similar to those nationally.

Year 11 and 13 results

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

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

Pupils and students currently in the school achieve well, particularly in the sixth form. This is because sixth form teachers have made a deliberate attempt to involve students more actively in their learning. This is less common in the teaching of younger pupils.

Pupils and students are encouraged to adopt good attitudes to all aspects of school life. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. The contribution made to their personal development is satisfactory, though with weaknesses in promoting their spiritual development. Attendance to school is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education in the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good in both the main school and the sixth form. Sixth form students are encouraged to be actively involved in lessons and to take responsibility for aspects of their learning. This aspect of teaching and learning is less well developed in some lessons in the main school. The assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent. The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form, with good enrichment through extra-curricular activities. The school does not comply with requirements for citizenship education for all pupils or for religious education for most of the older pupils.

The school's provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils and sixth form students is satisfactory, as are the procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for involving pupils in the school's work and development are unsatisfactory. Pupils are not encouraged to take enough responsibility for themselves. Arrangements for involving pupils and students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are unsatisfactory. The school has established good partnerships with other schools. The school has not established good working relationships with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, **leadership and management of the school are good.** Strong, clear leadership has provided the vision and drive to raise standards whilst good management has ensured the successful growth of the school. Very effective use has been made of external agencies and grants in driving forward improvement. Heads of faculty and subject leaders are increasingly effective at bringing about improvements to teaching and learning through review and self-evaluation. The governing body has played a strong role in helping shape the vision and direction of the school. Governors' prudent financial management and oversight of developments has been good. However, the school does not fully comply with its statutory requirements and, therefore, governance must be judged unsatisfactory against OFSTED's grading criteria.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school. They comment that their children like attending and applaud the good progress that pupils make. Inspectors agree with the concerns of a significant minority about the way the school communicates with them about individual pupils and school life in general. Pupils recognise that they are expected to work hard and do their best. However, questionnaire responses and discussions with pupils highlight a number of areas of concern. Inspectors judge behaviour in the school to be good but occasionally pupils' natural exuberance spills over into actions which can be intimidating to others. Pupils feel they do not all have an adult to turn to for help. Inspectors note that the current tutorial system and pastoral framework does not promote sufficiently secure relationships. The school is already dealing with pupil concerns that their views are not heard and has introduced a school council which has made a promising start.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the arrangements for consultation and communication throughout the school community;
- pay greater attention to pupils' personal development and especially to enabling them to take more responsibility for their learning;
- improve assessment arrangements, so that information is used better to plan lessons and courses and so that pupils are more aware of how well they are doing;
- improve teaching in modern foreign languages and personal, social and health education;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a course in religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11;
- to provide an adequate course in citizenship education for all pupils;
- to enable all pupils and students to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is good and improving. Standards are well above average and improving. Students select their courses from a wide and effective range on offer. Teaching is good, enabling students to learn successfully and achieve well. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory and the sixth form is cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- students do very well in examinations at the end of their sixth form study;
- teachers enable students to take significant responsibility for their own learning;
- students select from a wide range of courses and enrichment of the curriculum is good;
- new and revitalised leadership and management of the sixth form are providing a vision for the future but have had too little time to effect any significant improvements;
- the work of tutors in supporting students' academic progress is under-developed.

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 for English is good . It is better in English language, where teaching is lively and stimulating, than in English literature. Provision in French is good . Standards are above average because teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge for work at this level. Students work hard and show good independent learning skills. They achieve well in relation to GCSE grades.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . Teaching is good and often very good. Students achieve results at A level consistently in line with the national average. However, whilst students' attitudes are good, they show little real enthusiasm for mathematics.
Science	Provision in biology is very good . Standards are well above average as a result of very good teaching which embraces a wide range of approaches. Provision in chemistry is good . In particular, teaching is good, though with a stronger focus on helping students gain good subject knowledge than a detailed understanding of the subject.
Information and communication technology Humanities	Provision is good . Standards are above average and students are developing their independence in the use of computers. Provision in geography is good . Standards are average and teaching is effective, enabling students to achieve well. Provision in psychology is very good . Standards are well above average because students experience very good teaching which enables them to make very good progress.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is very good . Standards are above average on both food technology and product design courses. Standards on the design course are average. Teaching is good overall and provides regular monitoring of students work that gives them clear guidance on how to improve. Facilities for independent study are very good and well used by students to develop their coursework.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and in media studies is very good . Standards in art are above average and improving. Very good teaching fosters excellent student attitudes which enable them to make very good progress. In media studies teachers establish excellent relationships with students which provide a basis for very good teaching and effective learning.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in sports studies is good . Achievement is good because students respond well to good teaching. Assessment is not yet used well in planning for individual improvement.
Business	Provision is good . Standards are above average and students adopt very good attitudes and learn well.

General education

Provision in general studies is **very good**. Standards are rapidly improving because imaginative and often inspirational teaching helps almost all students achieve consistently well. Leadership and management are very good.

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

The provision of support, advice and guidance for sixth form students is satisfactory. The school does not, however, successfully involve students enough in the wider life of the school. The views of students are not sought in an organised way so that students do not feel fully valued.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have been successful in appointing a new and experienced head of sixth form. He has a clear vision for developing the sixth form through the greater involvement of tutors. The work of the deputy head of the sixth form successfully strengthens sixth form management.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy being at the school and comment that the courses suit their ability and career plans. They value the good support given within individual subjects. They are aware that the framework for providing regular personal and individual support and encouragement is not sufficiently secure so that they do not all have an adult in school who knows them well. Students say they only have a limited range of enrichment activities. Inspectors judge these activities as good, especially within particular subject choices.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses – Main school

Results at the end of Year 9 in national tests are **well above average** and improving at the same rate as results nationally. Results in GCSE examinations have been improving at a faster rate than nationally in recent years and are **above average**. Pupils achieve **well** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving standards have been maintained during a time of major change in the school.
- Results in 2003 were better than in 2002 at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11 and exceeded the school's targets.
- There is too much variation from subject to subject in GCSE results.
- The most able pupils in Year 9 do not do as well in English as they should.
- Achievement in modern foreign languages and citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- By the end of Year 9, pupils achieve better in mathematics than they do in English and science.
- By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve particularly well in design and technology, but achievement at this stage is unsatisfactory in religious education.

Commentary

1. The fact that the school has maintained a pattern of improvement in examination and test results during the past three years is remarkable. During that time the school has almost doubled in size and has changed from a school for pupils aged 13 to 18 to one for pupils aged 11 to 18. Incisive leadership has ensured that the focus on maintaining academic standards has not been lost as many new teachers and pupils have been integrated into the school community.
2. Results in national tests in 2002 were well above average in each of English, mathematics and science, with boys and girls performing equally well. In English, the most able pupils did not perform as well as expected. Results for all three subjects in 2003 were broadly similar to those in the previous year. Careful attention to ensuring that pupils are well prepared for national tests has been a major factor in ensuring that, in recent years, results have been improving at a similar rate to those nationally. The fact that all pupils make good progress is borne out by the fact that, in 2002 and 2003, results were well above those in schools with similar patterns of prior attainment.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.0 (36,6)	33.3
mathematics	38.7 (37.3)	36.2
science	36.3 (36.9)	33.7

There were 274 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Pupils currently in Year 9 are working at above average standards and are achieving well at this early stage in the year. There is some variation in achievement levels from subject to subject, however. Pupils achieve particularly well during Years 7 to 9 in science, where teaching styles engage and motivate pupils well. Standards are particularly good in mathematics because teachers successfully use teaching methods that are part of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. These methods engage and interest pupils who, in turn, work with enthusiasm and commitment. Pupils' achievement is good in most other subjects, though it is unsatisfactory in these years in modern foreign languages. This is partly because the

organisation of the curriculum at this stage is poor, but mainly because teaching is not good enough to enable pupils to learn the languages they study effectively.

4. Throughout the school, pupils do not achieve well enough in citizenship education. Two factors contribute to this situation. The subject has been introduced into the curriculum nationally in the past two years, during which time the school has had other major priorities to attend to. Consequently there is not, as yet, an effective strategy for checking on the contribution that other subjects are making to citizenship education. Many elements of an effective citizenship programme could be taught within a personal, health and social education programme. Currently this programme, though taught in school, has not been reviewed against the requirements for citizenship and so many gaps remain.
5. GCSE results have, in recent years, been improving at a faster rate than nationally. They were above average in 2002 and improved still further in 2003. In recent years the school has successfully enabled boys to do relatively well in GCSE examinations. Although girls still perform better than boys, the difference is now similar to that nationally. Results in 2002 were broadly the same as those in similar schools¹. The work of pupils currently in Year 11 suggests that this impressive level of results will be maintained.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	64 (62)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	44.6 (n/a)	39.8 (n/a)

There were 308 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve particularly well in design and technology, where standards of work in lessons are well above average. This is particularly because teachers in this subject track pupils' progress well and are therefore able to give very good individual support and guidance. Lessons in this subject are also planned to ensure that pupils develop good levels of independent study. Pupils achieve well in most other subjects during Years 10 and 11 but do not achieve well in the modern foreign languages they study. This is because, in this subject, teaching is not good enough. Not all pupils follow an adequate course in religious education during Years 10 and 11, as required, and hence overall achievement in this subject at this stage is unsatisfactory.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses – Sixth form

Results in the sixth form are **well above average** and are improving rapidly. Sixth form students achieve **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in A level examinations were well above average in 2002 and improved further in 2003.
- Female students did relatively better than males in 2002 GCSE A level results.
- Improving standards have been maintained during a time of rapid increase in numbers of students in the sixth form.

Commentary

7. Careful attention has been paid to ensuring that academic standards have been maintained during a time when there has been a rapid increase in the number of students undertaking advanced level studies. Teachers have successfully modified their teaching styles to ensure

¹ Similar schools are those that had similar levels of attainment for this cohort when they were in Year 9 two years previously

that students are more actively involved in their learning and this is the major reason for steadily improving results.

8. Results have been improving steadily and in 2002² were well above average. As they did nationally, female students gained better results than their male counterparts. This was also the case in 2003, when overall results maintained the improving trend. A small number of students with relatively low prior performance did not do well in 2002, but most students did better than their previous GCSE results would have indicated. Hence, students make good progress during their sixth form study.
9. This pattern of good achievement is borne out in the work of students currently in the sixth form. Students in Year 13³, particularly, are achieving well overall because of the good teaching they are receiving. Standards of work seen during the inspection are particularly impressive in psychology and media studies. In many subjects, students achieve very well but achievement in English is only satisfactory. In English, this is because the pace of learning, particularly in some English literature lessons, is slow and does not engage the students actively enough in their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Main school

The development of pupils' attitudes and behaviour is **good**, whilst arrangements for promoting pupils' personal qualities are **satisfactory**. Attendance at the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attend the school very regularly and punctually.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils enjoy each other's company and get on well together.
- A few pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes in some lessons and behave immaturely.
- Pupils make only satisfactory gains in their confidence and self esteem.
- Spiritual development is not promoted well enough.

Commentary

10. Pupils like the school and enjoy their work. This means that they attend very well and this helps them get good results in their studies. The school has worked successfully, and in harmony with parents, to improve attendance. These good procedures ensure yearly improvement and very little unauthorised absence.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 - 2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.3%	School data :	0.4%
National data:	7.6%	National data:	1.2%

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

11. Pupils generally have good attitudes to their work. When teachers make the lessons interesting, this successfully holds pupils' attention and encourages a strong commitment to learning. Such successful teaching styles are less widespread, however, for pupils in the main school. Pupils are therefore lively and interested in some lessons and acquiescent and passive in others.

² 2002 is the most recent year for which nationally validated results are available and against which reliable comparisons can be made.

³ The inspection took place only three weeks into the course for Year 12 students, so judgement about their achievement is based on limited evidence.

12. The school buildings and site are large and the grounds very hilly, so offering much potential for misbehaviour on the many staircases, outside pathways and woods. Despite these temptations pupils behave well at breaks and as they move around the school. Occasional boisterous behaviour by a very few pupils, and boys in particular, is sometimes seen as intimidating by others. The school manages these situations well. Pupils admit to hearing about bullying but having little direct experience of it. The school has recently raised the profile of the dangers of bullying. The school uses short-term exclusion well to combat bad behaviour and very few pupils are excluded from school on a permanent basis. Pupils behave well in lessons because teachers make their expectations clear. A few pupils, mainly boys, are occasionally rude and immature, showing unsatisfactory levels of self-discipline. This silliness does not often affect the learning of others. Most teachers prevent this by careful and consistent control.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1677	83	4
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	45	2	0

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

13. Pupils get on well together. They learn from each other in lessons. They relish the competition and co-operation promoted during house competitions and events. They understand the feelings of others and help look after others when given suitable encouragement to do so. Older pupils enjoy being responsible for younger pupils, such as through the valuable Year 11 house assistant scheme. Teachers sometimes do not structure and plan lessons and other activities in ways that would help pupils become more responsible and independent. This means that pupils are often reactive, rather than proactive, in lessons and within the school community. They have become accustomed to responding to the school's suggestions rather than taking the initiative. They are aware that they have not previously had much official say in decisions about various aspects of school life. The newly formed school council has made a very promising start and pupils support this attempt to give them a stronger voice.
14. Pupils show a satisfactory appreciation of their own culture and other people's cultural traditions. These aspects of their personal development are fostered well in some lessons, where teachers use the local area or social conditions to highlight particular issues. Teachers of some subjects do not provide pupils with activities that enable them to extend their understanding of cultural issues. Some, but not all, teachers help pupils to learn about different cultures and to appreciate the impact this has on lifestyles and opinions. Spiritual development is, as at the time of the previous report, still not a sufficiently strong feature of school life. Teachers do not often encourage pupils to reflect on issues likely to affect their developing values, beliefs and principles.

Sixth form

The development of students' attitudes is **very good**. Students present good role models for the rest of the school. Their attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy the subjects they study, adopting very good attitudes and working hard.
- There is no planned programme for personal development in the sixth form.
- The arrangements for checking attendance in the sixth form are inadequate.

Commentary

15. Students have very good attitudes to their work. They are highly motivated towards the subjects they study. When they are able to take responsibility, they show initiative and contribute well to the life of the school, but not all teachers encourage them in this aspect of study. The current arrangements for contributing to improving students' personal development are not planned sufficiently well to encourage everyone to take advantage of the chances on offer. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory but the school cannot be sure about students' attendance because the systems for checking are not rigorous.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Main school

The quality of education in the main school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**, with good enrichment through extra-curricular activities. The school does not comply with requirements for citizenship education for all pupils or for religious education for most of the older pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in the main school are **good** overall, though with some variation both within and between departments. The assessment of pupils' work is **satisfactory**, but assessment information is not used as well as it could be.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in design and technology, but are unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages and personal, social and health education.
- Teaching successfully focuses on developing pupils' knowledge and building up their skills, but gives less attention to developing their understanding.
- The school has identified improvement in teaching and learning as a priority.
- The poor management of the behaviour of a small number of pupils slows learning in some lessons.
- Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, but the information gained is not used well to guide pupils or in curriculum planning.

Commentary

16. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning and this is well illustrated in the design and technology department. Here, very good teaching encourages pupils to play a very active part in lessons so that they increase their understanding of the topics they are studying whilst developing their knowledge and skills. In many other subjects good attention is paid to helping pupils enhance their knowledge and skills. In lessons where this is a priority, teaching is good. Lessons of this type are common and this is why teaching was good in over half of lessons seen for pupils in Years 7 to 11 during the inspection. This mode of learning is particularly helpful in preparing pupils for national tests and examinations, but does less to contribute to their personal development. Details of lesson grades during the inspection are set out in the table.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 198 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (2%)	44 (22%)	80 (41%)	59 (30%)	8(4%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages. The figures include the 70 lessons which were observed in the sixth form.

17. The success with which pupils learn varies from subject to subject. Teachers sometimes do not engage and involve pupils actively enough in their learning. In these lessons, pupils are

not given enough chances to experiment, enquire and research. Nor do they work enough in groups, studying through discussion and debate. This means that the potential to develop these skills in pupils is not well developed. Successful work has already been undertaken to improve this aspect of teaching in the sixth form and good steps are being taken to extend this improvement into the main school. Managers in the school have been trained in classroom observation methods and this is beginning to help identify classrooms where good practice is taking place and where improvement is needed. It has not yet, however, helped ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory.

18. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a small but significant number of lessons. In modern foreign languages, work in some lessons for younger pupils is not challenging enough. This leads to unsatisfactory behaviour, which is not managed well. In a few lessons in other subjects the behaviour of a small number of pupils, mainly boys, is not well managed and this tends to slow learning. Overall, teaching and learning in personal, social and health education are also unsatisfactory. This is because teachers, although given clear guidance about what should be taught, are not given enough support for them to be clear about the methods that should be used. As a result, pupils find many of these lessons are dull because they are not actively involved enough.
19. Assessment is a relative weakness in the school. Some teachers assess pupils' work very well and use the outcomes of their assessment to plan future work. This is a strong feature of the work of the design and technology department, especially with older pupils. Others do not pay enough attention to detail in assessing pupils' work and do not use the outcomes well. This is a feature of work in many English lessons, where teachers do not modify tasks to cater for the needs of the most and least able pupils in the class. The school has, during the past year, successfully built up a comprehensive database of test and other information on pupils, but has not completed the development of arrangements for communicating this well to all teachers. Thus a potentially valuable resource is not yet being used well. The school has identified the need for improved quality and greater consistency in assessment, recognising that most pupils are currently not given clear enough information about how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. The lack of this information is a further reason why pupils are not encouraged to take enough responsibility for their learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 16 is **satisfactory**. Activities provided for curriculum enrichment, both within the school day and beyond it, are **good**. Staffing, accommodation and resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum offers a good spread of courses and subjects.
- There has been an improvement in the extent of vocational education.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is good.
- Regular review of the curriculum has led to the introduction of new courses.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is inadequate and the school does not meet the requirement for a course in citizenship education.
- Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not follow an adequate course in religious education, as required.
- Arrangements for teaching modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 are inadequate to enable some pupils to do as well as they should.

Commentary

20. The school provides all pupils aged 11 to 16 with a good range of worthwhile activities, which has been effectively extended as the school has grown in size. The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of all pupils and contributes significantly to the good standards being achieved in most subjects. Overall choice has been improved for older pupils, with new opportunities being offered in subjects such as information and communication technology, sports and the

creative arts. The improved range of vocational courses being offered enables some pupils to experience the work-related curriculum. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

21. The school offers a good range of enrichment activities, both within and beyond the school day. The wide range of educational visits, visiting speakers and curricular initiatives broaden pupils' experiences significantly. The school effectively encourages curricular innovation, for instance in taking a leading role in a consortium science initiative with other schools. The school is particularly successful in developing sport and the arts. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and the school is developing ideas to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils. The extensive programme of extra-curricular provision is well supported by pupils and further enriches their educational experiences. All this provides well for pupils as they move through successive stages in education.
22. There are weaknesses in the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. This is because not enough guidance is given to class tutors who teach this subject on the best ways to teach the materials provided for them, leading to inconsistency from class to class in pupils' experiences. The school currently depends on personal, social and health education lessons to teach pupils citizenship education. Coupled with the fact that the contribution of other subjects to developing citizenship education has not been reviewed, this means that the school does not meet requirements for citizenship education. For those pupils who do not follow an examination course in religious education in Years 10 and 11, the only religious education they receive is within the personal, social and health education programme. This is inadequate to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
23. The timetabling arrangements for this large school are complex and, for the most part, work well. However, in some year groups the matching of ability groups across more than one subject takes away the flexibility to place pupils in the best groupings for their needs. A fast track initiative to help provide for the most able pupils reduces choice between foreign languages and in Years 7 to 9 the decision to offer three foreign languages has not led to improvement in standards in these languages.
24. The school's belief in curricular innovation is a strength of leadership in the school and helps broaden choice for pupils. Further, it encourages teachers to be receptive to new ideas. The school has been broadly successful in managing change whilst ensuring standards remain high in most subjects. Pupils recognise that the school does well in helping them progress successfully with their studies. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining good quality teaching and support staff and this further helps to provide a stimulating curriculum. Accommodation and the level of resources adequately meet the needs of the curriculum.

Sixth form

The quality of education in the sixth form is **good**. Teaching and learning are good, with many examples of very good teaching. The curriculum is **good**, with many successful enrichment activities to extend the taught curriculum.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in the sixth form are **good**, with a considerable amount of very good teaching. The assessment of students' work and the use to which assessment information is put are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students learn very well in biology, art and design, psychology and media studies because in these subjects they are taught very well.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to make lessons interesting and thus to encourage students and engage them in their learning.

- Teachers in most subjects have improved their skills in engaging students more actively in their learning, but this is not the case in many English literature lessons.
- Assessment of students' work is used well in all subjects except English.

Commentary

25. Teaching and learning in the sixth form have improved and are now good, with some very good features. This is because teachers have responded very well to the challenge of senior managers to ensure that their lessons engage students more in their own learning. As a result, students are now encouraged to undertake research, to investigate and to enter into enquiry. Many lessons feature discussion and debate, which enables students to build confidence in their understanding of the topics they are studying. In turn, this approach helps students take more responsibility for their learning, contributing to their personal development and preparing them for undertaking independent study in further and higher education. The table below illustrates the good overall pattern of teaching in the sixth form, where over four-fifths of lessons seen were good or better and a third were very good or excellent.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 70 lessons in the sixth form

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	22 (31%)	33 (47%)	13 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in the sixth form in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

26. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to interest and engage students in most lessons. Only in some lessons in English literature is this not a characteristic. In many lessons the level of challenge is high. Maintaining good levels of challenge ensures that students learn at a fast pace and extend their knowledge and understanding very successfully. High levels of challenge are possible because sixth form teachers assess students' work well and take account of the outcomes of this assessment in planning lessons. They also make sure that students are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In turn, students are helped to take responsibility for planning their work and setting targets for themselves.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good access to a wide choice of subjects.
- Not enough attention has been paid to a review of access to and provision of vocational courses.
- Consultation with students and parents is not extensive enough.
- Enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities overall are good but students' access to them is not monitored.
- The provision of accommodation and resources is variable.

Commentary

27. The school offers good access to a wide range of subjects at A level. Since the last inspection the school has developed nine vocational courses at Level 2 but there has only been limited take up. Guidance through consultation with students and their parents for all sixth form courses is neither extensive nor targeted, particularly regarding prompt follow-up of the outcomes of AS assessments to ensure early and effective guidance for A level study.

28. Students are offered a wide range of excellent enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities through subject areas. Work experience is supported on request but is not yet part of a strategy to provide work related learning. There is no mechanism to monitor the success or

inclusivity of these opportunities across the school. Key skills courses are not targeted to ensure students learn the skills they need and don't repeat those they already have. Personal, social, spiritual, cultural and emotional development is encompassed within the general studies course but the student response to these aspects of the programme suggests that they could be more effective.

29. Teachers are able to provide well for students when they teach in either specialist rooms or in their own classrooms. Provision is less successful when teachers have no stable base to work with their sixth form groups. Space for students' independent learning is limited. There are excellent specialist resources in some departments but a lack of books for independent study in others.

Care, guidance and support

Main school

The school's provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is **satisfactory**, as are the procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for involving pupils in the school's work and development are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes good care of pupils' health and safety.
- The use of assessment information and a well integrated pastoral system to guide pupils' academic and personal progress are undeveloped.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are good.
- Support for pupils through the teaching of personal, social and health education and the tutorial system is inadequate.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and cared for.
- Processes for seeking the views of pupils and involving them in the work of the school are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

30. Statutory requirements for health and safety are met and risk assessments are conducted regularly and thoroughly. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and work places are safe and secure. Proper procedures for child protection are carefully followed and key members of staff have received the relevant training. However, accident records are inadequately analysed to identify the location of accidents.
31. Pastoral procedures are not yet fully co-ordinated to provide effective support and guidance for all pupils. Teachers generally know and respect pupils. There is always an adult that pupils can turn to for help and guidance. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported. Targeted pupils receive the necessary help from learning mentors to improve their academic performance. Induction arrangements of pupils who arrive from primary schools are well established, well organised and help pupils settle well into school.
32. However, registration and personal, social and health education lessons are not used effectively to promote pupils' personal, social and academic development. Tutors do not have an overview of the progress of pupils in their groups, nor is adequate time provided for effective discussion with pupils on how to improve. Indeed, assessment information, though extensive, is not used well by either tutors or most subject teachers to point pupils towards fresh targets for improvement.
33. Although most teachers listen to pupils and respect them, pupils feel that their views are rarely taken into account. Until this term, when a new school council has been formed, there has been no regular or formalised system through which the school could consult pupils.

Sixth form

The provision of support, advice and guidance for sixth form students is **satisfactory**. Arrangements for involving students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between students and subject teachers help students feel well supported in their studies.
- Very good library study facilities help foster a culture of study.
- The new leadership of the sixth form recognises the value of creating a strong support framework and has taken action to develop this area of the school's work.
- The lack of a robust system for linking academic and pastoral guidance means that students do not feel well supported in their personal development.
- The school has not promoted a culture of listening to students' views.

Commentary

34. Teachers in sixth form lessons nurture very good relationships with their students and consequently students feel confident about the help they get. The headteacher and his senior colleagues have deliberately encouraged teachers to adopt teaching methods that stimulate students' involvement in and management of their work. This has significantly enhanced aspects of students' personal development by encouraging them to take responsibility and show initiative. Teachers keep good records of students' progress and regularly share these with students. They routinely discuss what needs improving and these discussions further enable students to take responsibility for managing their learning.
35. Students do not, however, feel fully connected to the life of the school. The school has expanded rapidly and is in the process of altering arrangements for student support and involvement in the life of the main school. Currently, however, tutors do not have enough time with their students and lack access to detailed information about their academic and personal development. Consequently, they are not able to offer the necessary support or guidance to help students manage aspects of their academic or personal development. Tutors are not held to account for the activities of their students in tutor sessions.
36. Suitable careers information is provided in the excellent library, but little personal help is available. The school fails to seek students' views in an organised or systematic way. Students therefore feel that their opinions don't matter and this limits the development of their self-esteem and confidence.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with other schools are **good** and with the community are **satisfactory**. The school's partnerships with parents are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with other schools ensure the sharing of skills, expertise and resources.
- Good induction procedures for parents help them gain an early positive impression of the school.
- Parents of pupils with special education needs are now well informed and involved.
- The quality of information provided for parents is unsatisfactory and prevents parents feeling connected to and involved in the work the school.
- Parents do not feel that their views matter or that their concerns are quickly followed up.

Commentary

37. Parents are satisfied with what the school achieves. Unsatisfactory communication, however, leaves many confused about the work of the school. The school does not always fully follow up parents' concerns to ensure that parents are aware of what has happened and so are fully included in the home-school partnership. Parents do not get enough information about the

curriculum or about the progress their children make. Reports lack detailed descriptions of what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve their work and standards.

38. The school gives good support to the parents of Year 6 children transferring to the school as part of the good overall induction process for pupils. Parents are disappointed that this promising start to establishing an on-going partnership with them is not sustained. The school does not have mechanisms in place to consult parents regularly or routinely on aspects of school life. Nor does it always follow-up successfully with parents when they have contacted the school. In these ways the school does not always ensure parental satisfaction. The rapid and dramatic expansion in the school has been managed very well, with the key priority being on maintaining standards. This expansion has led to significant changes in staffing and in the way the school is organised. The nature and extent of these changes have not been successfully communicated to parents. As a result, parents are left confused and uncertain about, for instance who they should approach about various issues or concerns. The partnership with parents has suffered as a result. The school is aware of this and is actively seeking ways to communicate with parents and to engage them more. Parents of pupils with special education needs are now informed routinely about their child's progress and are carefully involved in consultation about their needs.
39. Despite all the internal changes over the last two years, the school has still succeeded in working effectively with a number of local schools. This both encourages curriculum innovation and ensures that the transfer of pupils into the school is good. The science collaboration project involving a federation of six local schools is particularly exciting and brings together a wealth of teacher expertise to put science into a local industrial context. The school has not been as successful in maintaining good links with the local community over the same period. Teachers' attention has focused necessarily on stabilising classroom experiences rather than extending the work out into the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Main school

The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is **good**. The headteacher has very successfully ensured that the school has the necessary vision and drive to raise standards. **Good** management has ensured the successful growth of the school. Very effective use has been made of external agencies and grants in driving forward improvement. Heads of faculty and subject leaders are increasingly effective at bringing about improvements to teaching and learning through review and self-evaluation. Governors' prudent financial management and oversight of developments has been good. Governance is **unsatisfactory**, however, because statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship, for citizenship education and religious education for all in Years 10 and 11 are not met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, clear vision and high aspirations for the school.
- The governing body has been very good in supporting and financing improvements to both the senior management structure and the accommodation.
- Changes and developments that are part of the vision are not always clearly explained and communicated throughout the school community.
- Financial management is very effective at getting the best value from the budget.
- The management of growth and change has been good.
- The governing body does not meet some of its statutory responsibilities.

Commentary

40. The headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of significant change. This has involved an almost doubling in size as the school changed from being an upper school for pupils aged 13 to 18 years to a school for pupils aged 11 to 18. Throughout this period he has developed a clear vision for the school that is shared by the governing body and, increasingly,

by the senior leaders. The transition has not been without difficulties but these have been very well managed to sustain a good learning environment.

41. The head teacher's evaluation of the school's position shows clarity of thinking, a willingness to reflect and a very sharp perception and analysis of progress to date. The school's plan for further improvement clearly demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and sets out appropriate strategies for improvement. Budget constraints have been very successfully managed, as a result of very effective challenging and monitoring by the governing body and the appointment of a bursar with strategic responsibilities. The school and governors have been rigorous in their pursuit of best value as they have extended accommodation and have developed a more appropriate management structure whilst keeping unit costs relatively low.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,505,724	Balance from previous year	181,696
Total expenditure	5,267,657	Balance carried forward to the next	238,067
Expenditure per pupil	2,954		

42. Governors are striving to be more strategic in executing their responsibilities and have undergone training to help them do this. They do not fully meet their statutory obligations because there is no daily act of collective worship, a course of citizenship education is not in place and not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their entitlement to religious education. The change to a much larger organisation has highlighted weaknesses in the management structure and links between pastoral and academic leaders that the school has been quick to identify and act upon. Performance management is used effectively and the school has put in place a significant amount of professional development to ensure that leaders and managers can fulfil their responsibilities. Imaginative links with other schools have enabled some to widen their vision of improvement strategies.
43. In the past year a full academic board of senior teaching staff has been established. This group of staff has a shared vision of how to bring about improvement through initiatives such as faculty and departmental reviews. At the moment this vision is not clearly understood by all teachers, however. Overall, self-review is having a positive effect upon the way leaders now monitor the work of colleagues in order to raise standards, but is affected by some inconsistent practice and lack of response by some teachers. Subject leadership in the main is characterised by very good specialist knowledge and the ability to build effective teams and create a good climate for learning. This is evident in the improvement in standards, which have risen at a faster rate than is the case nationally. The next phase of management training involving subject leaders is about to begin. Newly qualified teachers have an effective programme of support and induction and teachers new to the school can avail themselves of this also. Many teachers joined the school over the past three years as part of reorganisation and they make an effective contribution within subject areas. Methods of consultation and communication between senior managers and teachers, and the speed of response, are not yet robust enough for such a large school to ensure that the vision and policies for improvement are shared and acted upon consistently by all staff. Similarly, communication and consultation with parents have at times caused misunderstanding and the school has acted to remedy this through a termly newsletter.

Sixth form

Leadership and management of the sixth form are **satisfactory**. Changes in the role of tutors are planned to improve day-to-day management of monitoring and support for students, which is weak. Governors have given a strong lead in supporting the growth of the sixth form and improvements to

accommodation. Careful financial management has successfully balanced the cost effectiveness of small groups against the need to sustain choice.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new head of sixth form has a clear vision for improvement.
- Facilities for independent study are very good.
- The work of the deputy head of sixth strengthens sixth form management.
- The restructuring of tutor groups into Year 12 and Year 13 has improved support for students.
- The role of the tutor is not well enough defined to ensure clear links between academic and pastoral monitoring.

Commentary

44. The newly appointed and experienced head of sixth form has been in post three weeks and is already clear about priorities for improvement. There is a clear understanding of how performance data can be better used to monitor achievement and how management must improve. With the growth of the school the management structures in the sixth form have not evolved sufficiently to meet the demands of a much larger than average sixth form.
45. Day to day administration in the sixth form works well, but accommodation pressures do not help communication. Senior tutors are located around the school rather than in a sixth form base. The management structures have, in the past, placed too much dependence upon the head of sixth form. The roles and responsibilities of tutors are not clearly defined and these have thus not been delegated well to involve them effectively. The links between academic monitoring and pastoral support are weak. Students receive good guidance from individual subject teachers but lack a regular overview of their achievements. Guidance about courses given in Year 11 is not currently followed up through sufficient individual tutorial work in Year 12. Similarly, in Year 13, management roles and responsibilities for providing guidance on university applications are not delegated to ensure targeted support by sixth form tutors.
46. The main priority for development in the sixth form is an improvement in consultation and monitoring. This is so that support and guidance are more responsive to the needs of each student and further improve achievement. To this end, tutor groups have now been organised on a year basis to enable the specific needs of Year 12 and Year 13 students to be dealt with more efficiently. There has been limited development of the wider curriculum, such as work shadowing and extra curricular provision, beyond examination courses. The new leadership team has plans to develop this aspect of provision. An imaginative building programme has provided very high quality study facilities to support independent learning, but common room facilities are cramped. The vision for the future of the sixth form encompasses improved management and a broadening of sixth form provision in order to raise standards. Whilst this is wholly appropriate given the current situation, it is too early to judge the impact of any changes made so far.

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 for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils maintain good progress throughout the school.
- Teachers are not helped to use data to offer support to pupils.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The ablest pupils are not challenged to aim high enough.
- Timetabling and rooming difficulties hinder learning in some lessons.
- Classroom behaviour hinders learning in some lessons.

Commentary

47. Pupils enter Year 7 with above average standards and make good progress throughout the school. Pupils are co-operative and work hard. In national tests at the end of Year 9, results are well above average overall, with boys and girls doing equally well. However, the most able pupils are not helped to achieve the highest grades because they are not fully prepared for the test. This is because teachers do not follow national guidelines from Year 7 onwards. In the GCSE examinations, results are well above average, with pupils gaining a high number of A*, A and B grades. Both boys and girls achieve well above average results. Results in the English and English literature GCSE examinations are close to the school's average and are continuing to improve. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs do well in English.
48. Pupils achieve well in lessons, though there is often not enough support for the most and least able pupils in each teaching group. This is because the department relies on setting alone to ensure that the needs of pupils in each group are taken into account. However, the setting system is unreliable, especially in Year 8 and Year 10. Teachers do not make effective use of assessment data to identify pupils who need extra support. Not all teachers follow the department's marking guidelines and in most cases teachers do not provide pupils with targets for improvement. Too little is expected of pupils in lessons and pupils' exercise books have very little independent work in them.
49. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but a number of lessons are slow and not challenging enough. Pupils are not encouraged to undertake their own research, to discuss issues in groups or to share their findings and ideas with the class. This aspect has not improved since the last inspection. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a small number of boys, which is not well managed by teachers, hinders the learning of others in some lessons. The efficiency of some teachers is hampered by having to carry books and other materials from room to room. There are examples of good teaching, where the pace of the lessons is fast and a variety of stimulating activities are offered. In these lessons pupils are enthusiastic and thus make good progress.
50. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. The head of department provides very good support for new and temporary teachers and inspires loyalty among his staff. Currently, however, there is not a clear vision for the future direction of the department. The management of the department is unsatisfactory. Information on pupils' attainment is not provided to enable each teacher to monitor the progress of individual pupils. Some of the aims in the school's plan for improvement are being met, especially those involving support to staff. Other aims, designed to improve pupils' performance through assessment and target setting, are not being met.

51. Younger pupils are not offered enough visits and outings to enrich the curriculum. The plans in place to enhance access to computers will aid further improvements in the use of information and communication technology in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The literacy co-ordinator provides a very good programme of support and guidance to ensure that all subjects place a strong emphasis on improving written and spoken English. The current focus is on writing in Year 7, reading in Year 8 and speaking in Year 9. All teachers have been trained in improving pupils' literacy skills and further training is planned. All subject departments have produced policies on language in their subjects and some are putting these policies into practice.

Modern Foreign Languages

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

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Results at GCSE are below those for most other subjects in the school.
- 2003 GCSE results in both French and German showed an encouraging improvement.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils generally have good attitudes to work.
- Trips abroad make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

Commentary

53. GCSE results in 2002 were below average and were below those of most other subjects in the school. Boys did less well than girls. Result in 2003 showed an encouraging improvement in both French and German. At the end of Year 9 and Year 11, standards are below average in both French and German and boys achieve less well than girls. Unchallenging teaching and lack of active involvement of pupils in lessons are the main factors in boys' lack of progress. There are no other significant differences in rates of progress from one group of pupils to another
54. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory and work in lessons is below average. By the end of Year 9, pupils listen to and understand the foreign language. Pupils carry out short conversations in the language being taught but are not able to extend beyond this basic level of speaking. In their written work, most pupils write short passages from memory but examples of extended writing using a range of imaginative vocabulary are limited. This provides a poor base for Years 10 and 11.
55. In Years 10 and 11 standards remain below average and achievement continues to be unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 11, pupils carry out short conversations with a number of exchanges. They write longer passages but spelling and grammar are often inaccurate. More able pupils produce longer examples of writing but few write at length and with wide vocabulary.
56. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the work set is unchallenging and does not ensure good learning. In some lessons teachers and pupils speak too much English. In others, teachers' control of pupils is not good enough. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan carefully to ensure a high level of challenge and variety. Pupils are actively involved and are encouraged to practise and vary their language. The use of assessment for target setting and to show pupils how to improve is not well developed. Pupils show good attitudes to work and behave well when teaching is not boring.

57. The organisation of the curriculum is poor in Years 7 to 9. The arrangements for teaching the three languages on offer mean that pupils do not learn any of them well enough to reach good standards. Setting arrangements do not allow flexibility in modern languages. Some teachers teach in a variety of different rooms. This is not a satisfactory arrangement because it limits the effective use of resources. Trips abroad contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development. Standards have not risen since the previous inspection and the quality of teaching has declined. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and the subject has made poor progress since that time.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are well above average.
- GCSE results are improving.
- Teaching varies too much in quality in Year 9.
- The best practice in teaching is not being shared across the department.
- Timetabling issues affect the progress of some pupils.

Commentary

58. In 2002, results for pupils at the end of Year 9 in national tests were very good. This represented good achievement from entry standards in Year 7. Results in 2003, and standards seen in school, confirm this impressive trend. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average and significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. The most able pupils in Year 9 are currently achieving very well, particularly in algebra. However, all pupils in Year 9 achieve well. They are making at least good progress, apart from a minority of pupils with special educational needs whose progress is satisfactory.
59. In 2002, GCSE results for pupils at the end of Year 11 were above average. This represented unsatisfactory progress from Year 9 for that group of pupils. In 2003, results improved and most of the pupils now in Year 11 are maintaining their very good standards from Year 9. However, there are fewer pupils working at the highest levels than expected, partly because the most able pupils are not grouped together. A significant minority of pupils of just above average ability is not achieving well. They make unsatisfactory progress because of unsatisfactory or poor teaching.
60. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and often very good in Year 9, where aims and objectives are shared with the class, thereby actively engaging pupils in their learning. Sharp questioning from teachers focuses learning very clearly. Where teachers talk to pupils for too long and do not share objectives clearly, then learning is only satisfactory. Where teachers have poor classroom management skills, learning is poor. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils know how well they are doing, but they are often not given enough individual advice to help them improve.
61. Pupils generally respond well to their work in mathematics. When they have the chance to do so they work well in pairs. Pupils show genuine enthusiasm where teaching is very good, but behaviour is poor when expectations are neither high enough nor communicated clearly to pupils.
62. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has rightly highlighted that timetabling issues outside his control mean that teachers sometimes do not teach in their own rooms. This leads to ineffective use of resources in these lessons, which thus hinders pupils' progress. This is worse than at the previous inspection. Whilst the monitoring of teachers' performance takes place, the very good practice of some teachers has not been shared with weaker teachers to help them improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils show good levels of mathematical competence in most other subjects. They do particularly well in science, geography, design and technology and physical education but opportunities for developing these skills are not provided in English.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average as a result of good teaching, involving a range of styles and approaches.
- Leadership within the faculty is very good and results in a team which is reflective, innovative and ambitious to develop further.
- The development of assessment methods which involve pupils in reviewing their own progress is currently only at an early stage.
- There is too wide a variation in the quality of lessons.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and, as a result, both work well together.
- Very productive links have been established with local primary and secondary schools and this ensures both a good transition for pupils and the development of better teaching methods.

Commentary

64. Test results in 2002 at age 14 were well above national figures and above those for similar schools. Over the past four years, results have improved at a faster rate than nationally. Both boys' and girls' average point scores were well above national results. Results in GCSE examinations in 2002 were above the national average in double science, single science, biology, chemistry and physics. In double science, all pupils did well in comparison to their performance in other subjects. The results from 2003 are likely to be similar. Achievement of both boys and girls by the age of 14 is very good in comparison with schools where the pupils had similar standards on entry. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, with average and above average pupils making good progress. Some lower attaining pupils, mainly boys, make less than satisfactory progress. This is because insufficient challenge and a limited range of classroom activities mean that these pupils lose interest and thus cause behavioural problems.
65. Teaching is good overall and, as result, pupils learn effectively. In the most effective lessons there are high expectations, good pace, a good lesson structure and a variety of teaching methods. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes towards science and their teachers. Some very good teachers are particularly skilful at enthusing and motivating pupils of all abilities and thus these pupils make very good progress. Some teachers use very effective teaching methods but, because not all teachers adopt these methods, teaching quality varies.
66. Both leadership and management are very good. The managers within the science faculty work together very effectively to evaluate performance and plan for improvements in each subject. A thorough review of provision in Years 7 to 9 has led to improvements in planning and teaching methods so that they are now good. Assessment of pupil progress is satisfactory. However, pupils are often insufficiently involved in reflecting on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This has been identified as a priority area and a good start has been made in improving assessment, both in lessons and throughout the year. Innovative work with primary schools has led to teachers having a very good understanding of what pupils have learnt there. Consequently, they plan lessons that challenge pupils and this ensures that they learn very effectively. The establishment of a collaborative project with other secondary schools is leading to the development of improved teaching styles and materials for underachieving pupils in Years 10 and 11.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has led to very good improvements since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are developing a greater independence in the use of computers.
- Increased curriculum time and opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is contributing to raising standards in ICT.
- Pupils' achievement is not fully recognised in Years 7 to 9 because teachers are not using all available information to report on pupil progress and set challenging targets for improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good because of the high standards set by teachers.

Commentary

67. Results in GNVQ examinations for the small number taking the course in 2002 were well above average. In 2003 a much larger number of pupils followed an examination-based ICT course of study with reasonable success⁴.
68. By the end of Year 9, pupils' ICT capability is below average. Pupils are familiar with the use of the Internet, word processing and control but their experience in the use of the computer for modelling and information handling is under-developed. Below average attainment on entry to the school means that pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and the use of nationally produced materials is helping to raise standards this year. By the end of Year 11, pupils have well developed skills in systems and project management that they use successfully to solve data handling and spreadsheet based problems. Standards by the end of Year 11 are thus average and represent good achievement compared with the pupils' below average attainment at the end of Year 9.
69. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers structure lessons well and question sensitively to draw out pupils' understanding of areas of learning covered. Teachers also insist on high standards of behaviour. They move around the class throughout the lesson to monitor progress and to challenge further. However, some pupils with well-developed capability are not adequately challenged, thus slowing their progress.
70. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Where a small minority of boys do not behave well teachers follow the agreed school practices for behaviour management. However, the layout of some computer resources makes classroom management difficult. Pupils with special educational needs and learners with English as an additional language achieve well. Information about pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9 is not yet used successfully to ensure that achievements are recognised and appropriate targets set and reported to parents. Homework is used well by some teachers but could be better used across all teaching groups to prepare and extend learning.
71. The leadership of the department is good, securing very good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils now study ICT in all years from Year 7 to Year 11 and, although the number of pupils on roll has increased significantly, the school has ensured that adequate ICT resources are available. Management of the department is satisfactory. The department runs smoothly and now benefits from technical support that was not available at the time of the previous inspection. Work remains to be undertaken in the department to develop strategies that enable pupils to exercise independent learning in their ICT studies.

⁴ A significant number of grades for this course are under Examination Board review at the time of the inspection. Thus an overall judgement about these results is not valid.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. There is satisfactory use of computers and other information and communication technology in most subjects of the curriculum. Pupils make good use of the Internet and select and present information well. In science, good use is made of ICT for data logging and pupils handle information and present findings well in geography. In music, pupils make good use of composition software and the design and technology department uses ICT well to control moving objects and also in design and manufacturing work. Improvements in the management of pupils' ICT experiences in other subjects of the curriculum are required, however, to ensure that all pupils are able to use ICT successfully in all subjects.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving. They are now above average and all pupils achieve well.
- Good, well organised, teaching is producing very good GCSE results.
- The sharing of good practice through monitoring of teaching is not well developed.
- Pupils' good attitudes help them to learn well.
- Information and communication technology is not used frequently enough as a tool for teaching.

Commentary

73. In reaching above average standards in Year 9, all pupils achieve well as they enter the school with skills in history that are average. Pupils understand and recall key events well. Year 9 pupils, for instance, accurately interpret sources on factory conditions, with more able pupils skilfully evaluating their reliability. Literacy skills are generally good, though pupils are rarely required to produce extended writing before Year 9.
74. Very good GCSE examination results have been sustained over several years. The close monitoring of boys' progress has ensured that they did as well in 2003 as the girls. Standards of Year 11 pupils are above average and all pupils achieve well. These pupils are on course to maintain high standards at GCSE next year. Their good coursework shows that skills of enquiry and analysis are well developed.
75. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is good in Years 10 and 11, where specialist teachers have high expectations and use a wide range of stimulating activities. Teachers' good planning ensures they consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers make good use of resources generally, but not enough of information and communication technology. Teachers know their pupils well and provide resources to meet the needs of all, including those with specific literacy difficulties. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Marking is done frequently and provides pupils with good advice about how to improve. Analysis of assessment results and target setting are good in Years 10 and 11, but undeveloped in lower years. Teachers benefit considerably from pupils' good attitudes to learning, which enable them to teach effectively.
76. The head of department provides a clear vision and direction. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There continues to be a wide range of visits to stimulate interest. The schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 inadequately emphasise analytical and thinking skills which would encourage more challenging teaching. The department' good programme of monitoring and classroom observation is not yet fully developed as part of a strategy for improvement across the department.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards in geography and make good progress in their learning because they are taught well.
- The curriculum is enriched by educational visits.
- In some lessons, not enough time is devoted to evaluating learning.
- In a small number of lessons the management of pupil behaviour is not effective.

Commentary

77. The overall quality of teaching is good and most pupils work hard. As a result, by the time pupils are 14 years old, most achieve above average standards. Further good progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11 and, in GCSE examinations in 2002, results were above the national average. Results in 2003 were higher than in the previous year.
78. By the end of Year 9, pupils have good skills in using and interpreting data. Because teachers know their subject well they give pupils clear guidance on how to improve which contributes well to ensuring good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs contribute well in lessons because of the targeted support they receive. Whilst most lessons proceed at a good pace, on occasion they lack a summary discussion. This limits the chances pupils have for self-evaluation of their learning.
79. By Year 11, most pupils have a wide range of skills and use them effectively to support their learning. Teachers ensure that learning proceeds at a good pace. They use resources well and thus make lessons stimulating and interesting. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to gather, interpret and present data and this is a clear improvement since the previous inspection. However, at times they lack confidence in spoken responses and do not always develop their ideas sufficiently well. Where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory, behaviour management occupies too much time in a lesson. As a result, learning is restricted in these lessons.
80. The new head of department provides confident leadership. Departmental management is good, building well upon earlier practices. The curriculum offers all pupils the chance to develop their geographical knowledge and understanding. Educational visits offer considerable enrichment, effectively expanding pupils' understanding of geography through related tasks. The use of varied resources provides a stimulating atmosphere in many lessons. Relationships are good and most pupils respond well.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not allocated enough time to reach a satisfactory standard.
- Teaching is good so that those pupils who are given enough time achieve well.
- Standards on the GCSE course were much improved in 2003.
- Assessment of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is not as good as it is on the GCSE course.
- The very good leadership of the department and its good management are responsible for the maintenance of good standards.

Commentary

81. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with average knowledge and understanding of religious education. They achieve well and by Year 9 reach standards that are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They have good understanding of the major world faiths. In Years 10 and 11 pupils on the GCSE course continue to achieve well. They have very good

understanding of the teaching of various faiths on social and moral issues and achieve standards that are well above average. In all years, however, not enough attention is paid to pupils' own responses to what they learn so the spiritual dimension is not as high as expected.

82. GCSE results in 2002 were in line with the national average and there was a very significant improvement in 2003. However, over half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not choose the GCSE course and they are allotted so little time for religious education that they do not achieve satisfactorily.
83. Pupils learn well because teaching is good. The planning of units of work and individual lessons is very good. The very good relationships in classrooms create a climate in which pupils are tolerant of the views of others. Most lessons are set at a challenging level and pupils respond well. Materials are usually available to suit pupils of different abilities but sometimes the subject matter is too difficult for the less able unless supported by a teaching assistant. The marking of pupils' work is very thorough but in Years 7 to 9 there is no system to show pupils how to do better. By contrast, marking on the GCSE course is firmly linked to examination grades and, consequently, pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve.
84. The good standards that have been maintained from the time of the previous inspection are largely due to the very good leadership shown by the head of department, who is a fine role model and is responsible for the stimulating ethos. The department is well managed and is aware of fine-tuning that is needed to ensure that all teachers consistently follow the best procedures.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in public examinations are above average and improving.
- The head of faculty provides very good leadership and heads of subject are very good managers.
- Teaching is very good overall and teachers are well supported by qualified technicians.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work.

Commentary

85. Standards on entry are average, though pupils have had widely varying experiences in their primary schools. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average for both boys and girls. Pupils experience the full range of materials and processes over three years and develop a broad range of skills and knowledge. Teacher assessments in 2002 indicate the proportion achieving Level 5 to be well above average. The proportion reaching higher levels is only average, reflecting breadth of experience rather than in depth study. In lessons all pupils make good progress from Year 7 to 9. The very good specialist teaching progressively develops skills and knowledge. Pupils use information and communication technology confidently and carry out some computer aided design and manufacturing. They quickly develop very good attitudes and independence when working in practical situations. Work is assessed to a common format. Hence pupils have clear guidance about the levels they achieve and how to improve. This, in turn, helps them learn well.
86. Standards in the 2002 GCSE examinations were above average, the highest being in textiles and food. They have improved since the previous inspection. All pupils study technology. In 2003, results improved dramatically as a result of very good department monitoring and evaluation of the previous year's results. Teachers have modified their teaching plans and thus raised standards, particularly in the groups studying resistant materials and graphics.

Pupils achieve very well overall in relation to their standards in Year 9 but a minority of boys with poor attendance underachieved in food. Standards seen are above average for both boys and girls with good progress being made with coursework. Teaching is very good. Teachers track and monitor work effectively and give very good individual support, which helps all pupils achieve well. Lessons are well structured and resourced which enables pupils to work with good levels of independence.

87. Leadership and management of the faculty are very good. Departmental reviews have led to improvement and ensured a very effective team of teachers. The support provided by the qualified technicians and the high quality of the teaching environment, with access to computers, all contributes to very good learning.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Overall the quality of provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average.
- Good teaching generates good progress by the end of Year 9 and very good progress by the end of Year 11.
- Teachers and pupils relate well together, creating a very good learning partnership.
- The management of the department is good, promoting high expectations.
- Pupils do not have enough experience of using computers in art.
- The large number of single lessons in Years 10 and 11 limits the range of experiences available to pupils.

Commentary

88. When they first come to school, the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils are average. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average. Pupils make good progress because they respond well to the wide range of materials and experiences available to them. In GCSE examinations, standards are well above the national average. In all lessons, the very good learning partnership between teachers and pupils helps promote very good progress and achievement.
89. The quality of teaching is good and is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Lesson planning is very effective. The majority of lessons for older pupils are challenging but are less so for the most able pupils in Years 7 and 8. The personal development of the pupils is improving because they are encouraged to form opinions through discussion, share ideas and assist in the distribution and collection of materials and equipment. Language skills are improving because key words are introduced into most lessons as part of the school literacy policy. Contributions to the promotion of numeracy are limited but concepts of scale, proportion, perspective, area and volume are introduced. Regular references are made in most lessons to the work of significant artists and cultures in order raise creative and visual appreciation. The classrooms and surrounding areas contain good displays of work promoting high standards.
90. Assessment is good and, as a result, pupils are aware of their progress and how they might improve. Work is marked regularly and homework is used effectively as preparation or reinforcement for lessons. The previous inspection indicated that additional opportunities should be provided for all pupils to gain experience of using computers in art. This continues to be an area requiring improvement.
91. The management of the department is good. The standardisation of work in Years 7 to 9 is having a positive impact upon the quality and accuracy of teacher assessment. The number of single lessons has an adverse effect on the creative opportunities available in Years 10 and

11. A very good range of enrichment activities improves the knowledge and understanding of pupils. The appointment of a technician would prove beneficial in the preparation of materials and equipment, thereby supporting an improvement in lesson planning.

Music

The overall provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned lessons encourage pupils to learn.
- Assessment is used to raise standards.
- Standards in GCSE examinations are rising quickly.
- Music is very popular in the school.
- A rich diet of extra-curricular activities which is well-supported by pupils.

Commentary

92. The teacher assessments in 2002 for pupils aged 14 were average, as were the GCSE results for pupils aged 16. In 2003, standards achieved by 14 year olds were similar to those in the previous year but the GCSE results showed significant improvement. The increased number of pupils gaining A* and A grades was particularly impressive. There is no significant difference between the work of boys and girls.
93. Overall the standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement because, whilst some pupils join the school with good musical ability, the skills of the majority are underdeveloped. At age 16, standards are above average at this early stage in the year. Pupils make good progress and achieve well compared with their prior attainment. Good teaching is a key factor in improving the quality of learning, especially in Years 10 and 11. Many pupils, including a number who are talented, play instruments and sing to a high standard, which adds to their personal development.
94. The overall quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good with some very good features that enhance pupils' learning. More able pupils support the work of their less confident colleagues. Homework, when set, supports the work done in lessons. Pupils know their levels of attainment and how to improve. There is very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 that leads to a positive commitment from pupils. Since teachers plan lessons with skill, pupils are exposed to many musical experiences that promote a higher standard of learning. Pupils talk with interest about their work and confidently use information and communication technology for composing. Because predicted GCSE grades are discussed with pupils, many are aware of what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.
95. Very good leadership inspires students to do well and management of the department is effective. This is clear from the wide range of interest in music across the school and the many high-quality productions, concerts and foreign trips that take place. Formal monitoring of teaching is now taking place by the head of department and this is helping to improve teaching quality. The first class accommodation raises the profile of music and the resources available effectively support learning.

Drama

96. The course is effective in introducing pupils to drama skills and developing significant personal and social skills. Pupils enjoy drama, respond well and focus on tasks. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the course and participate well. Teaching is well structured and planned, with an effective use of improvisation to explore and extend ideas. The department does not evaluate assessment procedures and ways in which pupils can record their own progress.

97. GCSE drama results in 2002 were average. In 2003, results were less good because pupils' coursework was not good enough. The department is conscious that this needs to be improved. Pupils are committed and make good progress in lessons. The quality of their performance work is good with strong and sensitive characterisations. Teaching is effective and pupils' evaluation of their work is greatly enhanced by the teacher's supportive interventions. Relationships are very positive between teachers and pupils in both key stages.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Good leadership is bringing about improvement.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not used in planning lessons or talking with pupils to help them improve.
- Pupils have good attitudes, responding well to high expectations of behaviour and involvement.

Commentary

98. Standards in general physical education lessons across the school are above average. In 2002, GCSE results were above average and were an improvement on the previous year.
99. Good teaching enables all pupils to achieve well. They make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding. In examination courses, pupils achieve well in relation to the other subjects they study. Girls are doing better than boys. Pupils have good skills of literacy and this contributes to their good achievement in written examinations. They work hard because teachers plan interesting tasks that carefully build skill and understanding. Teachers give plenty of support and guidance as pupils learn, motivating them to improve further. The climate for learning in lessons is good as pupils respond well to teachers' insistence on good behaviour and involvement. Regular assessments are made of the progress pupils make, including helpful marking of GCSE work. However, in Years 7 to 9 these assessments are not used with pupils on a regular basis to help them improve.
100. Leadership is good and thus teachers work well as a team. The induction of new and experienced staff to the department is good. Improvement since the last inspection is good with improved results and a significant increase in numbers taking GCSE courses. Management is good. There is good analysis of examination data to check the work of the department. The department does not review its work beyond this to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Extra curricular provision is good and is well supported by pupils. There are very good collaborative arrangements with other schools to develop talented pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The subject was examined for the first time in 2003 and results were above average from a very large entry. In the one lesson sampled, Year 11 pupils achieved satisfactorily as a result of satisfactory teaching and good relationships with the teacher. The cramped conditions and technical problems with computers in the room constrained learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specific events and activities make a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship.
- There has been no gathering of information to establish which aspects of citizenship are already being taught in subject areas.
- Teaching is not effective in raising standards and management is weak.

Commentary

101. Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are below those expected and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because the full programmes of study are not being taught as required by law and pupils are receiving a limited curriculum. Although some elements of the curriculum are in place there has been no systematic gathering of information across other subject areas to find out which aspects of citizenship are already being taught.
102. Much of the teaching seen requires continuous writing to the virtual exclusion of activities such as discussion and role-play and so misses the spirit of pupils learning from each other. However, some activities, such as the elections for the recently formed school council, the visit from magistrates and using Year 11 pupils as form assistants, are starting to enhance the way pupils think about institutions. Activities such as these begin to raise the profile of learning but at present there is little incentive for pupils to take citizenship seriously.
103. Personal, social and health education is combined with citizenship to be taught together in the same lesson each week on a rolling timetable. This creates difficulties in planning workshops and attracting visiting speakers. However, a new co-ordinator for citizenship has recently been appointed who is aware of the shortcomings and is prepared to tackle them. Strong support from the senior management team will help to put this whole area of learning on a better footing.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
General studies	12	50.0	78.6	0	25.7	13.3	30.0
English/English language	9	88.9	92.0	11.1	29.9	30.0	35.7
English literature	6	83.3	94.4	33.3	37.9	38.3	38.9
French	5	100	85.4	0.0	35.2	38.0	34.9
Mathematics	27	51.9	74.2	7.4	34.3	16.3	31.3
Chemistry	7	85.7	84.8	14.3	36.9	28.6	35.2
Biology	13	100	81.6	15.4	33.2	32.3	33.2
Physics	15	66.7	82.0	6.7	36.2	20.7	34.3
Communication studies	6	50.0	94.2	33.3	36.1	21.7	38.5
History	6	83.3	91.8	16.7	37.2	30.0	37.8
Geography	7	71.4	88.3	0.0	36.4	17.1	36.3
Religious studies	7	42.9	90.9	14.3	38.9	17.1	37.9
Design and technology	11	90.9	89.2	0.0	32.0	26.4	35.7
Sociology	6	66.7	83.7	33.3	33.6	28.3	33.8

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
General studies	121	92.6	90.1	21.5	29.1	63.0	69.3
English/English language	17	94.1	98.3	17.6	36.5	67.1	80.1
English literature	12	100	98.5	50.0	43.7	85.0	84.3
French	6	100	96.2	50.0	46.1	80.0	83.0
Mathematics	20	90.0	93.3	50.0	52.2	83.0	84.7
Chemistry	25	100	94.0	48.0	45.9	88.0	81.1
Biology	42	100	91.6	47.6	36.3	88.1	74.1
Physics	26	100	92.8	30.8	42.8	77.7	78.6
Communication studies	20	100	98.3	45.0	36.8	85.0	81.1
History	16	100	97.1	75.0	41.0	96.3	81.2

Geography	21	95.2	97.1	19.0	40.5	71.4	80.9
Religious studies	38	97.4	96.3	21.1	44.0	73.7	82.2
Sociology	24	83.3	95.4	33.3	39.6	64.2	79.1
Economics	8	100	96.2	25.0	45.8	80.0	83.1
Design and technology	20	100	95.3	40.0	35.5	83.0	76.5
Art and design	9	100	96.1	77.8	48.7	106.7	85.1
Drama	11	100	98.1	9.1	41.5	67.3	82.9
Sports studies	9	100	95.4	33.3	29.5	75.6	73.2
Business VCE	30	100	87.1	18.0	16.5	65.9	60.1
Health and social care VCE	6	100	90.1	33.3	16.3	80.0	62.5
Information technology VQ	22	100	84.3	37.3	24.5	72.7	64.3

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subjects in this curriculum area were English and French but work was also sampled in German. Examination results in German are above average. Teaching is good and thus students are highly motivated, achieve well and adopt very positive attitudes to their studies.

English

Provision for English in the sixth form is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are good in both English language and English literature.
- Results have improved rapidly in English language.
- Pupils take more responsibility for their learning in English language than in English literature.
- The pace of learning is not fast enough in English literature.

Commentary

104. Results in both English language and English literature were above average in 2002. Results in English language are rapidly improving. The proportion of A and B grades achieved in both subjects is in line with the school's average. Standards of work being produced by students currently in the sixth form are good.
105. The teaching of English is good, especially in language lessons. In English language the pace of learning is fast. Students are challenged to think for themselves. They are clear about what is expected of them, as the tasks are effectively explained. Students' interest is maintained because they undertake a variety of tasks within the lesson. They learn well, because they actively undertake research and share their findings with others in the class. Because teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject they can, in English literature for instance, provide considerable amounts of detailed information. However, in some literature lessons the pace of lessons is slow. In these lessons, students are not encouraged to undertake their own research and to contribute to the research of others in groups by discussion. Too little independent written work is expected of students.
106. In some lessons teachers encourage male and female students to sit together for class discussions. In other lessons boys sit together and do not fully participate in answering questions, as they are overshadowed by the more numerous girls. Some group sizes are too large for whole-class discussions to be effective. Some students therefore do not fully participate in answering questions.

Key skills in language and literacy

107. Provision for the development of key skills in language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. There is evidence from such subjects as art, science, religious education and physical education that students are encouraged to use literacy skills to improve the analytical quality of their written work and oral discussions. Literacy skills support learning and achievement in examination courses.

French

The quality of provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are above average.
- Standards are above average because teaching is good.
- Students are highly motivated and show very good attitudes to work.
- In some lessons teachers tend to over-dominate discussions, thus restricting students' contributions.

Commentary

108. In the 2002 GCE A level examinations the number of passes at A and B grades was above average and all students passed. Students achieve well, given their prior performance in GCSE examinations.
109. Standards are above average at the end of Year 12 and Year 13 with male and female students achieving equally well. Students understand the detail of authentic spoken and written French about topical and political issues in France. They have good spoken vocabulary and understanding of grammar for work at this level. Students confidently read extracts from French magazines and newspapers. They write at length about such topics as rights and responsibilities and the difficulties faced by children in the Third World. Written work shows good vocabulary and accuracy.
110. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge both of the spoken French required and technicalities of how best to prepare students for examinations. Teachers are more challenging of students than they are in the main school. Students' work is regularly marked and teachers use marking well to give hints on how students might improve their work. Students are given plenty of advice and written prompts to guide them. Regular assessments give students a good indication of their present performance and likely grades. In some lessons the teacher contributes too much to discussions when students should be left to work out answers on their own. Students are attentive and highly motivated. They work hard and develop good individual and research skills. There is a relaxed and businesslike atmosphere in lessons.
111. The curriculum is good. Students can opt to study two languages for A level if they wish. Students are able to undertake work experience abroad. This clearly has substantial benefits in terms of their learning and experience. The management of the subject is good. Clear policies and schemes of work contribute to raising standards. Teachers and students work hard together and show a high level of mutual respect. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and often very good, helping students to achieve well.
- Results are consistently close to the national average.
- Relationships are very good, particularly in Year 12.
- Whilst attitudes are good, students show little genuine enthusiasm for mathematics.

Commentary

112. Results in 2002 were average, as they have been for several years. Results in 2003 were similar to those in the previous year. Generally there has been little difference in the performance of male and female students, though female students did better than male students in 2002. This pattern is mirrored in lessons seen, where male and female students are making equally good progress. Students of further mathematics also make good progress and are performing, as expected, above the level of most mathematics students.
113. Teaching, overall, is good. It is very good in Year 12, where teachers know students well and have established very good rapport with students. Teachers target questions clearly whilst explaining graph work and algebra, then enable students to consolidate learning and work at their own pace. Where students need more help, teachers provide relevant practice material and, where students made progress quicker, they are advised to omit certain questions. Students are helped to build confidence very well. In Year 13, teaching is well structured and information and communication technology is used effectively to demonstrate how to solve difficult problems by drawing graphs. However, questioning is less sharp and the pace of lessons is a little slower than in Year 12.
114. Whilst students work hard and have a good attitude, they show little excitement or love of the subject in any lessons. Students know their levels well because teachers regularly provide questions from past papers and grade them using accurate mark schemes.
115. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Whilst achievement is good, numbers studying mathematics are in decline and too many able students do not take up mathematics from GCSE. There is a need for the subject to be more openly seen as enjoyable and worthwhile.

Key skills in mathematics

116. Students have good levels of mathematical competence in most other subjects. These are particularly good in food technology where students calculate value for money and in geography where students work out and understand why people in cars could not escape from the volcanic eruption on Mount Etna. Students in science use mathematical skills consistently well. In physical education, where students struggled initially to understand how forces acted on the human body, they were well taught by the teacher and made good progress with their work.

SCIENCE

The focus was on chemistry and biology, but physics was also sampled. In physics, examination results in 2002 were broadly average. Two lessons were seen, of which one was very good and the other good. In the very good lesson, students made rapid progress in understanding projectile motion. This was because the teacher skilfully built on their existing ideas and helped them develop a much deeper understanding through effective practical demonstration, visual modelling and mathematical description.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students gain good subject knowledge, but do not understand as much as they could because of the styles of teaching used.
- Standards show great improvement over recent years as a result of some innovative developments.
- Assessment is not frequent enough and students' marks are not properly recorded and used to allow the teachers to encourage full development of understanding.
- There is inadequate access to computers as a tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

117. While standards of work in chemistry are very good, students' knowledge is generally a lot better than their understanding. This is because they do not have enough practice in explaining and applying what they know. Thus, in practical work, they are very skilful at experimentation but much less clear about why they do what they do. In their theory work, most have a very good knowledge of what happens in chemical reactions, for instance, without being able to explain why. Although over half of students gain A and B grades, some of the most able students are not encouraged to work, think or explore as much as they could. Also, some of those who start the course with lower GCSE grades find it hard to keep up, so do not achieve well.
118. Though the quality of teaching is good overall there are areas where improvement is needed. Teachers do not currently assess students' work adequately or keep records that allow achievement to be monitored. Nor do they encourage students to undertake extension work on an independent basis, so that they can provide their own challenge to achieve well and also prepare for higher-level studies.
119. Particular strengths of the teachers are their command of the subject, their suitably high expectations of most students and the variety of teaching methods used in even a single lesson. They do, however, require further training in assessing learning from day to day and in the modern standards for chemical names, units, symbols and abbreviations. The department, which is very well led and effectively managed, is aware of these needs. Plans are already in place to deal with them. Symptomatic of the very good leadership is the great improvement in standards. Much of this is due to some outstanding innovations, such as what the team calls the study partner initiative. Last, while the staff are trained in the effective use of computers and communications, they have far too little access to be able to work with them in most lessons, let alone to have the students use them in class.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved at AS and A2 level are well above average as a result of very good teaching.
- A wide range of teaching methods ensures that all groups of students make good progress.
- Very good support for individual students leads to them feeling confident about meeting the challenges of the subject.
- Very good teaching methods used in some lessons are not always shared systematically with all other teachers.
- Positive relationships between staff and students result in an effective dialogue which develops and deepens scientific understanding.

Commentary

120. Standards were well above average in both AS and A2 examinations in 2002. The upward trend was maintained in 2003 with more students taking the subject. Almost half gained grades A or B at A2 and over half at AS level. Investigations, including fieldwork, are strengths because students are given good individual guidance. Achievement by students is good in comparison with national results. Students across the ability range made better than expected progress in relation to their attainment at GCSE. Boys and girls both make above average progress.
121. Teaching is very good and, as a result, all students learn very successfully. The wide range of teaching styles is highly effective in helping students, who often learn in different ways. Teachers help individuals very well by monitoring their progress and giving very good individual advice and guidance. As a result, students grow in understanding and confidence so that, by Year 13, good scientific debates take place. However, particular examples of good practice are sometimes specific to individual teachers. This is because mechanisms for sharing best practice are currently under-developed. Leadership and management are very good, particular strengths including vision, modelling good practice and the setting of effective priorities for further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve above average standards because of good teaching.
- Students are developing a greater independence in the use of computers.
- Students do not do as well as they could in written examinations.
- The good vocational links already established require further development.
- Students' work is well monitored and they are well guided.

Commentary

122. Results in AVCE examinations in 2002 were above average. The 2003 results are similar to those in 2002. Almost all students who start the course go on to complete it.
123. Standards for students currently following the AVCE course are above average. This represents good achievement when students' ICT capability at the end of Year 11 is considered. Students are well motivated and have well developed independence in the use of the computer in a range of problem solving situations. These include the management and development of websites and also presenting information both graphically and using spreadsheets. Students are not critical or thorough enough in the evaluation of their project solutions. Also, independent learning resources for the study of examination material are not well enough developed to raise the standards of written work.

124. Teaching and learning are good. Students benefit from committed teachers who are very keen to try out new technologies and resources for the benefit of their students. There are some links with external companies but these are not well developed enough to emphasise the vocational aspects of the course. Teachers monitor students' progress very well and indicate clearly what students need to do to improve further. Homework is well integrated. However, not enough use is made of independent learning for some aspects of coursework so that more lesson time can be allocated to the study of examination topics. Students' attitudes and behaviour in this area of study are very good.
125. The leadership and management are good. A strong sense of direction and aspiration for continuous improvement is clear. Management systems are well established to support students with their studies. Students have very good access to ICT resources in lessons and negotiate access outside of lessons.

HUMANITIES

The focus in this curriculum area was on geography and psychology, but work was also sampled in history, law, religious education and sociology. In history, examination results in 2002 were well above average and were similar in 2003 to the previous year. In the two lessons seen, students achieved well as a result of stimulating teaching and their very positive attitudes to the subject. In religious education, A level results in 2002 were below average, but improved in 2003. In the two lessons seen, most students reached or exceeded expectations based on their prior GCSE performance. This is as a result of good teaching. Results in sociology have not been as good as in most other subjects in recent years but, in the lessons observed, students are working hard and learning well because of sound teaching. In law, which is in only its second year, students performed satisfactorily at AS level in 2003. Nearly all the students have continued with the subject in Year 13. In the one lesson seen, these students were achieving satisfactorily as a result of sound teaching.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good, enabling students to learn well and make good progress.
- Students adopt positive attitudes to their learning.
- The provision for curricular enrichment is very good because it extends learning and personal development well.
- In some lessons, there is insufficient time for discussion and reflection.

Commentary

126. In 2002 the standards achieved in A level courses were below average. In 2003 similar results were achieved, but there were few candidates. Students currently in Year 13 are achieving well. This is because of good teaching and positive student attitudes. Achievement is good overall, because attainment on entry to the sixth form course was below average.
127. All students work conscientiously to improve their overall knowledge, understanding and skills. The most able students present their work immaculately and this greatly assists them in reflecting on prior learning and consolidating their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Most students assemble an impressive range of data and possess sufficient skills to interrogate it and draw reasoned conclusions on factors that influence the environment.
128. Students in the sixth form are taught effectively and this is why achievement is good. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and careful departmental timetabling enables them to work to their strengths. This ensures students receive specialist teaching within the subject. Good use is made of information and communication technology and other resources to

present information. On occasion, teaching is over-directed which limits discussion and reflection. As a result, students do not always explain their ideas sufficiently well and this affects the quality of written work. Where teaching is most successful, students are encouraged to undertake some independent learning.

129. The curriculum is well matched to the chosen examination courses and this enables students to progress effectively. The use of residential fieldwork is a particular strength. This enables students to develop their understanding of a topic by helping tutor younger students. This also promotes students' personal development extremely well.
130. The subject is effectively managed, with the new head of department working hard to identify areas for improvement. A positive indicator of growth is the large number of students now studying geography in Year 12.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Students achieve very well and make very good progress.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The accommodation for the teaching of the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are excellent.

Commentary

131. This very popular course is now in its third year. As a result of very good teaching and excellent leadership and management, students quickly develop a high level of interest and motivation for their studies. Students research very well, using information and communication technology and other sources very effectively to contribute to their coursework. In AS examinations in 2002 and 2003 standards were well above average. Students completing the A2 course in 2003 attained good standards in three out of the four modules taken but did not do so well in a fourth module.
132. The unsatisfactory accommodation is a significant factor and affects. There is no specialist room for the teaching of psychology. Thus the use of interactive displays to support and further inform the students' learning is limited. Furthermore the lack of a specialist room also severely restricts practical and experimental work. Samples of previous work, discussion with students and lessons seen confirm that standards overall are now well above average but could go even higher if suitable accommodation is provided.
133. Supported by very good and sometimes excellent teaching, the students quickly develop a mature, independent and collaborative style of learning. There is a very high level of challenge. Students, after a very thoroughly prepared introduction by the teacher, are asked to conduct their own research. They take careful note of their previous studies, researching very effectively and making high quality presentations of their findings. Some of the materials they develop are so good that they form a basis for the further learning of other students and can often be used as further teaching resources. Relationships are excellent and there is a very strong, collaborative team approach between teachers and students.
134. A good indicator of the success of the course is that almost half of the students completing their studies in psychology last year went on to gain places to read the subject at university.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Engineering, design and manufacturing

The focus was on design and technology. Work on the recently introduced BTEC Early Years course was sampled. One Year 12 lesson was observed in which teaching was good and students were making good progress with their learning. Standards overall are average. One student so far has taken the examination and achieved a pass grade.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average because specialist teaching is consistently good.
- Students have very good attitudes to their work.
- There is a good range of courses on offer.
- Facilities for independent work are very good.
- Computer aided design is underdeveloped.

Commentary

135. Standards in the 2002 GCE A level examination were above average. Female students did much better than males overall, achieving well above the national average. Students have a choice of three technology courses in either food, product design graphics or 3-D design. In 2003 more students gained A and B grades than in 2002. Numbers opting for food technology are small but results for the AS examination in 2003 were good. Students' results for technology courses indicate good achievement by both male and female students in relation to their standards in Year 11.
136. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are above average. In Year 12, standards are average at this early stage of the course. Groups are split between teachers so that students experience a range of specialist expertise. Monitoring systems have been improved to track students' progress more effectively and regular advice from teachers helps them improve.
137. Teaching is good overall in technology courses. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and use this well to challenge and support students. Practical work on display from previous years is of a high standard and challenges students to aim high. Students have very positive attitudes to their work which helps them achieve. Teaching in food technology is very good. It sustains the pace of lessons and involves students very effectively in their learning through lively discussion and practical work. Students make regular use of information and communication technology to present their work in all areas of study. The use of advanced computer aided design software is under-developed however.
138. Leadership and management are very good and have ensured that an effective team of specialists teaches students. Good use is made of visits to industry to extend the curriculum. The high quality facilities in study areas and practical rooms and the very good support from technicians enable students to develop independence and achieve high standards in their work.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on art and design and media studies in the sixth form but performance studies, film studies, photography and theatre studies were also sampled. Achievement at AS level in performance studies in 2003 was average. Only two students are taking A2 performance studies, which is not ideal, but they are able to integrate dance, drama and music satisfactorily. Achievement in AS film studies in 2003 is above average. Progress is good in lessons and teaching is challenging and very effective in film studies. In photography, achievement at AS level was above average.

Photography teaching is very good and, as a result, students' portfolios are well presented. Theatre studies A level results in 2002 were below the national average but they improved dramatically in 2003. Students make good progress in theatre studies as a result of well-structured teaching.

Art

Overall the quality of provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average and continue to improve as a result of good teaching.
- The attitudes of students are excellent and therefore progress is very good.
- Leadership and management provide clear vision and the promotion of high standards.

Commentary

139. Standards are above average and continue to improve because of good teaching. Standards in 2002 were well above average. In 2003 standards were average because some coursework was below the expected standard. The analysis of work presently being produced indicates that standards are rising to the levels achieved in 2002.
140. Students demonstrate flair and imagination and produce work of quality and originality. Students are confident when working with a variety of materials and resources. They are articulate and can discuss their work with confidence and have pride in their achievements. Their attitude toward the subject borders on excellent and is a major contributor to the quality of the work produced. Progress is very good due to the attitude of the students and the quality of teaching.
141. Teaching is very good. Lessons are challenging and well planned. Classroom organisation and management are extremely effective and the relationship between the teachers and the students is excellent. Regular references are made to the work of significant artists and cultures in order raise creative and visual appreciation. Assessment is effective, students are aware of expectations and know how to improve their work. Work is monitored on a regular basis and assessment is particularly effective as an influence on future curriculum development and lesson planning. The students are well aware of teachers' expectations and their own strengths and weaknesses. Students speak highly of the support provided by teachers.
142. The quality of leadership and management is good. There is clear vision and very effective planning which promotes high standards in lessons. The teachers work as a very effective team, offering complementary skills. Teachers maintain detailed records, which enable them to set students targets for achievement.

Media Studies

Overall, the quality of provision for media studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement and examination results are very good.
- Very good teaching and learning are built on excellent relationships between teachers and students.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Accommodation is very good and media resources are excellent.

Commentary

143. Students achieve well. They show considerable knowledge and understanding of media terminology, concepts and skills. They apply these well and develop them in critical and practical work. They also successfully use them to engage with wider social and cultural issues. They use research skills extensively and have a good grasp of textual analysis. They present their work well. The quality of students' practical work is improving now that they have regular access to first class equipment.
144. Lessons are well planned and well structured so that students are able to reinforce and consolidate their learning in a variety of ways. Teachers intervene expertly to support and extend learning. Assessment is used to set individual targets for students and marking of coursework is thorough.
145. Students' enthusiasm for and commitment to media studies enable them to learn productively, independently and co-operatively and with ever-increasing skills. They talk very cogently about their work. They are focused and participate well in lessons and support each other. They are capable of both sophisticated self-evaluation and critical evaluation of each other's work. Students are clear about the scope of the course, what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.
146. The teacher in charge of media studies has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve, high aspirations for the department and high expectations of her students. She has an excellent command of the field, both theoretically and practically. Her confidence in using media technology and sophisticated software enables her to offer the highest level of support to her students. The staffing of the department is now reasonably stable and she is able to offer her staff considerable support in preparing lessons and planning.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus subject in this curriculum area was sports studies. Work was also sampled in leisure and tourism. In this subject provision is good. This is because the course is carefully planned to meet the needs of its students. Students achieve average standards and gain valuable skills that provide good links to areas of employment. In the lesson observed the standard of teaching was good and students consequently made effective progress.

Sports Studies

Provision for sports studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching builds on the very good attitudes of students so they achieve well.
- There is good use of information and communication technology for both teaching and learning.
- The standard of coursework is high.
- Assessment information is not used to plan for improving individual achievement and progress.

Commentary

147. Results at A level in 2002 were above average, as they have been in recent years. In Year 12 many students did not record examination grades at this stage, but standards in lessons are above average.
148. Students achieve well. They make good progress in lessons because they work hard and are motivated by good teaching. They do well in sports studies when compared to the other subjects they study. A particular strength is the very high standard of coursework on improving performance. This is because teachers make good links between practical performance and the underpinning theoretical principles. Students' good standards of literacy support the quality of their coursework.

149. Teachers use methods that involve students in their own learning and encourage them to learn from each other. Information and communication technology is used well by teachers to make lessons interesting and by students for independent study. This independent learning has improved since the last inspection. Students have a good understanding of how well they are doing. Work is carefully marked and, if necessary, teachers use this information to revisit topics to ensure thorough understanding. This assessment is not so well used when planning lessons and tasks that recognise and progress students' learning at an individual level.
150. Leadership of the course is good. Since the last inspection standards have risen to be above average. Numbers taking the course are rising. Management is good. Careful analysis of results is used to highlight any areas of weakness and is followed by effective action for improvement.

BUSINESS

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Procedures for assessing work and reviewing students' progress are very good.
- The subject is well led and managed so that good learning is encouraged.
- Students' very positive attitudes help them to learn well.
- Students' skills of analysis and evaluation are not adequately developed.
- Learning is constrained by unsatisfactory accommodation and limited resources.

Commentary

151. In 2002, results in the AVCE and GNVQ Intermediate examinations were above average. Females did significantly better than males. Results have been improving steadily in recent years and retention rates are good.
152. In all courses, students reach average standards, which represents good achievement compared with their GCSE performance. GNVQ students use business terms with understanding. Less able students have difficulty with technical terms and in evaluative writing in their conclusions. Successful linking of study units, such as customer services, to their work experience reinforces their understanding. Year 13 students have a good understanding of the topics studied and use their selected companies well to illustrate business theory. The analytical skills of more able students are undeveloped. Students have very good information and communication technology skills, especially in Year 13, and at least sound literacy and number skills.
153. Teaching is good as teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan assignments well. Units of work are effectively broken down to make them accessible to students of all abilities. Students learn effectively because lessons have clear purpose and good quality materials, though book resources are not used enough. Sharper deadlines for work completion are promoting good learning. More challenging questioning, especially for more able students on the AVCE course, is often lacking. Assessment of students' work is very good and progress is monitored closely. Students are well motivated and work productively, both independently and collaboratively.
154. The subject is well led and managed. A clear vision and direction have been agreed after a well-focused critical review of the work of the department. There is a strong commitment to improvement, which has been good since the last inspection. Regular classroom observation to monitor teaching is encouraging the sharing of good practice. Interest is being stimulated by the introduction of work experience and visits to local businesses. Effective group work and the monitoring of students' progress are hampered by unsuitable desk arrangements in the main classroom. Moving rooms during double lessons also disrupts learning.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The school has recently put in place a BTEC course for Early Years. The only students so far to take the examination gained a pass grade. Students currently following the course are achieving well because of good teaching and are reaching broadly average standards.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

There was no focus subject, but work in general studies was sampled. In 2002, A level results were below the national average. In 2003, results were better than this from an impressive entry of almost all of the Year 13 students. Two lessons were seen with Year 12. One was excellent and the other was very good. In both lessons questioning from teachers was sharp and resources were used very effectively. This ensured that students thought deeply about events in history and their links with political leadership and the philosophies, music and the arts movements of these times.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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