

INSPECTION REPORT

GREENACRE SCHOOL

Chatham

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118817

Headteacher: Mr A Reese

Lead inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi

Dates of inspection: 24th – 28th November 2003

Inspection number: 259362

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11-18
Gender of students:	Male
Number on roll:	941
School address:	157 Walderslade Road Walderslade Chatham Kent
Postcode:	ME5 0LP
Telephone number:	01634 861593
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Butler
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd -5 th February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Greenacre is an average sized 11-18 secondary modern boys' school with 941 students, including the students in the joint sixth form run with Walderslade Girls' School. Most students are white United Kingdom heritage. Other ethnic minority backgrounds of 2.4 per cent include Indian, Bangladeshi, African, Chinese and mixed or dual heritage. Student numbers are increasing as the school gains popularity locally. The immediate school ward suffers from considerable deprivation, although some students also come from the relatively more affluent new housing developments. 12.4 per cent are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 16.1 per cent. A quarter of local students are taken by the grammar schools. The students' prior attainment on entry is below the national average. Just over 2 per cent have English as an additional language need. The percentage of students with special educational needs is very high at 32.4 per cent (national 18.1 per cent). Of those, 4.6 per cent have statements of special educational needs (national 2.4 per cent). The school has a joint sixth form provision with its neighbouring school, Walderslade Girls. Sixth-form courses are taught jointly by staff on both sites. The sixth form is run as one unit with one head of sixth form. There are also further courses offered by a local consortium made up of the two schools and three other local secondary schools – two grammar schools and one mixed high school. The sixth-form numbers are 34 in Year 12 and 28 in Year 13.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2447	Dr Faysal Mikdadi	Lead inspector	Citizenship
10329	Brian Sampson	Lay inspector	
30941	Keith Brammer	Team inspector	English, sixth form English
18888	Janet Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education
4908	Ian Farquhar	Team inspector	Sixth form mathematics
32211	Brendan Geoghegan	Team inspector	Sixth form ICT
4727	Jeff Hale	Team inspector	Geography
11959	John Hardy	Team inspector	Design technology
22501	Sue Jones	Team inspector	Music
22458	Gilbert McGinn	Team inspector	History, sixth form history
31525	Sue O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31528	Trevor Riddiough	Team inspector	Science, sixth form biology
10053	Janet Simms	Team inspector	Art
1578	Maureen Sinclair	Team inspector	ICT
15277	Chris Vidler	Team inspector	Business education
32362	Ken Warburton	Team inspector	Mathematics
33170	Julie Winterman	Team inspector	Religious education
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Sixth form music

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good, effective, caring and inclusive school that has created the right learning environment to allow its students to achieve well. When compared to all schools nationally, students' attainment is below the national averages in the Year 9 tests, except for mathematics, where it is average. The percentage of students attaining five or more grades A*-C is also below the national average for all schools. However, compared to similar schools, these results are well above the national average. Given the students' low prior attainment on entry to the school, these results show good progress. Teaching and learning are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership, which has enhanced the school's performance. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership by the headteacher is very good;
- Students' achievement and attitudes to learning are good;
- The school provides a good climate for learning, which includes good, and often very good, teaching. The quality of teaching is further enhanced by a rigorous programme of monitoring and by the effective use of the advanced skills teacher;
- Provision for science is unsatisfactory;
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in that teachers do not always give students clear advice on how to improve their performance and do not use assessment outcomes in planning lessons;
- The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school is very good;
- The promotion of students' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is unsatisfactory;
- Curriculum provision does not include religious education for all, sex education and education for personal relationships and a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme for all;
- The care, welfare and guidance of students are very good;
- The school's links to parents, the community and other providers are very good and help to enhance students' achievement as well as their chances of further education.

IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection has been **good**. The biggest improvement has been the significant increase in GCSE results. Other improvements have included higher attendance rates, better quality teaching and learning, enhanced opportunities for using information and communication technology (ICT) and improvements in the standards of literacy and numeracy. The management of special educational needs provision is now very good. The school has failed to improve provision in religious education, which is still not offered to all as is required by statute.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	D	C	D	A

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

Students' achievement is good. Students starting school have well below average prior attainment. By the end of Year 9, their attainment is below average compared to all schools. Standards are average in mathematics, art, ICT, geography and religious education, and above average in physical education. By the time students leave compulsory schooling, attainment in most subjects is below the national average. They are average in English, art, drama, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. These results show good achievement by students. Compared to national averages in similar schools, these results are well above the national

averages. Students' language skills are significantly improved by their schooling. Numeracy skills are underdeveloped, although some good practice takes place in some subjects.

Students' personal qualities are good. They behave satisfactorily. Their attendance and moral, social and cultural development are also satisfactory. Students lack satisfactory spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the students' education is good. Teaching is good in all subjects apart from science and religious education, where there are some weaknesses. This good teaching results in all students achieving well. Achievement by students with special educational needs is very good.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory because the school does not offer religious education, personal, social and health education, sex education, relationships and citizenship for all students. Links with parents, the local community and other schools are very good. Teachers work very hard to provide students with a very good extra-curricular activities programme.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good. The headteacher offers very good leadership, maintains a high profile around the school, works closely with staff and pushes hard to enhance students' achievement. Leadership by senior and subject staff is good. Support offered to staff by the leadership group is good. Day-to-day management is good. Governors do a good job working with the school, supporting and challenging senior managers and supporting staff. However, they have not ensured that their school complies with the statutory requirements to provide religious education for all, a daily act of collective worship, sex education and relationships.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and students think very highly of the school. Parents believe that the school has helped their children achieve well. They pay tribute to the hard work of staff and the headteacher in creating the right learning environment to achieve this. Students speak very highly of their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- work closely with the local education authority to raise the quality and availability of accommodation, especially in music and physical education;
- ensure consistency in the use of assessment to help students improve their performance and to help teachers plan their lessons;
- ensure that all students have access to a full programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the school offers all its students religious education, sex education and relationships and a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth-form provision is satisfactory and rapidly developing. It is financially cost effective.

Walderslade and Greenacre schools offer a joint sixth form for their students. This venture started in 2001 and is still developing in both the curriculum offered and in the standards reached by students. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is completely shared, classes are mixed gender and facilities in both schools are equally available to all students. The joint sixth form also forms part of a wider consortium with three other schools. Although standards of attainment are generally below or well below average, they are improving and students achieve well from GCSE. ICT is a strong subject and provision for the development of key skills in general is good. Leadership and management of the sixth form as a whole, incorporating the close collaboration of the leadership teams of both schools, are good, but there is a weakness in the leadership of business education.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision for ICT is very good, where students achieve above average standards as a result of very good teaching;
- Students' attitudes to their work are very good, resulting in a very constructive, open and secure climate for learning;
- Provision for full vocational courses is underdeveloped.
- Development of key skills in communication and application of number is good and results in key skills qualifications above those in similar schools;
- Accommodation and resources for independent learning are inadequate for the demands of an expanding sixth form.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although skills of independent learning are not well enough developed. Students' attitudes are very good and contribute significantly to good overall achievement.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . Overall, teaching and learning are good, but opportunities for independent learning and the use of ICT are undeveloped and achievement is satisfactory.
Science	Provision in biology is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are good, but there are insufficient resources for students to work independently. Physics was also sampled and provision found to be satisfactory .
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is very good . Teaching and learning are very good and the subject is expertly led and managed. Students achieve above average standards.
Humanities	Provision in history is good . Good teaching, coupled with very positive students' attitudes, allows students to achieve well. Extended writing skills are underdeveloped.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in music technology is good . Teaching of this new subject is good. Students are well motivated and are making good progress.
Business	Provision in business education is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory , but there is too narrow a range of strategies being used, and insufficient opportunities are given for

independent learning.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Support, advice and guidance for the students in the joint sixth form are good. All students are allocated to mixed tutor groups from the two schools, and tutors provide good overall support, although there is some inconsistency in their quality. There is good support from tutors on university applications and good impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities. Students often use school mentors, but they also receive effective help from representatives of Greenwich University. The monitoring of academic performance by tutors is satisfactory. The involvement of students by seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory. Although students have their views listened to in many informal settings, they also have a sixth-form council, where they have good opportunities to express ideas and concerns.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The overall leadership of the sixth form is good, and reflects the commitment of the two headteachers and governing bodies to the development of the joint sixth form. Day-to-day management of the sixth form is good and the development of the curriculum by senior and middle managers is very good. The head of sixth form, teachers and mentors guide students well. Performance data is monitored very well. The two schools work closely together to allocate a joint fund to support the sixth form and regular meetings are held between staff. Overall, the joint sixth form is cost effective. The governing bodies have shown a very keen involvement in the sixth-form development, but do not ensure that religious education and a daily act of collective worship are provided for all students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The majority of students interviewed enjoy being in the sixth form. They appreciate the opportunities that have been created and show positive attitudes to their work. In the questionnaire responses, a very large percentage of students felt that they were helped to study independently, that teachers were expert in their subjects, were accessible for support and assessed their work so that they knew how to improve. A significant minority, however, indicated that homework was not always worthwhile and a number also noted that they did not feel there was someone in either school, who knew them well.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

By the end of Year 9, students' standards of attainment are **below average in most subjects**. They are average in mathematics, art, ICT, geography and religious education, and above average in physical education. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are below average in most subjects and average in English, art, drama, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Given the very low prior attainment of students on entry to the school, this represents **good value added education for Key Stage 3 and very good value added education for Key Stage 4**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement overall is good.
- The highest standards are in mathematics, art, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education in Years 7 to 9.
- Students' literacy improves significantly by the end of their schooling.
- Students with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Achievement is very good in drama and aspects of art and physical education.

Commentary

1. When students join the school in Year 7, their attainment is very low, being well below average. The school has very few high-attaining students. By the end of Year 9, the overall level of attainment in most subjects is below average. It is average in mathematics, art, geography, ICT and religious education. It is above average in physical education. Such attainment shows good value added provision by the school. These levels of results in the National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments represent good achievement by students and their teachers. Students with special educational needs make very good progress.
2. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment in most subjects are below the national average. However, standards are in line with the national averages in English, art, drama, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Such good achievement is the result of consistently good teaching. Particularly good teaching has produced very good achievement in art, drama and geography.
3. When the 2003 Year 9 National Curriculum test results and Year 11 GCSE examination results are compared with schools in similar circumstances (as measured solely by the proportion of students, who are eligible for free school meals), they are well below the national averages. However, when these results are compared with those attained by students in similar circumstances, they are below the national average in English, in line with the national average in science and above in mathematics in Year 9. In 2003, all of the three core subjects improved their results. The school's results for students gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C and five or more GCSE grades A*-G are well above those of similar schools.
4. Students' language skills on entry are well below average. Reading skills are below average in Years 7 to 9, but improve significantly by Year 11. The students' creative writing is better than their critical writing, which remains below average. Literacy skills are successfully enhanced in science, geography, history and music. Students use subject-specific vocabulary competently.
5. Despite some training on improving numeracy skills, mathematics across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Good practice in the use of number takes place in design and technology, geography, history and physical education.

6. Students are competent in using ICT, which is used well to aid learning in English, business studies, history and modern foreign languages. It is less competently used in science and religious education.
7. Two lessons of business and communications systems were sampled. Lessons are offered to students in Years 10 and 11 after school as they cannot be timetabled during the school day. They are very well organised by the ICT department and the attendance, which is purely voluntary, is very good.
8. The 2003 GCSE examination results were well above the national average for similar schools, especially at A*-C grades. In the lessons seen, students were reaching average standards, which represents very good achievement as they enter the course with below average attainment and they have only one hour a week after school. This very good progress is due to the very good teaching. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of challenging activities, which fully engage the students. The clear aims for the lesson, the brisk pace and a strong reinforcement of learning ensure that students gain a sound knowledge and understanding of business terms. They also acquire good ICT skills of word processing, data analysis and effective use of spreadsheets. The very good learning is encouraged by the teachers' excellent relationships with the students and their very positive attitudes to learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.7 (29.3)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.4 (31.8)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	31.2 (29.9)	33.6 (33.4)

There were 167 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining five or more A*-C grades	34% (41.7%)	52.6% (49.9%)
Percentage of students gaining five or more A*-G grades	93% (93.9%)	86.3% (90.9%)
Percentage of students gaining one or more A*-G grades	99% (97%)	94.6% (96%)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	28.98 (37.4)	34.7 (34)

There were 102 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form

Walderslade and Greenacre schools offer a joint sixth form for their students. This venture started in 2001 and is still rapidly developing in both the curriculum offered and in the standards reached by students. Teaching is completely shared, classes are mixed gender and facilities in both schools are equally available to all students.

The inspection has focussed on seven subjects out of the full range offered. They were English, mathematics, biology, history, music technology, and business education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.

- Standards are well above average in ICT.

Commentary

9. The results published for GCE A-level in 2002 were those for Greenacre School, although both schools took GCE AS examinations. Relatively few candidates were involved. Overall, results at A-level in 2002 were well below the national average, except in ICT, where they were well above average. Although results at AS level in the small number of subjects were varied, the achievement of these individual students was satisfactory.
10. In 2003, many more subjects were taken at A-level, AS level, and in vocational qualifications in health and social care, business studies and ICT. Results are varied, and national comparators are not yet available. The majority of students gained pass grades A-E at A-level, and relatively few students (3 per cent) gained the higher grades at AS level. Three-quarters of students entered for GNVQ qualifications in health and social care, business studies or ICT gained a pass grade or higher. Overall, the achievement of students in the sixth form is good when comparison is made with the modest GCSE grades on entry to the sixth form.
11. In the current year, the range of subjects studied has been further expanded. In the seven subjects inspected in full, standards seen are above average in ICT, average in history, biology and music technology, and below average in English and mathematics. There has been a good improvement in the standards reached by students in each year since the sixth form was established. This is shown by the observation that standards are generally higher in Year 12 than in Year 13, relative to expectations for students' stage in the course. Progress in ICT is particularly good and it is also good in English and history at this point in Year 12. The few students following the music technology course are making good progress in this relatively unusual and innovative subject. Students on the advanced vocational course in business studies are making satisfactory progress.
12. Several students are entered for key skills qualifications. Results from 2003 are well above those found in other schools. The overall pass rate was high with an 88 per cent pass at Level 2, but there were few Level 3 entries.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.3	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	15.4	39.4
Average point score per student	115.6	263.3

There were 18 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes are good, whilst attendance, punctuality, behaviour and moral, social and cultural development are generally satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are **very good** procedures to promote **good** attendance.
- The students' interest in school life and the range of activities provided is **very good**.
- The school's promotion of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is **unsatisfactory**.

Commentary

13. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The school works closely with parents and carers to ensure this. Attitudes are good because most students indicate that they want to learn. In a religious education lesson seen with a lower-ability Year 8 group, students were discussing

the Moslem faith. They showed that they had retained and worked out much knowledge and understanding from previous lessons. The school's large range of extra-curricular events are regularly over-subscribed, particularly the computer clubs. The school successfully stimulates students' desire to learn.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	9.7	School data:	0.3
National data:	7.8	National data:	1.2

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

14. There are good relationships between students as well as with staff. The school sets high expectations for students' conduct and works hard to achieve them. Overall, behaviour throughout the school is satisfactory and in some lessons, where management is very good and teaching stimulating, it is often very good. However, at changeover times, behaviour can be hectic, but as students explained, "You have to reach the next lesson at the same time as you have left the previous one!". Nonetheless, corridors are effectively supervised by staff, including regular patrols by senior managers. Exclusions are high and a constant source of worry to the school. However, the routines to improve figures are gradually working as numbers have fallen quite dramatically within the past four years.
15. The school acknowledges that bullying, harassment and minor racial incidents do take place occasionally. However, these are in a minority, are satisfactorily documented and the perpetrators are effectively and sensitively dealt with. Students are given the confidence, via discussions in lessons and assemblies, to report such incidents to an adult. All staff are very experienced at recognising potential flashpoints and in successfully dealing with them.
16. Many students arrive at the school with low confidence and self-esteem. The school recognises this well and, by the time they leave, most students have been built up to have at least a satisfactory self-opinion and they are willing to take life on. Within school, students are given opportunities to prove themselves as responsible persons by becoming prefects, joining the school council or captaining one of the many sports teams on offer. The school's drama department is also promoting students' personal awareness effectively.
17. Although, overall the moral, social and cultural development of the students is satisfactory, their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are not well developed. Assemblies contain a 'Thought for the Day' and a very short period of reflection, but there is no act of collective worship. Opportunities for social, moral and cultural development are satisfactory. The school has worked hard to get on with its immediate neighbours. A linkup between various local services, students and the local Neighbourhood Watch has helped to build a security fence around the school entrance, thereby giving neighbours a little more privacy, as well as enhancing the school's image in its local community. The students are mostly proud of their school. They are usually polite. They open doors ahead of adults and usually say "Good morning". During the inspection, little vandalism or graffiti were witnessed. However, some litter was seen around at break and lunchtimes. This is quickly cleaned up. Students are good representatives of their school in local sports activities or during visits, such as the Year 7 trip to Paris. Local culture is pursued through visiting Rochester Castle and Cathedral and various maritime museums. More multicultural aspects are recognised in the study of Indonesian and African Music and several ethnic minority speakers have been into school. However, visits to local mosques and synagogues are currently not part of the curriculum. Through studying leisure and tourism, some of the older students are discovering how to sell Britain and its various cultures, whilst also successfully looking into others further afield.
18. Overall, the students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities contribute significantly to the success of their learning. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection, whilst attitudes compare well. However, exclusions are still high, despite the school's effective efforts

to use its inclusion unit instead of sending some students home. Apart from the spiritual aspect, social, moral and cultural development opportunities and outcomes are comparable to how they were at the last inspection.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of students on roll	No. of fixed period exclusions	No. of permanent exclusions
White – British	902	218	5
White – Other	6		
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	3	3	
Mixed - White and Black African	3		
Mixed - White and Asian	4		
Mixed - any other mixed background	3		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	2	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	4	
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African	3	1	
Black or Black British – any other background	2		
Chinese	2		
Any other ethnic group	2		

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

Sixth form

Students have very good attitudes to their work and their behaviour is very good. Attendance rates in the sixth form are satisfactory and timekeeping is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have very good attitudes to their work.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Students quickly make new friendships and settle in well.
- The attendance rate is around average and timekeeping is good.
- In a small minority of lessons, students are reticent and not keen to research for themselves.

Commentary

19. Sixth-form students are polite, friendly individuals, who want to do well and take their studies seriously. In an excellent design and technology lesson on engineering, students clearly enjoyed working with the teacher and spoke with some pride about the wooden model they had drawn and what they had learnt about angle projections.
20. Students quickly establish very good relationships and they enjoy each other's company. They appreciate having teachers, who are new to them. They feel this is especially beneficial in terms of staff from the other school treating them with respect, whilst not having known them previously.
21. Sixth-form students are particularly good role-models for younger students to aspire to. They are happy to become involved in the main school life. They help with the school council and are attached to form groups, listening to reading and offering friendship and support. Some are being trained as mentors, so they can support younger students in a more structured way.
22. In a few lessons during the inspection, it was noted that students were reticent in expressing their views and reluctant to research information for themselves. Whilst fairly active in

fundraising for local charities, their role is limited in influencing sixth-form decisions, although they have the opportunity to express their views about improvements to sixth-form life through their sixth-form council.

23. Students register in tutor groups at both sites and the combined attendance figure is around the average for sixth forms. Their attendance is carefully monitored and, where necessary, parents are involved successfully in enhancing attendance.
24. Students for whom English is an additional language are well integrated into the work of the school. Their attitudes to work are good. Students with special educational needs have positive attitudes since they benefit from the good support systems in place.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school has a **good climate for learning**. Teaching and learning are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is at least **good and often very good**. It has improved since the last inspection. As a result, students learn well and make good progress. Students with special educational needs make particularly good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is almost invariably good and often very good.
- Teachers do not give students enough advice on how to improve their work.
- Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, art, drama, modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in science largely because there is a lack of clear focus in lessons and an insufficient use of students' prior attainment.
- The support provided by the advanced skills teacher (AST) and members of the school's leadership group has a positive impact on enhancing the quality of teaching.

Commentary

25. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. The result is that students learn well and with enjoyment. The improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection has been significant. A very small number of lessons seen during the inspection were unsatisfactory and these were mainly in science. There are no significant differences in the quality of teaching and learning between subjects. It is at its best in mathematics, art, drama, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. Outstanding lessons were also seen in art, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages and geography.
26. Teachers have good relationships with their students. They work very hard and give very good support to students, who need it. Teacher assistants provide very good support so that students with special educational needs make very good progress. Special educational needs students are well known to their teachers, who provide effective support aimed at their specific needs. Teachers provide very good support outside the classroom and give up a great deal of their time to provide successful extra-curricular activities that enhance the students' learning.
27. Teachers, who need help in any area of their teaching, are given excellent support by the AST, who works closely with them. Similar support is also provided by senior managers. The support given includes helping teachers understand the way the boys learn, how to plan lessons more effectively, how to manage behaviour successfully, and providing strategies for engaging students in their learning. The impact on the quality of teaching has been significant.

28. Assessment strategies vary considerably. Marking is prompt and largely accurate. However, teachers do not offer students advice on how to improve their work in mathematics, science, design and technology and history. In English, there is insufficient use of assessment to help lesson planning. Occasionally, marking in modern foreign languages allows some errors to go unmarked. In art, data on students' attainment is not used to track their achievement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 138 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12 (9%)	48 (35%)	46 (33%)	27 (20%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

Sixth form

The quality of the teaching in the sixth form is good, and leads to good learning. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in ICT are very good.
- Teaching of key skills is good.
- There is a lack of independent learning, partly owing to a lack of resources in some subjects.

Commentary

29. Teaching was very good in ICT, good in music technology and history, and satisfactory in the other subjects inspected, although planning and choice of teaching method in business studies were sometimes inappropriate.
30. Teaching of key skills is good. Students can attend individual workshops in each of the main key skills, and the co-ordinator shows great skill in helping individual students develop literacy skills, which have enabled students to improve their performance in their main subjects. Two students gained university places last year because of their success in key skills. Another two students for whom English is an additional language have also been helped significantly in their key skills sessions. The co-ordinator works well with colleagues to ensure that students can provide evidence of their key skills competences within the subjects that they study.
31. Vocational courses are limited in choice, but in general are taught well. For example, students make excellent progress on health and social care courses because of the inspiration and excellent role-model presented by a recently appointed teacher. She makes excellent use of her vocational experience as a nurse, midwife and trainer and shows great skill in using a wide range of teaching approaches to motivate and engage students, who might otherwise not be so enthusiastic about their own learning. Her expectations are very high and she constantly challenges her students to consider the skills that they will have to develop to enter careers in the health and social care sector. Planning and choice of teaching method are weak for a vocational course in business studies.
32. In English and mathematics, learning is satisfactory. The methods adopted, whilst comprehensive, do not develop sufficiently the students' independence of learning. In the very good lessons, the teacher makes very effective use of the students' own knowledge. Resources are not always sufficient for this aspect of sixth-form study to be effective. The provision in both libraries is limited. Textbooks to support mathematics and business education are in short supply and form a barrier to independent learning. In music technology and ICT, however, this aspect is generally good.

33. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in ICT. Teachers use their very good knowledge to inspire students. Homework is used particularly well and planning is meticulous. Students' progress is monitored closely and feedback is used effectively to focus the teaching.
34. Overall, assessment in the sixth form is carried out satisfactorily, and contributes to the good learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (13.3%)	7 (23.3%)	10 (33.3%)	9 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- Religious education provision is unsatisfactory overall and it does not meet statutory requirements.
- Personal and social education is insufficiently planned and has low time allocation.
- Accommodation for physical education and music is severely lacking and this has a negative impact on students' learning.
- Students with special educational needs are supported very well.
- There is no daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

35. Although the curriculum provides students with a suitable range of courses, it is unsatisfactory overall because the joint provision for personal and social education, religious education and citizenship does not cover all aspects of these subjects in enough depth. The very good English curriculum allows all students to take drama in Years 7 to 9 and gives opportunities for both drama and media studies at GCSE. All students have specific ICT lessons. Extra ICT suites and an increased amount of hardware and software have resulted in a significant increase in the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. The vocational GCSE in ICT is a successful curriculum development, which meets the needs of students very effectively. The recent introduction of a second modern foreign language and innovative teaching methods provide students with very good opportunities in this subject area. Vocational courses have been introduced in science, ICT and leisure and tourism. Links, which give subjects continuity and progression into the sixth form, are developing satisfactorily.
36. The allocation of one or two lessons each week, depending on the year, in which personal and social education, religious education and citizenship are taught in a carousel arrangement, does not allow essential skills to be fully developed due to shortage of time. Tutor time and the science curriculum contribute to these subjects and the school has a theme for the week. When personal and social education was observed in tutor time, students' learning ranged from good to unsatisfactory. There is no detailed scheme of work that draws all areas of delivery together. The provision is, therefore, unsatisfactory because students have inconsistent experiences. The provision for religious education is unsatisfactory in all years and breaches statutory requirements.

37. The very good and sensitive support given to students with special educational needs ensures that they can access every aspect of the curriculum. Students with physical disabilities are very well integrated and have full access to all learning opportunities. In Year 9, students are given very good advice to help them choose examination courses of study that are well matched to their abilities.
38. Very good extra opportunities enrich the curriculum. Sports are very well represented, as are drama, music and modern foreign languages. Many fieldtrips in history and geography stimulate students' interest and provide very good learning. ICT clubs before school, at lunchtimes and after school are very well attended. There are seven school bands and many students attend instrumental lessons. Students in Year 10 have two weeks work experience, which is very well organised by a local partnership in conjunction with the school's administrative assistant for careers. Many reports from previous students and employers indicate the high quality of opportunities offered and the many benefits gained.
39. There have been several improvements in accommodation and resources, especially in ICT, since the previous inspection. Resources remain satisfactory, but poor accommodation in music and physical education severely hinders learning. However, in art, students work in spacious areas that allow stimulating and vibrant display and have the capacity for large three-dimensional work. The canteen is very cramped. The library is small and current resources are not adequate for the school's curriculum. Staff turnover in previous years and recruitment difficulties make the match of staff to the curriculum unsatisfactory. There are unqualified staff in many subject areas and more teachers are needed in design and technology and physical education. The 26 support staff, who are attached to subject areas, help students very effectively in their learning.

Sixth Form

The quality of the curriculum in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

40. Each year, the school tries to expand the subjects offered and, as the sixth form grows, more courses become viable. National Vocational Qualification engineering is offered, as are GNVQs and AVCEs in business, health and social care and ICT. With advanced levels in most GCE subjects and general studies, the formal curriculum meets the needs of most students. The range of vocational courses is, however, limited and the school is conducting serious enquiries in collaboration with the local college into developing work-related learning and more NVQs. The opportunities for enrichment are not extensive and the quality of personal and social education varies considerably according to the tutor group.
41. Guidance for those entering Year 12 is good and students are given several opportunities to meet the careers adviser attached to the school. The general studies courses taken by the majority of students and the successful termly conferences ensure that statutory requirements for religious education are met. The eight students with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, are very well supported by the learning assistants, and the time given to individual students is considerable.
42. Sixth-form students use all the same facilities at the main school. Their study room on the Greenacre site is well fitted out with computers and resources and a member of staff supervises the room in lesson times. There is no sixth-form common room and this limits the social development and the sharing of learning experiences between students from both schools.

Care, guidance and support

Students' care, welfare, health and safety and the provision of support, advice and guidance are very good. The way in which the school involves students through seeking, valuing and acting upon their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The extent to which each student has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school is very good.
- The students' access to well-informed support, advice and guidance is very good.
- The induction arrangements for students are very good.
- The impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities is very good.

Commentary

43. The school has very secure child-protection procedures. The named and trained person has ensured that all staff have been appropriately briefed and all new teachers learn these procedures as part of their induction. There is a detailed and well-written policy and very good liaison with the local social services. All relevant documentation is securely locked away. The school has several looked-after and traveller children, who are closely and effectively monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
44. The headteacher is the named health and safety person and, with the deputy headteacher, has ensured an up-to-date written policy and very detailed risk assessments for all eventualities. All fire, physical education and portable electrical equipment are date checked and emergency exercises are held at least once a term. All escape routes are accessible and well marked. School meals are cooked, served and consumed in hygienic conditions and the school is well on its way to a Healthy Schools' Award. The school has its own Internet Safety Policy, approved of by all parents. Students' views on the school are overwhelmingly positive.
45. The school makes good use of outside support, such as the police, who give talks on drugs and crime, the school nurse and the behavioural support service. There are very caring and efficient accident and medicine administration procedures with well-trained first aid persons. All students spoken to agreed that there was always someone to turn to for advice and a comforting word, be it their head of year, teacher, headteacher, senior staff, or even friends. The school's head of pastoral care, special educational needs co-ordinator, learning mentor or head of assessment unit can always lend a kindly ear. Impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities benefits students considerably. For example, realistic, individual targets are set and regularly discussed with students and parents at academic days and external professional advisers come in and give valuable advice.
46. Very thorough induction from Year 6 to Year 7 ensures a seamless transition. Before the transfer, parents can come to the open week and learn about the school, whilst the head of Year 7 and the special educational needs co-ordinator visit as many feeder schools as possible.
47. The school values the opinion of its students and seeks them either through the school council or through regular questionnaires. Recently, students have raised funds and agreed to refurbish the bicycle sheds.
48. This is a very caring and secure school, within which students can feel safe. Such very good care, guidance and support compare well with the high standard seen at the previous inspection and contribute very significantly towards the successful learning of the students.

Sixth form

Commentary

49. Within Years 12 and 13, the provision of support, advice and guidance is **good**. The impartial guidance on further study or career opportunities is a strength of the school. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.
50. Students often use their appropriate school mentors, but they also receive effective academic help from representatives of Greenwich University, who come in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. All receive good tutorial support from their heads of year and individual class tutors. The majority of personal support, guidance and advice are shared in common with their relevant school support systems. The impartial support received on study or careers is of very good quality. Although students have their views listened to in many informal settings, they also have a sixth-form council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and other schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision to parents of information about the school and students' standards and progress is very good.
- Contributions of links with parents to students' learning at school and at home are very good.
- Procedures to ensure satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints are very good.
- The mechanism for the transfer of students is very good.
- The management arrangements for shared or linked provision are very good.

Commentary

51. Most parents think very highly of the school. The school provides very clear information. Copies of the prospectus and governors' report conform with statutory requirements. Reports on their children's standards and progress are clear and unambiguous and parents get a very good view of what their children can do and what is expected of them. Regular sessions with tutors and/or heads of year are available to parents for discussions on progress. These are also available when students move up a year. Newsletters are regular and very informative. Parents also have their own notice board in school. The school takes parents' view seriously and accommodates them wherever possible. There are very clear procedures to ensure satisfaction and deal with any concerns and complaints. Although the school prefers that parents make an appointment to see staff, any emergencies are dealt with as soon as possible. There have been many curriculum evenings, for example, on how students learn, the use of ICT and target setting.
52. Parents are very keen to help both in school and at home. Many teaching assistants are also parents of children in the school. Others help with sports coaching and transport to events. Parents appreciate the home/school diaries, whereby they can follow homework closely. Many help with topics and projects. Although the school does not currently have a parent teacher association, governors are raising money towards the school's impending bid for Sports Specialist Status.
53. The school's links with other schools and colleges are extensive. As part of the local consortium, students and staff can take advantage of shared subject knowledge and training with local grammar and high schools. Teacher trainees are always welcome from local universities and colleges. Very beneficial, reciprocal arrangements are in operation through shared, linked provision with a neighbouring special school. The school has very caring and efficient mechanisms for the transfer of its students, whether into work experience, jobs, careers, other schools, or even its own sixth form.
54. Overall, the school's links have improved since the previous inspection and contribute significantly towards the success of the students' learning.

Sixth form

Commentary

55. Years 12 and 13 have **very good** links with other schools and colleges. Educational links with other schools and contribution to wider partnerships are **very good**. Management arrangements for shared or linked provision are **very good**. The mechanism for the transfer of students is **good**.
56. Students training as teachers help in local nurseries and primary schools. A similar arrangement is made for sports leadership trainees. As within the main school, mentors from Greenwich University advise students on their future. There are also productive links with Christ Church College, Canterbury. Shared/linked provision is evident in the manner with which students have been combined into one successful sixth form. The school's mechanism for transfer into careers and university is efficient and caring.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership of the school is **good**. The **headteacher, whose leadership is very good**, is well known and highly respected by both staff and students. He maintains a high-level presence in the school and knows students well. He has had a significant impact on improving the learning ethos of the school. Members of the senior leadership group subscribe to the headteacher's vision for enhancing achievement and work well and cohesively as a team. They are seen by staff as approachable, helpful and rigorous. Middle managers largely reflect these leadership qualities. Governors do not comply with legal requirements since religious education and sex education and relationships do not comply with these requirements. They also do not ensure that the school provides a daily act of collective worship. However, governors make a good contribution to the school's success.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is good and has had a positive impact on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leadership is outstanding in geography and very good in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Management is very good in English, mathematics, art, geography, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Progress since the last inspection has been at least good in every subject, except in religious education, where it has been unsatisfactory.

Commentary

57. The school has a clear vision of where it is going and what it wants to do. Over the last decade, it has turned the school into a good learning environment. Test and examination results have increased significantly to reach their currently well above average attainment, given the students' prior attainment. The result has been that students achieve well academically and develop well as individuals.
58. The headteacher is well known and respected around the school. He spends an enormous amount of energy working with individuals and maintaining a high profile around the school. Difficult aspects of the school are well managed, for example, non-specialist teachers are well supported and retention and recruitment have been successfully enhanced. This is also reflected in the successful support by other senior managers.
59. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored with each subject audited twice a year. Targets for improvement are set and monitored. The headteacher has specifically focused on training teachers on strategies relating to how students learn. This has caused an ongoing discussion

on the best methods for enhancing students' achievement. This process has been successfully enhanced by the effective use of the AST.

60. Governors know the school well. They are supportive and have been known to challenge senior managers when needed. They visit the school regularly and are well versed in its strengths and weaknesses. The school does not comply with legal requirements to provide religious education for all, to provide an appropriate programme for sex education and relationships and to provide a daily act of collective worship.
61. Middle managers are invariably good. Leadership and management are very good in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. Leadership is outstanding in geography. There is no-one in charge of religious education, which has caused a decline in provision since the last inspection. All other subjects have made at least satisfactory progress and, in the overwhelming majority, they have made good progress.
62. The school manages its funds effectively. It applies the principles of best value well. Given the good teaching, learning and achievement, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,995,644.05	Balance from previous year	277,791
Total expenditure	2,751,635.05	Balance carried forward to the next	244,009
Expenditure per student	3,287.49		

Sixth form

Commentary

63. The leadership of the sixth form reflects the school's **good overall leadership**. Management succeeds in ensuring the efficient running of the sixth form across two schools and linking teaching and learning with other consortium institutions. Students are well looked after and their progress is effectively tracked. Despite the shortage of adequate social accommodation, sixth-form students are well monitored and effectively managed.
64. Day-to-day management of the sixth form is effective. Staff are clear about what their roles and responsibilities are. Students have access to them for support both in and outside lessons. Under the knowledgeable guidance of the head of sixth form, teachers and mentors, students are able to pursue their studies effectively.
65. The school expends considerable effort and energy to ensure that sixth-form provision is successful. Given the short time that the sixth form has been running, these efforts are paying off.
66. The two schools work closely together to allocate a joint fund to support the sixth form. Regular meetings are held. Overall, the joint sixth form is cost effective.

PART C: SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The overall provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work seen and in Year 9 national tests and at GCSE are improving.
- Good teaching is ensuring that all students achieve well.
- The very good curriculum considerably enriches students' learning experiences.
- Improvement since the previous inspection is very good because of high-quality leadership and management.
- Teachers do not use assessment data and National Curriculum level information effectively.

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

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

Examination results

67. Standards are rising. Year 9 national test results in 2002 were well below the average for all students, and below average for students: this represents a considerable improvement over previous years. There was a further improvement in 2003, especially in the number of students obtaining Levels 6 and 7. The GCSE English results in 2002 were below average for students in English, and close to average in literature. Again, the results were much better than in other years. In 2003, English results were similar to 2002, whilst those in literature were average.

Standards and achievement

68. Overall, standards of work seen were below average. Speaking and listening skills in all years are average because students have regular opportunities to use talk in lessons to develop, refine and share their ideas. Reading is below average. Students are encouraged to read for enjoyment, but their deductive and inferential skills are weak, notably in Years 7 to 9. However, these are much improved by the end of Year 11. Writing standards are also below average. There are frequent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, especially among middle- and lower-attaining students in all years. Creative writing is often lively and entertaining and is stronger than critical writing, which tends to be descriptive rather than analytical, with argument undeveloped. In literature, even the most able tend to offer unnecessary historical and biographical information instead of showing a close awareness of writers' techniques and how these influence readers. The less able enjoy narrative writing, but, because of their limited vocabulary and experience of a range of formal writing styles, they have difficulty with writing to instruct and inform.

69. Many students enter the school with standards of literacy, which are well below average: however, because of their positive attitudes to English, good teaching and the considerable enrichment opportunities offered by a very good extra-curricular and support programme,

which includes booster classes, coursework surgeries, theatre trips and visiting theatre groups, their achievement is good, both in Year 9 National Curriculum tests and Year 11 GCSE. All Years 7 to 9 students have a drama lesson and the subject is taught as an option in Years 10 and 11, along with media studies. Unlike in most secondary modern schools, all students follow GCSE courses in both English and literature. These additional subjects help students to develop a wide range of skills and knowledge: for example, drama gives many Years 7 to 9 students much needed self-confidence and practice in working with others. All students use ICT to improve their writing and research skills and those with special educational needs receive high-quality individual support and guidance from their teachers and teaching assistants, who work very well together to ensure that they make good progress.

Teaching and learning

70. Teaching and learning are good overall. There is some very good teaching in all years, which challenges students and makes their learning exciting. The most successful lessons are the ones in which teachers clearly identify the skills and understanding, which they wish to develop, and fully involve the students in their own learning and in evaluating their lesson outcomes. The department has successfully researched how boys learn and how to motivate them; consequently, teachers have high expectations of all students and plan work, which is both relevant and rewarding. Marking in Years 7 to 9 is positive, but, because not all teachers refer to the National Curriculum level criteria in their comments, some students are not being shown exactly what they need to do to improve. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of advice and use of examples for guidance are good.

Leadership and management

71. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong corporate dedication, excellent communication and a shared commitment to the raising of standards. Team responsibilities are well delegated, teaching is carefully monitored, priorities for development are clearly identified and new staff are well inducted into the department. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Standards are rising annually, and nearly all students now leave the school with two GCSE English qualifications. Oracy is no longer a problem, teaching and students' progress are good, there is a very rich curriculum, new 'student-friendly' texts are used well, and ICT provision is good. However, teachers still make insufficient use of assessment data in their lesson planning.

English language and literacy skills

72. Standards of literacy are well below average on entry. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded, there is a whole-school commitment to improving communication skills and very good literacy support, including additional classes, from the special needs department. Consequently, students make very good progress and most reach average standards by the end of Year 11. Speaking skills have improved considerably since the previous inspection and are stronger than those in reading and writing.
73. There is much good practice, particularly in science, geography, history and music, and all departments ensure that students know and regularly use their subject's specialist vocabulary. However, there is some lack of consistency concerning the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammar within and across subjects, and other general weaknesses in religious education. Useful literacy units of work have been incorporated into afternoon form-time, but there is no cross-curricular working group to maintain the impetus of staff training or to promote and share best classroom practice. The role and contribution of the library and its very capable staff has not been fully explored.

Drama

74. The 2002 GCSE drama results were well above the national average. They were average in 2003. The standards of work seen in all years are average, which represents very good achievement given the limited experience of students on entry and their only having one weekly lesson in Years 7 to 9.
75. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers demand and receive high standards of behaviour and co-operation from all students. They respond well, and enjoy the creative challenges and problem-solving and decision-making opportunities of group work.
76. The leadership and management of this relatively new department are very good. Careful planning ensures that drama makes a considerable contribution to students' personal and social development, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teachers work well together and all lessons cover the very important areas of trust and teamwork, and involve students in evaluating their own and others' performances in an objective, supportive and positive way. Consequently, self-confidence and self-esteem are developed and students help and learn from each other. A programme of school productions and theatre visits also provides valuable performance opportunities and cultural enrichment, as well as building important cross-curricular links and co-operation with other departments.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- Students' achievement is good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students' attitudes are very good.
- Standards by the ages of 14 and 16 years are below average.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

77. Standards in French in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below national averages at Level 5. Standards in French at GCSE in 2003 were well below the national average. They were a little below those in similar students' schools when measured against 2002 national data. There were no candidates for GCSE in Spanish.

Standards and achievement

78. Evidence from lessons observed indicates that standards are above average in speaking and listening in Years 7 and 8 in French and Spanish. Standards in both languages by Year 9 in

speaking and listening are average, and in reading and writing are below average. In French in Years 10 and 11, standards are generally below average. At present, no students take Spanish in Years 10 and 11. Students generally achieve well. In Years 7 and 8, achievement is very good and students make rapid progress, especially in speaking and listening. In Years 9 to 11, students continue to make good progress, although their standards are below national averages.

Teaching and learning

79. The main reasons for the good achievement of students are the very good teaching and the students' very good attitudes to learning modern languages. Teaching is lively, interesting and stimulating. Teachers draw on a wide range of strategies that involve students actively, including songs and games. All teaching is in the foreign language and students are given very good opportunities to hear and respond to the spoken language. As a result, all students, including those with special educational needs, learn very well in the early years. They are fully involved in all lessons and are very keen to contribute. They quickly develop the confidence to use the foreign language as the medium of communication, even to each other. They make rapid progress in understanding instructions and classroom language. They need more opportunities to apply their learning in independent speaking and writing as their knowledge of the language develops. Assessment of students' work is regular and gives helpful guidance on how to improve. On occasions, marking allows errors to go unchecked. The teaching of modern languages makes a good contribution to students' literacy. Students' use of ICT is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

80. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The department forms a very committed team, who work in a very consistent way. This contributes significantly to the very good provision. Curriculum innovation is good. The department has maintained its high standard since the previous inspection. Standards at GCSE continue to improve and the quality of teaching is now very good overall.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is very well led and managed.
- Planning is well developed, especially for Years 7 to 9, and the three-part lesson is a feature of all lessons.
- Learning support staff are used very effectively.
- The use of ICT, both in planning and in lessons, is inadequate.
- Mathematics across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Assessment and target setting, including marking, which informs improvement, need further development.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

81. In 2002, the results in the National Curriculum tests of students at the end of Year 9 compared well with the average nationally and very well with similar schools. Results in 2003 were higher overall, maintaining the upward trend of recent years. When students' attainment at the end of Year 6 is taken into account, the results show that students achieved very well. The proportion of students gaining a GCSE grade A*-C in 2002 was well below the national average and was much lower in 2003. The percentage of students gaining grades A*-G, which matched national averages in 2002, dipped slightly in 2003. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

Standards and achievement

82. Standards overall are average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Students achieve at least good standards. In a Year 7 lesson on sequences, which contained a very high proportion of students having special educational needs, students were able to identify sequence rules and apply them. In a Year 11 lesson on trigonometric functions, the use of ICT enabled students to gain an appreciation of the effects of altering coefficients and constants on the curves generated. The presentation of students' work is generally good and covers a wide range of topics at all levels.

Teaching and learning

83. The quality of teaching is very good overall in Years 7 to 11. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and have high expectations of students. Three-part lessons are well planned and structured in line with the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Objectives and short-term targets are shared with students to ensure they have specific goals to achieve throughout lessons. Students have very positive attitudes to mathematics and this contributes towards a good pace being maintained. Students are attentive when teachers are describing the next phase of lessons, resulting in students making good progress. The quality of marking of students' work is inconsistent, ranging between good and unsatisfactory. Where it is good, students are informed where mistakes have been made and what they should do to correct them. Where marking is unsatisfactory, work is simply ticked or crossed, or not marked at all. Assessment of students' progress is well developed, but assessment and target setting, including marking, which informs improvement, need further development. Marking of books is inconsistent, with diagnostic remarks being offered in some instances and not in others. Teachers use clear and concise terminology, ensuring students fully understand the meaning and significance of new vocabulary. Good levels of questioning ensure students remain focused throughout lessons. Students are encouraged to respond, even when unsure of the accuracy of their answers. Teaching assistants are employed very effectively to support students having special educational needs.

Leadership and management

84. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The head of the department leads an effective team of staff, who are mutually supportive. Schemes of work have recently been updated in order to address previously identified areas of weakness and new texts have been purchased to support the scheme. The positive impact of these changes is already becoming apparent, especially for Years 7 to 9. The focus on the national strategy has contributed to the standards achieved. The monitoring of teaching and the opportunity for sharing good practice across the department are now well established. Literacy across the curriculum is still developing, with speaking and listening skills, especially the correct use of mathematical terminology, being constantly encouraged. The interactions and the good relationships between staff and students are a strong element of lessons.

85. The accommodation and resources for this subject are satisfactory. New texts, allied to the recently updated scheme of work, more readily meet the needs of the curriculum offered to students.
86. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have continued to rise, and all issues previously identified have been successfully dealt with, with the exception of the development and use of ICT, which is currently still insufficiently used. However, the school intends to incorporate the mathematics department into the school's computer network in the next phase of development. ICT does not currently feature in planning or general lesson delivery. In the two lessons observed where ICT was used, it had a positive impact on students' learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

87. Other departments have received training in improving numeracy skills, but this has only had a minimal effect on the incorporation of mathematics across the curriculum. However, some examples of good practice were seen, particularly in science, where students were using tabulation, bar charts, line graphs and lines of best fit. Geography supports mathematics well, with particularly good support for graphicacy. Other examples were observed in history, where Year 7 students were using timelines and Year 11 students were using bar charts and graphs on unemployment in Nazi Germany. Physical education uses equations, graphs and charts during Years 10 and 11. Students studying design and technology have opportunities to measure and weigh accurately. They also use the skill of estimation when working on design briefs. Numeracy is identified in English schemes of work, but no evidence of its application was seen.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning needs to be improved urgently.
- Teachers prepare students well for the demands of GCSE coursework and tests.
- The newly appointed head of department has established a positive ethos within the science department and recognises that there are further steps for improvement and is determined to secure them.
- There is widespread use of teachers, who are unqualified and inexperienced in classroom management and curriculum delivery in Years 7 to 9.
- There is uncritical and heavy reliance on a commercial scheme of work, which does not generate the activities, which match the learning needs of the students.
- Assessment is not used diagnostically to track progress and identify the next steps for learning.

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

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Commentary

Examination Results

88. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards were below the national average. The trend has been upwards over the past five years, and the rate of improvement has been faster than the national improvement rate. When compared to the other core subjects, students do better in science than in English, but not as well as in mathematics, suggesting that not all students are achieving as well as they should.
89. At the end of Year 11 in 2003, most students took double certification GCSE. The number of students obtaining a GCSE grade of A*-C is below the national average. The trend has been steady over the past four years. In 2003, a weaker cohort resulted in a decrease in the A*-C pass rate.

Standards and achievement

90. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was satisfactory. The achievement of students in Year 7 is, however, unsatisfactory. This is due to teachers' inability to pitch teaching accurately because they are unaware of the prior attainment of the students. By Year 9, achievement is satisfactory. During Years 8 and 9, teachers are able to increase the rate of progress as the learning needs of the students become clear. Low-ability students make more progress than high-ability students during the first two years of this key stage because teaching matches more closely their needs than those of average and high ability.
91. The achievement of students in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, although the standard of work seen was still below the national average level for all schools. This does, however, represent reasonable progress and positive added value.

Teaching and learning

92. During the inspection, almost three-quarters of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Only half the lessons were satisfactory or better in Years 7 to 9, while the vast majority of lessons in Years 10 to 11 were satisfactory or better. The better lessons were characterised by good pace; for example, in Year 7 science, the teacher moved at pace through a range of time-limited activities, such as sustained questioning, note taking, practical work and problem solving, and used the achievement of the learning objectives as a means to track progress with the students. In Years 10 and 11, teachers use their knowledge of the requirements of GCSE coursework and examinations to prepare students for success. For example, in a Year 10 investigation, students were given the framework required to produce a report that would meet examination requirements.
93. The ineffective teaching is characterised by undifferentiated learning objectives, which are not understood by students and lead to a lack of focus in the lesson. Teachers' expectations are often too low due to a lack of sufficient information on prior learning to design activities that are interesting, challenging and appropriate. Students with high ability are not identified or stretched.

Leadership and management

94. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Staffing difficulties in recent years have weakened the quality of teaching and learning. Once these can be resolved, the subject will be in a stronger position to improve. The head of department is new to post this year. She has already identified the main strengths and areas for development. She has established a positive ethos within the science department. She recognises that there are further steps for improvement and is determined to secure them. The department team is working hard to maintain and develop from its current position. Improvements since the last

inspection are satisfactory. Strategies to develop diagnostic assessment designed to inform students how to improve their work still requires attention.

Information and communication technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very effective leadership and management.
- The department provides a very good curriculum, including many extra-curricular activities.
- Teaching and achievement are good.
- There is good use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- High-quality marking is inconsistent.
- There are too few links with industry for the vocational GCSE course.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

95. The end-of-Year 9 National Curriculum teacher assessment results in 2002 and 2003 were in line with all schools nationally, but far better when compared to other schools, which do not receive students with the full range of ability. In 2003, the majority of Year 11 were entered for the short course ICT GCSE and results were well below average, and all students, who took the full GCSE, obtained the higher A*-C grades compared to a national figure of 57 per cent. There has been an upward trend in results since the last inspection.

Standards and achievement

96. The attainment of the current Year 9 students is in line with national standards, with a significant number, especially in younger classes, reaching higher standards. This represents good achievement as many enter the school with variable, and often unsatisfactory, knowledge of ICT. Well-organised and rigorous assessment shows that students make rapid progress because of a high-quality curriculum, which is expertly planned and supported by good teaching. By the time they leave Year 9, they have used ICT to combine word processing and graphics. The Internet has been used for e-mail and research and they have learnt to use computers to handle data as well as control, monitoring and modelling. The higher achievers can make independent decisions about, for instance, the criteria to be used to judge the success of an ICT activity.
97. All students study a double option vocational GCSE, which was introduced a year ago. The current Year 11 is the first class to take the new examination, with its focus on applying ICT to the solution of real-life problems. This practical approach reflects the aptitudes and interests of many students and there are indications that results will be better than previous ones. There is good progress in relation to prior attainment, reflecting the very strong leadership and management of the subject. Students achieve well because of skilled teaching and a persistent stress by all staff on students' personal and academic development. This approach benefits students with special educational needs, who also gain from consistent support from learning assistants, who know them well. Consequently, they make good progress, as do the

more able, who are encouraged to consider the effects of ICT on work patterns and society in general.

Teaching and learning

98. Teaching and learning are good or better in 70 per cent of lessons. Teachers' good subject knowledge is communicated well. They effectively use the new technology to make the work more accessible and interesting. For example, an interactive whiteboard was used to stimulate good student participation on how to change text to suit the intended audience of an ICT text. Lessons are well planned with clear introductions and learning objectives. A range of teaching strategies enlivens lessons. A common feature is the emphasis on short-term targets to promote a brisk pace of learning. Years 7 to 9 classes benefit from the expert implementation of new national initiatives to promote good teaching and learning in ICT; for example, an emphasis on the discussion of students' ideas and the importance of annotating changes to illustrate evaluation and improvement. Good practice has spread throughout the school and teachers' high expectations underpin successful lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. A sharper focus on key learning points and the management of behaviour would have made satisfactory lessons good. Assessment at the end of units is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in the GCSE course. Students are aware of the assessment criteria and participate in the process. Teachers rigorously assess these units as a team and change their teaching plans in accordance with the strengths and weaknesses that have been identified. At times, day-to-day marking is not of the same high quality. Students are given too little guidance on how to improve and there are too few checks to ensure that they have completed tasks.
99. Students react positively to the good teaching and the good relationships. The majority try hard to succeed. They are influenced by the strong work ethic that permeates the department, reflecting the vision and highly effective management of the head of department.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership and management are very good. A dedicated and extremely competent head of department leads a committed team of teachers, technicians and mentors. All believe that the students can achieve and work extremely hard to accomplish this. Students are very involved in the vast range of ICT extra-curricular opportunities that are available to them. This easy access to additional support is a major factor in the good achievement in ICT, as is the highly structured curriculum that concentrates on the practical application of short-term tasks. GCSE ICT is taught in Year 9, thereby giving additional time for in-depth study. Systematic monitoring of teaching and learning, within a good atmosphere of professional development, ensures the spread of good practice and the quick highlighting of potential concerns. Many initiatives have been successfully introduced, including the school web site and links with parents. A national quality mark for ICT has been gained. The previous inspection judged attainment at the end of Year 9 to be unsatisfactory, but it is now in line with national expectations. All students study a GCSE ICT course. There has been good improvement over time. However, the school recognises that development work is still required in some areas, such as marking. There are too few industrial links to enhance the vocational GCSE course.

ICT across the curriculum

101. Overall, there is good use of ICT as an aid to learning in English, business education, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. It is very well used by teachers in art and by the music department. All other subjects make satisfactory use of ICT, except science and religious education. Additional time and resources have recently been allocated to promote ICT across the curriculum in order to raise the quality of provision to very high. The department rightly understands that improvements are needed in the assessment of cross-curricular ICT.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is outstanding.
- Teaching is almost always good and is frequently better.
- Standards are satisfactory. Examination results, whilst slightly below average, are improving and students achieve well.
- Key skills in literacy and in the use of information and communication technology should remain improvement priorities for the department.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Achievement	good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Outstanding
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

102. Although GCSE results in 2003 were slightly below national averages, they have risen steadily in recent years. They now exceed the overall results gained both by this school and by other similar schools, and, therefore, represent very good achievement by older students. Results for students aged 14 years are comparatively low, although more-able students do well.

Standards and achievement

103. Standards are satisfactory. They are very low when students first enter the school, but they rise sharply thereafter. Standards observed in lessons confirm that, whilst many less-able students struggle to recall important facts or to articulate and explain key concepts, more-able students often attain high standards. Some Year 11 coursework studies of coastal management, for example, are excellent and fieldwork is a well-established strength of the school. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, although the work of these, as well as younger students, is not always as well presented as it should be. This, however, has long been a key marking focus for the department and work becomes increasingly neat, properly annotated and completed as students move up the school. Students' key skills of writing and numeracy are well supported in geography and, whilst varying sharply in individual cases, are generally satisfactory. ICT skills, at least in the case of older students, are also satisfactory, though these, together with literacy, should continue to be key improvement priorities for the department.

Teaching and learning

104. Teaching is good. Frequently, it is very good. At its best, it is sensitive, courteous and imaginative and, because it is so well planned and presented, it successfully enhances students' levels of achievement. In these lessons, teachers find exactly the right balance between firmness and patience and use their subject knowledge to pitch the lesson at precisely the right level. This has a marked effect on students' behaviour, which can frequently be challenging, and ensures that they are responsive and keen to contribute. Marking and assessment are consistently good and students are not only encouraged to do better, they are

given clear guidance on how they may succeed. Provision to support students with special educational needs is used effectively. Some teaching, however, whilst satisfactory overall, places too great an emphasis on the pace at which less-able students are asked to work. The department should evaluate for itself the impact and appropriateness of some of its teaching methods and adjust them to suit students' needs wherever necessary.

Leadership and management

105. Management of the department is very good. Leadership is outstanding. There is an excellent vision for geography that pervades everything the department does. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection. It is reflected not only in the excellent role-model for teaching offered by the head of department personally, but also by the imaginative and stimulating displays that capture the interest and motivation of any students that enter the department's area. Geography properly reviews its own quality and impact by auditing students' work and by ensuring teaching is professionally monitored, although there is scope to make these two initiatives complement each other more effectively. The arrangements for performance management are good, as are systems to support newly qualified teachers. Financial management is good, but accommodation, whilst filled with stimulating and highly relevant display material, lacks the blackouts needed to ensure teaching is able to make the best use of its audio-visual aids.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have recently improved in all years and students achieve well.
- Good teaching succeeds well in involving students in their own learning.
- Leadership and management are effective and they are based upon a good awareness of how the subject can improve.
- The students' very positive attitudes to the subject promote good learning and the subject's growing popularity.
- Assessment results are inadequately used in Years 7 to 9 to inform the planning of teaching and the curriculum.
- The students' skills of analysis and interpretation are undeveloped in Years 7 to 9.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

106. GCSE results were well below average in 2003. They have been consistently at this level, although marginally better than at the time of the last inspection. However, the standards currently seen in Year 11 are higher as a result of good teaching and leadership of the subject.

Standards and achievement

107. Students enter the school with skills in history that are well below average, especially their writing skills. This makes it difficult for them to analyse and interpret historical evidence. They achieve well as most begin to reach below average standards by Year 9 and those, who go on to study GCSE history, generally consolidate this. Standards of current Year 9 students are considerably higher than the very low teacher assessments for 2003 as they are beginning to benefit from the higher-quality teaching of the last 18 months as a result of a change in staffing. Most Year 9 students can reach simple conclusions about the events and changes that they study. They express strong feelings and good understanding of soldiers' suffering in the First World War through poems and competent enquiry work, though many have difficulty with lucid, lengthy, written expression. Their ability to analyse sources and interpret events is less developed. By Year 11, many students have a better grasp of these skills and a fuller understanding of the different perspectives that exist on the events that they study. For example, more able students explain well the link between the Reichstag fire and the Nazis' election success in 1933. However, weaknesses in literacy hamper the ability of many students to write clearly and at length, although the department is increasingly using support materials to tackle this.

Teaching and learning

108. Lessons are taught at a good pace with well-planned, stimulating activities that succeed well in involving all students in a variety of activities. The aims of the lesson are clearly shared with the students and are strongly reinforced at the end to check their learning and to generously reward achievement. There is a good focus on improving literacy skills, with many effective opportunities to practise writing, such as with poems on the First World War in Year 9. This work is often well supported by using writing frames and very effective classroom assistance. Students make good progress in lessons as a result of this good teaching. This is also promoted by the students' very positive attitudes to work and their good behaviour, seen in all lessons. Students are encouraged by the teachers' strong enthusiasm, their warm relationship with them and their generally very good management that keeps them on task well. Consequently, they enjoy the subject and work productively. They acquire knowledge and learn important new skills of enquiry, empathy and communications. However, there is less frequent emphasis in Years 7 to 9 on developing skills of analysing and interpreting sources. Marking is done frequently and provides students with sound advice about how to improve. Analysis of assessment results and target setting is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but undeveloped in lower years.

109. In an outstanding Year 9 lesson, students of low ability were enthusiastically involved throughout the lesson as a result of excellent planning of a variety of short, stimulating activities. After the aims of the lesson were clearly explained, students' good prior knowledge was well rewarded with merits through an effective, quick-fire session of recap questions, which were widely targeted. Students were then quickly moved from effective card sorting of different types of historical sources in pairs, to writing an essay on the global nature of the First World War. The teacher very effectively used writing frames and the valuable support of a classroom assistant to support their weak literacy skills. The constant oral feedback kept students fully involved so that they were eager to read out their essays to the others, who listened in respectful silence. Consequently, they made excellent gains in their knowledge and communication skills of speaking, listening and extended writing.

Leadership and management

110. Although key staff have only recently taken up their posts, there is a good vision for the subject and an awareness of the improvements that are necessary. Under the good guidance of the head of faculty, much has been accomplished by the two co-ordinators of the subject so that improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards, achievement and the quality of teaching have all improved. This has been helped by the good systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in order to ensure that the best practice is shared.

Resources and the planned use of computers have also improved. The very good displays of students' work in the classrooms and corridors celebrate their achievement well. A strength of the department is the provision of an excellent range of outside visits, including trips to Berlin and Belgium, which have done much to enhance the subject's popularity and the students' learning.

Religious education

The quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

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

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in religious education does not meet statutory requirements.
- The absence of a head of department leads to limited levels of achievement for those studying religious education, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching does not challenge the more able students because of the inadequate planning in the area.
- Students behave well in religious education lessons and are productive because teachers establish clear expectations for learning.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

111. Approximately 50 per cent of students have no opportunity to study religious education. The school does not, therefore, meet statutory requirements in the provision of religious education for all students. Standards achieved by those, who completed the GCSE short course in 2003, were well below national averages. Standards of work seen for students currently studying for the GCSE short course are in line with expectations. Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are below expectations. Students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory because the curriculum does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The absence of a head of department for the past two years means that planning is inadequate and fails to consider students' achievement over time.

Teaching and learning

112. Teaching and learning within the lessons seen was satisfactory overall. Teaching does not challenge the most able. This is because there is an over-emphasis on learning the facts of religions rather than looking at the impact of religious beliefs and values on the lives of individuals and communities. Students behave well in religious education lessons and are productive because teachers establish clear expectations for learning. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject. Students respect each other's views and are confident in expressing their personal opinions because teachers value all contributions to lessons. When asked to debate moral issues, students do so in a mature and thoughtful way. Assessment practices are underdeveloped and do not support learning.

Leadership and management

113. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory because the school has been unable to appoint a head of department.
114. Progress since the time of the last report has been unsatisfactory. The school has failed to improve attainment and progress in religious education. This was identified as a key issue at the time of the last inspection. Provision does not currently meet statutory requirements and the lack of a head of department means that issues regarding leadership and management, planning and assessment remain.
115. The provision of religious education for all post-16 students is delivered through conferences each term.

TECHNOLOGY

Design technology

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Student achievement is good across the subject.
- Teachers' good command of their subject encourages students in their work.
- The quality of support staff and deployment are very good.
- Attitudes and behaviour in the department are good.
- Students have experience of a good range of resistant materials.
- Class size has a negative impact on the effectiveness of lessons because some rooms have limited space.
- Use of assessment data is still developing and there is an inconsistency in the application of the marking policy.
- Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum, but there is insufficient use of ICT to aid design and enhance presentation of folder work.

Examination results

116. Students' knowledge and skills in the subject are well below average on entry to the school. By the end of Year 9, students reach a standard that is below average for their age. The majority of students show a reasonable degree of competence when using hand and machine tools. Most are confident in the workshop environment. All groups, including those with special educational needs, progress well.
117. At the end of Year 11, the overall percentage of those gaining higher grades is below the national figures for similar schools. In 2003, the results were particularly low overall. However, the performance in resistant materials matched the national average for students. Performance in graphic products was poor. Standards of work seen during the inspection show improvement and compare favourably with standards for students in secondary modern schools nationally. There is insufficient use of ICT to enhance folders and to support the design work.

Standards and achievement

118. In the first three years, from a low base, students develop their skills and knowledge at a better than average rate. Quality of design, creativity and standard of finish are good. Students in the upper years also achieve at a better than average rate. In graphical products, there has been under-performance, some of which is attributable to staffing changes. Overall, the trend in results shows a continuing improvement and students achieve at a better than average rate. Students with special educational needs progress well because additional support is so good.

Teaching and learning

119. Overall, teaching in the subject is good. All teaching seen was satisfactory and mainly good, with some very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and a very good knowledge of the students they are working with. They provide activities that the students find motivating and that help improve the skills required to succeed. Objectives are usually well-explained, engaging students from the outset of the lesson. The majority of teachers maintain a good pace throughout by giving good individual support and guidance. Learning is helped further by very effective deployment of support staff, who know the students well and demonstrate a high level of initiative. In less effective lessons, students do not always know what is expected and teachers attempt to give too much information at one time, which slows the pace of the lesson. Questioning is not always targeted or sufficiently open to encourage independent student thought. In the lower years, teacher marking is inconsistent and does not tell students how to improve. Feedback on GCSE work is better as it follows specification guidance, but a small number of students are not sure of their predicted grades or what to do in order to achieve a higher grade.

Leadership and management

120. The leadership of the subject is very good. There is a good team spirit, which underpins a desire to improve student achievement. Staff competency serves the needs of the students well. The department would benefit from having a further specialist in order to reduce group sizes, which in some lessons restrict progress. There is a satisfactory curriculum that provides for the standard range of resistant materials to be experienced, but there is no opportunity for students to work with food or textiles.

121. Almost twice as many students achieve the national average at the end of Year 9 as did at the time of the previous inspection. With the exception of 2003 figures, a similar improvement is seen at the end of Year 11. Whilst the use of ICT, particularly for computer-aided design, remains limited, new facilities are beginning to solve this problem. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and lead to high levels of achievement.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 11.
- Students learn very effectively how to produce well-annotated, imaginatively presented sketchbooks.
- Very good discussions enable students to write and talk confidently about art.
- Students are very highly motivated and enjoy the subject greatly.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Teachers' planning does not include enough explicit information about provision for minorities.
- Students do not use ICT creatively in their artwork.
- The department does not use data well enough to track students' achievement.

Commentary

Examination results

122. GCSE results in 2002 were lower than previous years, but the average for all students nationally. Students did better in art than in their other subjects. Results rose in 2003 and were above average when judged against similar schools. Achievement was very good.

Standards and achievement

123. Students' standards on entry are below average. They make good progress in two- and three-dimensional media between Years 7 and 9. Students also achieve well in talking and writing about their learning and about artists' work. By Year 9, attainment matches the expectations for 14-year-old students. A large proportion of students take art to GCSE and progress in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Current standards in Year 11 show most students work at C grade or above. Their highly positive attitudes to the subject indicate that they will exceed these grades, and so achieve results higher than those predicted by the school's assessment systems. Standards are satisfactory, but there are too few high attainers. Sketchbooks are imaginatively presented and much better than average for students.

Teaching and learning

124. Teaching and learning are very good. No teaching is less than good and some excellent lessons were seen. Staff have very good subject knowledge and understand the nature of the curriculum extremely well. They plan and resource lessons very effectively. Teaching methods enable all students, including those with special educational needs, to achieve standards, which are frequently well above those, which might be expected. Students also learn very well about art from other cultures, often using these ideas in their work. Marking is very good, providing clear advice and guidance about how to improve. Teachers use lesson time very well to challenge students effectively, creating stimulating environments, where students want

to learn. Very good one-to-one sessions in class enable students to overcome problems, do well and enjoy their work. The well-focused differences in provision for individuals and groups, which teachers show in these sessions, do not appear in the department's plans.

Leadership and management

125. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department is a very good role-model for both teachers and students. Training is needed to enable teachers to use available data to track students' achievements and progress. The department urgently needs ICT resources so that students can use computers creatively in their work.

Music

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and students learn well.
- The very good ICT resources, including the high-quality department intranet, are used very effectively by teachers to enhance teaching and learning.
- Provision for instrumental and singing lessons is good and involves many students.
- Opportunities for students to perform outside lessons are good and bands perform very well.
- The number of students choosing to opt for GCSE music is growing.
- The music accommodation is poor.
- Assessment information is not being used enough to improve standards.
- In Years 7 to 9, students' performing and composing skills are underdeveloped.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

126. GCSE results have fluctuated in recent years. In 2003, results were well below average. However, numbers have been small so comparisons with national averages are statistically unreliable.

Standards and achievement

127. Most students enter the school with below average musical skills and, by the end of Year 9, standards are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement. In addition, these students had no music lessons for a year because the school had difficulty in appointing a music teacher. Year 9 students can perform rhythmically simple pieces and keep their own part going in a group, but their performing skills are generally underdeveloped. When composing, they create simple ideas, but do not yet develop their ideas within musical structures using melody, rhythm and chords. They suggest appropriate improvements to the work of others, but their knowledge and understanding of music vocabulary is limited.

128. There are no students taking GCSE in Year 11, but there is a large number in Year 10, indicating that music has become a more popular option choice. In Year 10, students are working in line with expectations for their current level of attainment. High-attaining students

have a good knowledge of chords and are developing a good understanding of layering parts to create successful compositions using music-sequencing software on computer.

129. Standards in performing by extra-curricular bands are very good.

Teaching and learning

130. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers use the very good ICT resources very effectively to enhance both teaching and learning and, as a result, students are developing their ICT skills and their knowledge and understanding of music very well. Lessons are well planned with varied activities, which means that students work productively and co-operate well in paired or group activities. Activities are often matched to students' prior knowledge and understanding, which means that students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students and are effectively supported by teaching assistants. However, the performing and composing work could be more challenging at times so that students make more progress with developing their skills. Demonstration is used effectively to focus students' learning and, as a result, students acquire a better understanding of what they have to do and how. Students show good attitudes and behave well in lessons because of the effectiveness of the teaching.

Leadership and management

131. The head of department has already made very good progress in raising the profile of music in the school and in enthusing students since being appointed just over a year ago. This has resulted in more students choosing GCSE music and approximately 12 per cent of students receiving instrumental or singing lessons. The head of department has also developed high-quality resource materials on computer for each module of work and, as a result, students have very good access to information about music, sound clips, activities and worksheets, such as those related to African and gamelan music. He has very clear priorities for moving the department forward, particularly with regard to the further development of the department intranet to support teaching, learning and assessment. However, assessment information is not yet used well enough to track students' progress and improve standards. Teachers work very effectively together and have a strong commitment to improving the work of the department. However, a systematic approach to monitoring the teaching and learning in instrumental and singing lessons is not fully in place in order to share good practice, to identify training needs and to further improve the quality of teaching and students' attainment.

132. The music accommodation is poor because there are not enough specialist classrooms, practice rooms and storage. This limits teaching strategies and group work and contributes to the underdevelopment of students' performing and composing skills. Although ICT resources are very good, there are insufficient percussion instruments to support the National Curriculum programme of study.

133. Extra-curricular provision is good and contributes well to students' personal and musical development skills. Students are given opportunities to learn to sing or to play a wide range of instruments and progress by taking part in the various bands, which perform to a high standard. There are also opportunities for students to perform during the year in concerts and productions, such as the 'Popstars' concert and 'Bugsy Malone'.

134. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Years 7 to 9 attain above average standards and their achievement is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers.
- The very good provision of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum.
- Poor facilities, lack of time and the policy of entering all Year 11 students depress standards in the GCSE examination.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

135. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002, with a new syllabus, were well below the national average. In 2003, the levels of attainment were lower. Whilst students attained well in the practical activities, marks in the coursework and theory paper were poor. This may partly be attributed to the very high percentage of the year group entered for the examination compared to most schools, and to the system of teaching GCSE and core physical education at the same time. Thus, having a very low time allocation for the subject overall.

Standards and achievement

136. Students enter the school with standards below expectations as a result of lack of experience in some areas of the National Curriculum before joining the school. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above the national average and similar to the 2003 teacher assessments, which represents very good achievement. Students build a secure knowledge of fitness and are able to warm-up independently and effectively. Successful planning of the curriculum has ensured more continuity and progression and this has raised standards in each activity. For example, in rugby, students have secure ball-handling skills and a good knowledge of defensive and attacking strategies. Students in Years 10 and 11 continue to improve their games skills in the one lesson allocated to practical activities. The majority attain above average standards in football and rugby. Many students are hindered in the theoretical aspects of the GCSE course by below average literacy skills. A few files are neatly presented and well organised, but a substantial number are unhelpful for revision because students fail to finish work and take little pride in their presentation. Overall, students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Individual students and teams achieve high standards in regional competitions in athletics, cricket, football and rugby. The attainment of these talented students is above the national average and they benefit from the very good opportunities offered by their teachers. The achievement of students with special educational needs, especially those with physical disabilities, is in line with those of their peers. They are fully integrated into all lessons and benefit from the excellent help given by the department's support assistant. One lesson was sampled in Year 13. Standards were below average and achievement satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

137. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was very good. Teachers have very good subject expertise and give students a good visual image on which to base their performance. Students benefit in their learning because classes are divided by ability, but, in a few lessons, not enough attention is given to setting different tasks to match the differing needs of the students within the groups. However, in the majority of lessons, teachers circulate well to extend the more able and to help those students finding the activity difficult. In lessons where learning is very good, students are given opportunities to take responsibility, literacy and numeracy skills are developed well and tasks are set that encourage students to evaluate the work of others. Teachers have high expectations and encourage students by using the department's system of rewards effectively. Students have very positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers. This benefits their learning and allows teachers to manage successfully the uncooperative behaviour of a few students.

Leadership and management

138. The department is very well led and managed with a clear vision for improvement. The head of department has built an enthusiastic team, but there is a shortage of teachers in the department. This has been partly dealt with by using a non-specialist teacher and by reducing the number of lessons for Year 7 students. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in many key areas. However, the poor accommodation remains a major area of concern because it is having a detrimental effect on learning, especially in Years 10 and 11, where the curriculum is limited by having one small poor-quality gymnasium and where the outdoor all-weather facility is of extremely poor quality.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

The quality of provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The citizenship scheme of work covers the statutory requirements.
- The course succeeds in enhancing students' awareness of prejudice and discrimination.
- Only half of the student population receive a discreet citizenship lesson. The other half learn about citizenship through the school's religious education provision and through the personal, social and health education programme.
- Students benefit from effective discussions on aspects of citizenship.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

139. Students are willing and able to engage in discussions on civic issues such as discrimination, prejudice, democracy, empathy and the effect of media advertising. The discussions that they engage in are relatively basic, but tend to show a clear understanding of the issues discussed. Students can work together and produce appropriate responses to take back to plenary

sessions. Literacy skills are low, but the students still manage to produce insightful responses. Achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

140. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and resources used are good. There is considerable teacher control of discussions, although, when given the chance, students respond well and show some independence. Difficult issues, such as race relations, are carefully handled by sensitive teachers and teaching assistants. Students are encouraged to speak out and to use examples from their daily lives. Student behaviour occasionally interferes with their learning, but this is managed satisfactorily.

Leadership and management

141. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The person in charge of citizenship has produced a good scheme of work to be used with the half of the school that follow a discrete citizenship course in both key stages. Many modules within this programme are replicated in the school's personal, social and religious education. This does mean that the half that does not follow the discrete citizenship lesson a week do lose out on some aspects of the course.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, seven 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.

GCE AS level courses (Joint Sixth)

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B	
		School	England	School	England
Biology	7	29	82	0	33
English	5	80	94	0	38
Art	5	80	90	20	43
Design and technology	6	67	89	0	32
French	5	40	85	0	35
ICT	23	83	78	8	21
Geography	6	83	88	33	36
Media Studies	4	100	n/a	0	n/a
Performance Studies	2	100	n/a	0	n/a
Psychology	1	0	83	0	32

GCE A-level (Greenacre) and VCE courses (Joint Sixth)

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B	
		School	England	School	England
ICT (AVCE)	4	100	84	0	25
Business Studies (AVCE)	8	13	96	0	33
Art and design	5	80	95	40	49
English literature	5	100	99	0	44
Geography	5	100	97	0	40
ICT	9	100	89	22	22

Level 2 Vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business GNVQ	4	100	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
Health and social care GNVQ	2	100	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a
ICT GNVQ	3	33	n/a	33	n/a	0	n/a

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision for English literature is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and all students attain a pass grade at both AS and A2 levels.
- Students' positive attitudes to the subject and very good classroom relationships contribute well to their good achievement.
- Some of the teaching is not challenging enough and is not developing students' independent learning skills sufficiently.

Commentary

142. Standards attained by the five students in the A2 examination in 2002 were well below the national average, but all students received a pass grade. In 2003, only four students from the two schools were entered. Again, all passed, but because of the low entry, comparisons with national standards are unreliable. In the much larger joint entry for AS in 2003, in which male and female students were taught separately, results were well below average.
143. Standards of work seen are below average overall, though those in Year 12, currently comprising of only female students, are improving rapidly. Most students can speak confidently when required and contribute well to class and group work. Standards of writing are less secure because of students' limited vocabulary and the inability of all, but the most able, to synthesise commentary and quotations effectively. Writing is often in an inappropriate narrative style because students respond strongly to plot and character, but often forget that these are literary constructs: hence, they are not analysing the writer's techniques and style and, therefore, they cannot attain the higher grades. Additionally, although many students can identify a suitable range of literary terms, they have difficulty commenting upon their effectiveness in their texts.
144. Achievement is good overall. It is better in Year 12 than in Year 13. This achievement is aided considerably by students' positive attitudes to the subject and the very good relationships, which exist both between students and with their teachers. However, many students are too reliant on their teachers and are not developing as confident, independent learners because they are not inquisitive enough, and are not given sufficient choices in their assignments or opportunities for personal research. For example, students in Year 12 are relying too much on

interpretations contained in a study guide to *Measure for Measure*, instead of developing their own.

145. Male and female students are now taught together in Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In some lessons, they are very good. In the best lessons, the teacher makes very good use of the assessment objectives to guide students' responses and to ensure that they know what is expected of them. Each student is regarded as a valuable resource and the teacher makes very effective use of their own knowledge and experience to help them associate with the themes and texts being studied. In the less successful lessons, the teacher is seen as the provider and expert and students are not encouraged to engage closely enough with their texts, especially with language and imagery. In these lessons, exercises on the use of literary terms, for example, are not put within the contexts of the books being studied: hence, although students are able to identify literary terminology, they do not apply it to their own texts or, very importantly, comment upon how it influences a reader or audience. Some marking is very good and teachers' comments clearly link to the grade level descriptors, but this is not always the case.
146. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new courses have been well implemented, in spite of some staffing problems, and are jointly managed. There is commitment and enthusiasm from both schools and they are looking for ways of improving provision further and encouraging recruitment to the courses. The schools are still developing systems for the sharing of best practice and the effective monitoring of teaching and assessment, as well as looking at ways of promoting students' self-study and their independent learning.

Languages and Communication

147. English literature: Standards are below average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, though some of the teaching is very good. Students show good commitment to the courses, and those in Year 12 are making good progress: however, students are not developing well as independent learners.
148. Media studies: One Year 13 lesson, together with students' work, was sampled. Overall, standards are well below average. Teaching and learning are good. Staffing problems, which depressed standards and achievement last year, have been resolved. Students rely too much on their teachers and are not effective independent learners. Resources for practical work are limited.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered pure mathematics and statistics at AS level; also, the application of number unit, which forms part of a key skills programme.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching programme has been well planned to match the previous experience and needs of the students.
- There is good measure of support for individuals.
- Classroom teaching is structured to take account of the wide range of prior attainment of the students.
- The use of private study is underdeveloped.
- The use of computer technology is underdeveloped in teaching and learning.

Commentary

149. This is the first year of the AS course in its present form: the course will operate over two years, but students will be entered for examination modules earlier if their work shows that

they are likely to succeed. There is insufficient data available from previous years to make examination comparisons with national averages.

150. The students' background in mathematics is not strong: most have not studied the higher-tier course at GCSE. As a consequence, the teacher has to ensure that this work is taught and understood before embarking on some aspects of the AS work; attainment, therefore, is below national expectations at this stage. Skills in algebra and knowledge of routine trigonometry are not sufficiently secure at this stage to allow the teacher to proceed to more advanced ideas at any great pace. Two students have a stronger background in mathematics and their attainment is in line with national expectations.
151. Written work shows appropriate coverage of AS topics to date, with students showing competence in inequalities, identities and turning points. In statistics, they are confident with the routines of data-handling and can compute and interpret coefficients of correlation. Students have made sufficient progress with the AS work to show that achievement to date is satisfactory.
152. Teaching is good. The teacher explains the work thoroughly and ensures that students' individual needs are met by constantly checking for understanding and by giving good individual support. Assessment of work is done mainly in class, with written comments on students' files, which show how improvements can be made and how work should be presented; this procedure is backed by homework assignments and routine tests.
153. The course has been well-planned to suit the students' diverse needs, but there are not enough books or software to support individual study or to enhance basic curricular needs.
154. Overall, the course provides a good basis for the use of mathematics in other subjects; the statistics course makes a strong contribution to numeracy.

Application of number

155. This subject forms part of a key skills course. In order to achieve an award, students must pass a test at either Level 1 or Level 2 and compile a portfolio of work, which shows competence in number. Last year, all 14 students, who entered for Level 1, passed and 21 out of 23 passed Level 2. The portfolios met the standards of the awarding body.
156. The students currently studying the course have already shown competence with designing and making containers, which they have adapted to suit the needs of their vocational area or other area of interest. Their work on an assignment based around planning a holiday shows similar competence.

SCIENCE

The science department offers both AS and A-level human biology and AS level physics.

The focus of the inspection was on biology, but physics was also sampled.

157. In the physics lesson observed, the teaching was satisfactory. The students were involved in whole-class discussions relating to the joint solution of problems in momentum theory. The attainment of the present A-level group is close to the expected national level. The students have made satisfactory progress from their GCSE examinations. There is a good relationship between the teacher and students that gives rise to a constructive learning environment. The small number of students in the group, and the recent introduction of the course, make comparisons difficult.

Biology

Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and the ability to make clear explanations of abstract concepts through modelling.
- Teachers have a high commitment to support the learning of post-16 students at all times.
- Teachers have professional and business-like relationships that instil high challenge and expectation.
- Teachers are skilful in developing confidence in the students' ability to develop and apply their science.
- The students' attitudes to learning are positive and relationships are very good.
- There is a significant lack of specialist resources and equipment to enable students to work successfully on their own.
- There is a lack of opportunities to develop in-depth independent learning strategies.

Commentary

158. In 2002 and 2003, AS level was the only course available. In the current year, AS and A2 groups are in place.
159. The 2002 results and the provisional 2003 results show that the AS level examination results have remained below the national average. This is a consequence of the ability of the intake being skewed. Numbers taking the subject have been too small to make reliable comparisons between groups of students. However, students with good grades at GCSE generally achieve results on or above expectations at A-level. Numbers taking the AS examination in 2002 were small, but increased in 2003. Numbers in both current AS and GCE A-level classes are maintained at a viable number through the joint sixth-form arrangements. Students' results overall were in line with expectations and those with better GCSE results exceeded expectations. While no students, who followed AS in 2002, proceeded to A2 in 2003, all of the students, who achieved good grades at AS level in 2003, continued into the second year of the A-level course.
160. The standards of work seen in lessons and in students' work compare well with the national average.
161. While most students currently in Year 13 are achieving well in relation to their GCSE and AS results, a minority failed at AS, and intend to re-sit the examination next year. All students respond very well to the good teaching and well-structured course. In one lesson seen, the students' existing knowledge of the structure and function of the eye was effectively probed by the teacher and developed using examination-type questions that had to be answered within short time limits. Their responses were discussed in detail and any difficulties were resolved with the help of other students and the teacher. This resulted in all the students producing good written answers that could be used for revision.
162. In Year 12, students have made good progress beyond GCSE and show good knowledge and understanding of the first AS module on biochemistry. In one lesson, they were able to apply their knowledge of molecular theory, kinetic theory and the properties of enzymes to explain the results of an investigation. In another lesson, they showed good understanding of cell division through the analysis of microscopic preparations, which they then used to prepare and present commentaries to their peers. Immediate feedback was provided to generate further improvements.
163. Teaching is good overall and so students learn well. The teachers have very good subject knowledge that they keep up to date. They show enthusiasm for biology in their teaching, relating theories to students' knowledge and describing events in the development of the subject. Teachers set out the objectives clearly, conduct lessons at a good pace and have high expectations. Students are actively involved throughout the lessons, concentrating well and readily engaging in discussions with the teachers. As a result of the small numbers,

teachers have very good knowledge of individual student's abilities. They use this knowledge, together with the results of ongoing assessment, to plan lessons effectively and this ensures that all students make good progress.

164. Students work well in lessons and so they make good progress. They enjoy the subject, relationships with each other and their teachers are very good and they feel well supported. They readily discuss learning difficulties both during and outside lessons with their teachers, who are approachable and responsive. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop strategies to improve their knowledge.
165. Written work consists mainly of notes and answers to structured questions that follow up the theory and practical work done in lessons. Marking of questions is thorough and the small teaching groups enable any problems to be discussed with individual students. All students have appropriate textbooks and are supported by additional worksheets.
166. The subject is well led and there is a commitment to improvement. Both physics and biology are well led by the specialist co-ordinators, through the head of science at Greenacre School. Good relations are maintained between the post-16 partner organisations, ensuring a broader intake of students. Good use is made of assessment data to monitor and evaluate the work of the students. Severe limitations are placed on practical work by the shortage of suitable apparatus for advanced level work. Several major pieces of equipment are old and in need of replacement. The technical staff work hard to maintain this equipment and this places an additional burden on the relatively small amount of technician time.

Information and communication technology

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve above average standards because of the very good teaching.
- Students are involved very well in using systems to monitor their progress and identify how they need to improve.
- Students are not able to use ICT fully in the learning of all subjects of the sixth form.
- Students express themselves freely in the secure and supportive learning environments created and they have very positive attitudes.

Commentary

167. A good range of courses is offered in the sixth form to suit students' previous learning. Students all have opportunities to develop their ICT capability either through examination courses or by following key skills programmes in ICT. A-level results in 2002 were above average and, in 2003, more students were entered, but results were below those of 2002. A new vocational A-level course was first examined in 2003, but these results cannot be compared with national averages. Standards seen for students following the A-level course are above expectations. This represents good achievement when students' broadly average ICT capability at the end of Year 11 is considered. Students are well motivated and have a positive approach to their learning in the wide range of study contexts provided. A GNVQ intermediate course is offered to students, who did not follow a course of study in Years 10 and 11, or for those, who did not gain a grade C or above. Students on this course are making satisfactory progress and there is a good retention rate for all courses.
168. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that allows them to link all interactions with students to other aspects of the subject and to examination expectations. The very competent teachers are also very keen to maximise the potential of ICT and text-based resources for the benefit of their students. Teachers monitor students' progress very well in lessons and through marking of work, indicating clearly what students need to do to improve further. Good use is made of ICT systems to communicate with

students, send them resources and involve them in identifying how their current progress links to their overall final grade in the subject. Students' attitudes and behaviour in this area of study are very good; they work with a high degree of independence and communicate clearly in the secure and supportive learning environments created. Very good use is also made of homework to extend learning.

169. The leadership and management are very good. The head of ICT has very good vision and innovative leadership of the curriculum with excellent role-model qualities for teachers and students demonstrated through teaching standards. The curriculum is good and constantly re-evaluated. There are very well-established management systems to support students with their studies. Students have very good access to ICT resources in lessons and negotiate access to these outside of lessons.

ICT across the curriculum

170. There is very good use of ICT in the teaching and learning of ICT courses, with good use also seen in history, music and business education, and satisfactory use in English. Students use the Internet and word processing within coursework and use presentation software often to illuminate the talks they give to the class on their studies. There is, however, unsatisfactory use by students in mathematics and in biology. Students are not given the opportunity, in particular, to use data-logging equipment in their experiments. There is some good use of digital projectors generally in teaching and learning.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on history, but religious education was also sampled. Standards in AS level religious education are below average. Teaching is satisfactory and enables students to develop some independence in their learning and research. Furthermore, their skills of analysis and evaluation are being developed. Students' learning and achievement are satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching with a variety of well-planned, stimulating activities ensures students make good progress.
- Students are encouraged to work independently and effectively through group work.
- The students' very positive attitudes to their work help them to learn well.
- Students' skills of structuring extended writing analytically and coherently are undeveloped.
- The sharing of good practice through more formalised monitoring of teaching is undeveloped.

Commentary

171. The AS GCE course is being taught for the first time with the current cohort of Year 12 students. Therefore, it is not possible to make comparisons with the previous report or examination results. Standards in work seen of the current students are average. This represents good achievement as they began the AS course with attainment that is below average.
172. Students have a good knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of the periods under study. They show good skills of individual enquiry and record evidence well from a range of sources. Essays are generally well researched, especially by the most able students, who are developing sound skills of detailed analysis and mature essay construction. However, these skills are less developed in students of other abilities. Most students lack an awareness of the views of a variety of historians as their reading is quite limited. Students generally articulate ideas with growing confidence and most defend their views effectively. This has

been encouraged by stronger emphasis on group research work and presentations, such as those on the rise of the Nazi party and the French Revolution.

173. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to thoroughly plan a variety of tasks, often based on a range of stimulating resources. There are opportunities for students to study by themselves on challenging enquiries, often in groups. This is developing their skills of critical analysis and independent thought so that they are ready to challenge the arguments of others. The thorough marking and target setting for improvement also promote their progress, though critical checking of essay style is undeveloped. Teaching takes advantage of students' strong motivation and very good attitudes to learning, which enable them to teach effectively. This produces very good working relationships in the classroom and an atmosphere where students are ready to participate in discussion.
174. The two co-ordinators of the subject provide a clear vision and direction. They are both committed to improvement, set high standards of teaching and expectations and work well together. However, the systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching through mutual classroom observation is undeveloped. This inhibits the sharing of good practice.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Music technology

Provision in music technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses areas

- Teaching is good; teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic.
- Students' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment.
- Accommodation is cramped; resources are limited due to an increase in the popularity of the subject.
- Techniques for developing the subject are not fully understood.
- Students support each other in practical work.

Commentary

175. Students took AS music technology for the first time in 2003. Results were below average. Both students have continued studying at A2 level. Current standards of work seen from Year 13 students are still below average, but they are average in Year 12. For the more competent students in Year 12, standards are above average.
176. Most students have not studied music for GCSE examination so their achievement is good. They are competent when using equipment and are able to be critically supportive of other's efforts, and help each other to make progress. They can compare pieces of equipment and relate current work to that done using previous equipment and methods of recording and editing. However, their use of musical terminology and theory is weak. They struggle to recognise key changes and pieces of music in different styles.
177. Teaching is good. Teachers use their wide range of professional expertise to good effect in practical and theoretical lessons. Planning is thorough and gives students an opportunity to present information to the group, which contributes to their key skills portfolio. This activity helps them research independently so that they do not always rely on the teachers to guide them. There is a good balance of activities, allowing students freedom, but with apt support when necessary. Teaching is sensitive to individuals' needs, yet demanding to ensure that they think for themselves and come up with their own solutions. As a result, students are well motivated and enthusiastic about technology.

178. The course is led and managed satisfactorily. However, at present, there are no clearly defined roles to ensure someone takes responsibility for developing the subject. Informal arrangements are working smoothly with strong teamwork and a shared commitment to the subject. Students' progress and their attendance are being carefully monitored. There has been considerable investment in equipment, but with the growth of student numbers, more is needed. Accommodation is cramped in one building and this restricts the access students can have in order to work on their material out of lesson time.

BUSINESS

Business education

Provision of business education in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Methodical planning ensures that students are well prepared for external and internal assessments.
- Teachers work very hard to ensure that individual students are well supported in their learning.
- The reliance upon a limited range of teaching strategies results in lessons, which lack challenge and interest.
- Students work well together and are supportive of each other.
- The leadership of business provision is poor and insufficient support is given to hard-pressed staff.
- Because of the limited time devoted to vocational courses, students have few opportunities to become independent learners.

Commentary

179. In 2003, 93 per cent of students taking the three-unit AVCE in business passed the course, which is better than national standards, but no students achieved A or B grades. The pass rate for the four students taking the six-unit course was 100 per cent, but there were no A, B or C grades. GNVQ intermediate business results were worse than would be expected nationally, with a 30 per cent pass rate and no merits or distinctions.

180. Achievement of students on all business courses is satisfactory. Lesson observations and examination of students' work show that almost all students make progress in developing business skills, which have to be developed to meet assessment requirements. Although hesitant, most students taking the intermediate GNVQ course are able to deal with simple cash flow questions and most have sufficient numerical skills to complete simple calculations. They are able to apply these to simple applications, such as realising the importance of cash flow forecasts to business decision-making. Students on this course with low levels of confidence and weaker literacy and numeracy skills make little progress, and foundation level work is more appropriate. Better-motivated students in this group are helpful and supportive of their lower-achieving peers, including those with severe physical disabilities.

181. AVCE students are able to see the links between their studies and actual business practice. In the first year of their course, they undertake in-depth examinations of companies of their choice and are able to apply simple models of input output analysis to the productive process involved in both retailing and manufacturing. Some have only a superficial understanding of the importance of quality systems, while a minority are able to understand the importance of such business functions on profitability and performance. Second-year students make good progress in tackling more challenging tasks relating to financial management and control.

182. Teaching and learning on business courses are satisfactory and teachers do well to ensure that students are well prepared for examinations. Test requirements are carefully analysed and this enables teachers to provide good support to students. However, in their anxiety to

ensure that students are well prepared, teachers rely on a narrow range of teaching strategies. There is little group or paired work and too few opportunities for students to develop more extended verbal responses or to take more responsibility for their own learning.

183. AVCE students spend around five hours per week in business classes and this severely limits opportunities to develop research and the higher-level evaluative skills necessary if students are to get better examination grades.
184. Management of students' learning is competent and schemes of work have been developed, which incorporate a good range of different learning activities and the integration of key skills. More effective leadership is required to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and to ensure that these important vocational courses make a fuller contribution to the curriculum offered in the newly established sixth form.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	3
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	3
Overall standards achieved		3
Pupils' achievement	3	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	2	3
How well pupils learn	2	3
The quality of assessment	3	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	4

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