

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Newcastle-under-Lyme

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124461

Headteacher: Ms F Hegarty

Lead inspector: Mr D Pittman

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th December 2003

Inspection number: 259395

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	996
School address:	Ashfields New Road Newcastle
Postcode:	ST5 2SJ
Telephone number:	01782 615636
Fax number:	01782 717391
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Hennigan
Date of previous inspection:	19 th January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John Fisher is a Catholic comprehensive school. There are 996 pupils on roll (497 boys and 499 girls). The school serves a wide catchment area drawing pupils from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. Most pupils are of a white British heritage. The overall attainment on entry is above average. There are 85 pupils on the school's register for special educational needs, 14 of whom have statements.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16976	Denis Pittman	Lead inspector	
13786	Susan Walsh	Lay inspector	
12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English
17923	Michael Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics
3937	John Seed	Team inspector	Science
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
31129	Jeff Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design
23891	Peter Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology
29972	John Webster	Team inspector	Geography
2626	Marion Thompson	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
22501	Sue Jones	Team inspector	Music
7926	James Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education
10275	John Cosgrove	Team inspector	History
18477	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	Citizenship; Business education
14943	Eric Peagam	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus ltd

BPS Business Centre
 Brake Lane
 Boughton
 Notts
 NG22 9HQ

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Terms used in this report

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students of all ages at school.

At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).

Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievements** reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those with a comparable level of attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St John Fisher is a very good school, which is sustaining a high standard of education. The standards of work seen are well above average at the end of successive key stages. Pupils achieve well as the result of very good teaching. The quality of management provided by the headteacher is very good. The school is well led with a clear vision and purpose. Pupils' and students' personal development is significantly enhanced by an ethos that is supportive, yet also based upon high expectations. The staff show a strong commitment to the shared objectives of continuing improvement; and the extra-curricular provision is good. Relationships are very good; this is reflected in high standards of behaviour and the developing maturity of pupils. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above national averages. At the end of Year 9, test results are above those for similar schools; there is significant value added through this key stage.
- Catholic values clearly underpin the work of the school and they contribute greatly to its caring ethos.
- Attitudes to learning are very positive; levels of attendance are high.
- The school is effectively led and managed; the leadership of the headteacher has successfully created a climate of challenge and improvement.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; this promotes very effective learning amongst pupils and students.
- Pastoral care is strong and develops very positive relationships within the school.
- The curriculum provision is very good. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in some areas of the curriculum but lacks consistency of use in some subjects.
- Some accommodation and resource levels in departments are unsatisfactory.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have been on an upward trend. The quality of teaching continues to be a strength of the school with an increasing focus on learning outcomes. The curriculum has been given greater breadth in terms of flexibility by the introduction of vocational courses, although the school recognises that this is an area for further development along with its response to the Key Stage 3 Strategy. The lack of a library poses problems in being able to provide opportunities for independent study identified in the previous report.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Test results at the end of Year 9 show a continuing pattern of high attainment. The trend of improvement is in line with the national picture. Achievement is good – most pupils make significant progress in their studies through this key stage. Standards of work seen at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above average. In the 2003 GCSE examinations there was a dip in overall examination performance compared with previous years but particularly high standards were reflected in the results for modern foreign languages, history and business education. The below average performance in relation to similar schools is a reflection of the results of a particular year group. Grades have varied from year to year but the normal pattern of progress is at least in line with similar schools for GCSE examination results. Although there is some difference in the achievement of boys and girls, it is not significant, and all groups continue to make very good progress.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Key Stage 3.*

Pupils respond very well to the school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, although multi-cultural education needs further development. Generally the personal development of pupils and students is very good. Relationships between each other are very good and relationships with staff are equally strong. Behaviour and attitudes are very good, and exclusion rates are low. Pupils' enthusiasm for schoolwork, regular attendance and mature attitudes promote very good achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is very effective in identifying the individual needs of pupils and students. The overall quality of **teaching** is **very good** and helps promote high standards of achievement. Teachers' detailed planning and subject knowledge help to promote and develop pupils' skills very well. The school has successfully created an ethos for learning based upon high expectations and positive working relationships. The active encouragement of teachers helps to motivate pupils and students; this leads to high productivity. Pupils and students are keen and interested learners. Assessment procedures in departments are effective but there is lack of coherence throughout the school. Staff are provided with good quality information which allows them to track pupils' progress accurately. Target setting and planning procedures have been improved.

The curriculum provides a very good range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils. Enrichment, including extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside the school day, is good.

The school has a very effective pastoral system. Pupils are very well supported and any underachievement is quickly identified. Very good care, support and guidance contribute significantly to pupils making significant gains in academic achievement and personal development. The school is popular and oversubscribed, and enjoys a very good reputation in its community. The school has effective links with parents and good links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is effectively led and very well managed. The management skills of the headteacher are very good. Strategic planning is a strength. The leadership and management of senior managers and other key staff are good. Governors carry out their responsibilities appropriately; they have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the high standard of education provided. Most parents report that their concerns are acted upon and that there is particularly good support from tutors and year heads. Pupils and students enjoy being at the school. They feel that they are taught well and they are very helpfully supported in their academic and personal development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The things the school should do to improve are:

- Ensure greater consistency in the application of assessment procedures.
- The overall accommodation provision is unsatisfactory; it is particularly restrictive in physical education; the absence of library facilities impedes research work.
- The provision for learning resources is inadequate. ICT resources are below the national average.

[Note: These aspects have been identified in the school's improvement plan]

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good and it gives very good value for money. Provision for post-16 students has improved considerably since the previous inspection when provision was described as being unsatisfactory. The great majority of students in the sixth form are from within the main school, some 52 per cent having opted to continue their education from Year 11 in 2003. Overall teaching is very good and students learn very effectively as a result. Achievement is good with students doing well in relation to their prior GCSE qualifications. The school caters well for its students through a range of 28 GCE AS and A-level courses, six of which are taught at a local further education college. The quality of support and guidance for students is very good; they appreciate this. Leadership and management of the provision are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and results in good achievement.
- Standards are above average and provision in the great majority of subjects is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the school and to learning.
- Provision of enrichment provision is very good, as is students' personal development.
- The quality of support and guidance for students is very good.
- The number of courses that are available to students is extended as a result of close links to a local further education college.
- The lack of a school library hinders the scope for students to engage in independent research or wider reading.
- A lack of accommodation restricts further expansion and development of sixth form provision.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is good . Standards are above average because of good teaching and strong leadership. Provision in French is very good . Standards are well above average and good in relation to prior attainment, but for a small cohort of students. Teaching, learning and attitudes are very good. In German two lessons were sampled. Standards are well above average and good in relation to prior attainment and targets. Teaching, learning and attitudes are very good.
Mathematics	The quality of provision in mathematics is very good and students learn very well as a result. Teachers set high expectations, challenging students to

	achieve. Standards are above average.
Science	Provision in biology is very good . Standards are above average. Overall, teaching and learning are good and occasionally very good. Provision in chemistry is very good . Standards are above average and students achieve well. They make good progress as a result of the good teaching and their very positive attitudes.
Information and communication technology	Provision in computing is good . Standards are above average and the quality of teaching is good. Attitudes to the subject are very good. There are far fewer females on the course than males.
Humanities	Provision in history is very good . Very good teaching in a good learning environment promotes consistently high standards. Provision in geography is very good . High standards are achieved because teaching is very good.
Engineering, design and manufacturing	Two lessons in product design were sampled. Teaching and learning were at least very good and one lesson was excellent. Teachers involve students fully in stimulating debate about design issues and they develop their skills well, including the use of ICT equipment.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and design is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory and standards are average. Students do not draw for different purposes nor are they well enough read to allow a personal view of art and design. Their practical skills in a range of processes are good. In music one GCE AS lesson was sampled. Teaching was good and students achieved well.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	A double practical lesson, involving both Year 12 and Year 13 students, was sampled in the recently introduced GCE AS and A-level physical education courses. Teaching and learning were good and students were developing well their analytical skills of quality of performance. Standards are average.
Business	Provision in business studies is very good . Very good leadership and management support very good teaching. Students respond accordingly and attain standards that are well above national averages.
Health and social care	Provision in health and social care is very good . Very good leadership and very good teaching take students' learning to high levels.
General education	Two general studies lessons were sampled. Teaching and learning were good.

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

In addition to the focus subjects, lessons were also sampled in physics, Latin, classical civilisation, law, psychology and textiles. In physics and textiles teaching and learning were very good; they were good in Latin and law and satisfactory in classical civilisation and psychology.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Very good quality advice, guidance and support are provided for students. This promotes good achievement and high academic standards. Students have access to high quality information about course requirements and expectations, including individual advice from subject teachers, before they embark on sixth form study. Tutors and the head of sixth form provide students with very high quality advice regarding university applications. There are regular reports to parents about students' progress but these contain insufficient indication as to how improvements can be achieved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The number of students has increased and academic standards have improved. The head of sixth form and tutors form a strong team who are respected and appreciated by students. The Catholic ethos, so evident in the main school, continues to be strong in the sixth form. There is a clear sense of direction to promote and develop a more inclusive sixth form. Development issues are addressed by the whole school improvement plan, there being no separate improvement plan for the sixth form.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The headteacher has regular meetings with representatives of the sixth form to air views and concerns. Discussion between inspectors and a significant number of sixth form students, both formally and informally, indicates that students are very positive about the sixth form, the range of subjects and enrichment activities offered, the quality of teaching and the quality and level of support and guidance they receive. They commented negatively on the insufficient ICT resources in the sixth form study area. The strengths and weaknesses identified by the students are justified.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 are well above national averages and show a continuing pattern of high attainment. Overall standards in GCSE examinations were above average. From the quality of work seen, standards are well above average at the end of Years 9 and 11. Achievement is good. Standards in the sixth form are well above average. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls; all groups continue to make very good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 9. The value added is significant through this key stage.
- Standards in English, art, German and history were particularly high in 2003 GCSE examinations.
- Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above national averages.
- Overall achievement is good, reflecting the hard work of pupils and staff.
- The quality of work produced in lessons is very good.
- The overall performance in GCSE 2003 examinations was below that of similar schools.

Commentary

Main school

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37.1 (40.7)	33.3 (33.3)
Mathematics	38.8 (37.5)	35.3 (34.7)
Science	36.9 (36.5)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 171 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, the combined results were well above the national average. In mathematics and science, standards were well above national averages, and in English they were above. Overall standards in these subjects were above those of similar schools. The overall trend in test performances is in line with the national picture. In general, pupils achieve well and make very good progress in their studies. Test results at the end of Year 9 show a continuing pattern of high attainment.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	71.6 (69.7)	52.6 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	99.0 (95.0)	86.3 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100.0 (98.0)	94.6 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	40.7 (41.9)	34.7 (39.8)

There were 154 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ

2. Overall performance in GCSE 2003 examinations was above national averages; this was not as high as it has been in previous years. In the grade categories five or more A*-C and five or more A*-G, results were well above average. The performance in most subjects was above national figures, with very good standards being achieved in English, art, German and history. The dip in overall examination performance, for the cohort of pupils in 2003, is reflected in the below average comparison with similar schools. The relative progress of some pupils was not as good as usual although it was particularly good in the grade category five or more A*-G. The targets set for 2003 were successfully met; they have been realistic and are set to be more challenging given the focus on effective learning and consistent monitoring of progress.

Standards seen during the inspection

3. Standards seen in lessons and in the samples of pupils' work generally reflect high standards of performance. By the end of Year 9, overall standards are well above average, being particularly high in mathematics, English, science, art, history and modern foreign languages. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is very good. Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to think for themselves. Very good teaching in mathematics, English and art leads to high achievement and very good learning in lessons. Overall achievement in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good. The value-added measures compiled by the local education authority (LEA) indicate significant improvement through Key Stage 3.
4. The pace and challenge of lessons continue in Years 10. Overall standards continue to be well above average. The inspection took place during the mock examination period for Year 11 so no lessons were seen for this group. However, a scrutiny of written work and discussion with pupils showed that the quality of work continues to be at a high level. Standards are particularly good in mathematics, art and music. In most subjects pupils build very successfully on secure foundations established in their earlier years in the school. Generally they continue to achieve standards which are well above expectations.
5. Gifted and talented pupils are appropriately challenged by the work in their lessons and are able to reach their potential. The school continues to explore a variety of initiatives to broaden their experience.
6. There is, within the school, a small minority of pupils for whom English is an additional language, but none are at an early stage of acquisition of English. Their needs are monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator as part of her overall brief and, where appropriate, teachers are alerted to the need to ensure that pupils' receptive language development is sufficient to enable them to understand concepts being taught. As a result, these pupils make progress and attain in line with their peers.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, across all years, is good. They make good progress in subjects across the curriculum largely because of the way that their literacy problems are addressed, especially through the individual tuition and support they receive. Pupils with special educational needs have the same access to the curriculum as other pupils. Some pupils who arrive in Year 7 with attainment in English measured at National Curriculum level 2 generally make gains which bring them to level 4 or higher by the end of Key Stage 3, and most go on to achieve passes either in GCSE at foundation level, with some achieving good results at GCSE A-level.

Sixth form

8. GCE A-level standards were well above the national average in 2002 and in 2003 standards were similar. Students achieved well in relation to their GCSE qualifications. In 2002, the school was third in the national list of non-selective schools at GCE A-level.

9. In lessons seen and in the samples of work scrutinised, standards are well above average and students are making good progress in their different subject choices. Students' work shows a very good response to teaching. In lessons, achievement and progress were never less than satisfactory. They were good in half the lessons and very good in a quarter. Students with special educational needs and the gifted and talented achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Though there are opportunities in lessons for students to develop independent study skills, this is hampered somewhat by the lack of sufficient ICT resources and the lack of a library in the school.
10. Students' standards in literacy skills are very good and in numeracy good. This enables them to make good progress in the full range of courses they study.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' very good attitudes combined with high rates of attendance support good achievement. There is very good planned provision for spiritual, moral and social education and good provision for cultural education, which promotes very good personal development. Pupils mature into very confident well-balanced young people. Sixth form students' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and promote very high academic standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to their schoolwork.
- Attendance rates are very good.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, and social education is very good; it results in the very good personal development of pupils.
- Sixth form students are very hard working; they attend school regularly.

Commentary

Main school

11. Pupils enjoy attending school and feel secure and confident. They are interested and absorbed in their work and the majority are very hard working. They want to do well and have high aspirations. Teachers are very skilled at managing behaviour and most pupils are very keen to get on with their work. This results in behaviour within classes being very good. Behaviour outside class is good but there is a tendency for pupils to be a little noisy but they are not uncooperative. They drop significant amounts of litter and many pupils recognise this as a problem. The number of exclusions is relatively low and there were no permanent exclusions in the last year.
12. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils say that there is very good racial harmony and very little bullying. Many parents report that pastoral staff, including the heads of year, have dealt with bullying issues very quickly and appropriately. The anti-bullying message has been reinforced in religious education and citizenship. Pupils have a very well developed sense of fair play and will report bullying or even try to intervene themselves. A small number of parents thought that bullying was not dealt with to their satisfaction. The school's procedures for dealing with bullying are very effective.
13. Nearly all pupils have very good attendance. They rarely miss school through illness but some pupils take holidays in term. Most pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day and lessons. Parents are very aware of the importance of regular attendance. The school has effective systems for following up absences and has very good support from the educational welfare service. There is still a reliance on manual registers and this makes it more difficult to make a thorough analysis of patterns of attendance. Very good attendance promotes continuity of learning and is an important factor in the good achievement observed.

14. The school very successfully promotes pupils' self-awareness and their understanding of the world around them. Many subjects, including English, geography and religious education, encourage pupils to consider spiritual questions and issues. Pupils are able to discuss their beliefs confidently and without fear of derision. Pupils are encouraged to defend their beliefs and to challenge unfairness. In a Year 9 geography lesson about HIV infection in Africa, pupils were able to understand very mature concepts such as the exploitation of poor people by multi-national companies and the way that local cultures and beliefs differ widely from western values. There is also very good spiritual education in the sixth form; during a general studies lessons students were able to discuss medical ethics with developing wisdom and understood the issues and pressures involved in significant moral dilemmas.
15. Strong spiritual and moral education encourages pupils to understand and respect each other's beliefs. Although the Catholic viewpoint is always considered when discussing spiritual, moral and social issues, non-Catholic pupils are able to express their own views and they sometimes present a counter-argument which is always respected. Pupils appreciate strong religious commitment but they also assimilate values of tolerance and respect for all. Pupils develop their own moral code and a strong understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
16. Pupils are very socially aware and are keen to be responsible members of the school community. They work well together on shared and group work. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and the prefect system is respected. Cultural education is good and is a strong feature of modern foreign language and geography lessons. Pupils have good cultural opportunities through extra-curricular music and the bi-annual ski trip to Canada.

Sixth form

17. Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good and promote high academic standards. Students are keen and eager to come to school. Very high attendance rates promote very good continuity of learning. Students work very hard and are keen to succeed. Their very positive attitudes, together with very good teaching, promote good achievement.
18. Because there is no library and ICT resources are more limited than in other schools, opportunities for independent study are restricted. However, many students access information at home, in the local public library or the local university library. Year 12 students are expected to spend any of the first three periods studying independently, but supervised, in the sixth form area. They appreciate the structure that this creates and good study habits are established as a result.
19. Students are proud to be members of the sixth form. Behaviour is very good both in and out of lessons and students provide very good role models for younger members of the school community. Relationships are very good. Students are confident to ask for help when they need it.
20. Planned opportunities for spiritual, moral and social education help promote high standards of attainment as well as very good personal development. For example, students were able to understand the spiritual aspects of Othello's character in an English literature lesson; this gave them a fuller insight into Shakespeare's work. Students are respectful of each other's viewpoints; they are confident to speak out and this allows lively debates to happen in subjects such as general studies and history. Students are willing to learn from each other. There is good involvement in the life of the school. Some students, for example, provide good support for younger pupils with special educational needs.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year

Authorised absence	
School data	6.1
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	1.1

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	836	53	0
White – Irish	6	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	97	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Pupils achieve well because of the high quality of teaching. The commitment to learning, which is shown by pupils' attitudes to work, is conducive to high standards. Staff are provided with good quality information which allows them to track pupils' progress accurately.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is very good and consistently promotes high standards of attainment. Pupils and students in the sixth form are keen and interested learners.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very effective planning and subject knowledge help to promote and develop pupils' skills very well. Standards of attainment are high.
- The active encouragement of teachers helps motivate pupils and leads to high productivity.
- Teaching methods are very effectively geared to pupils' different levels of ability.
- The management of behaviour is very good and is built upon the very good relationships that exist in most classrooms.
- Assessment procedures are detailed and provide pupils with good guidance as to how to improve. However, assessment procedures in music are unsatisfactory for Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 146 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (2.7%)	38 (26.0%)	76 (52.1%)	28 (19.2%)	0	0	0

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

Main school

21. Pupils are taught very well throughout the school. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, with some examples of excellent teaching. Teaching is very effective and stimulating in design and technology, history, business education, English and mathematics. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen on this inspection.
22. A particular strength is the consistency of the quality of teaching across subjects. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to the pupils and the school. They form a self-evaluative group, supporting one another well. The school has a good programme for teachers' professional development and training. Members of the leadership team support other teams of teachers. The school has set clear aims for improvement in teaching and learning.
23. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and expertise, and show enjoyment of their subject, which is often enthusiastically shared with their pupils. In a very good Year 9 mathematics lesson, the very effective questioning elicited good quality answers and promoted high levels of pupils' self-confidence, enabling them to suggest different strategies for solving problems. The good teacher/pupil relationships ensured the lesson proceeded at a good pace. The very high expectations of the teacher resulted in very good learning and high standards. In the best lessons, teachers set suitably challenging tasks. A positive feature of teaching is the teachers' use of discussion and activities, enabling pupils to express their own views and ideas.

Design and technology – an example of excellent practice

The innovative ICT-based interactive learning package currently being developed in design and technology features a number of elements, which aid pupils' learning. Schemes of work have been entered into the department's laptop computer in an easily accessible and exciting graphical format, and organised into individual units of work within each year group. Pupils and teachers can open a unit of work, and within this they gain access to lesson notes, tasks, homework and video footage of lesson introductions and demonstrations, which can be viewed with a data projector and screen. Lessons seen using this facility, were motivating and inspiring pupils.

24. The very good teaching evident in lessons enables and consolidates pupils' learning. Explanations are clear and questioning is effective in moving pupils' learning forward and helping them to recall previous learning. Starter activities promote an interesting beginning to the lessons. For example, in an excellent Year 8 science lesson on inherited characteristics, the starter activity was used effectively to assess pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of the lesson topic. The pupils were enthusiastic and actively engaged in the ideas being discussed. Building on what pupils understand and know is a positive feature of most lessons. Good management of pupils, regular assessment throughout the lesson and expectations of pupils to use the correct terminology, result in very good progress.
25. The homework set is purposeful, challenging and used well to reinforce learning. Good opportunities are provided for accelerated learning in lessons. A range of visits and visitors to the school motivates pupils and promotes their learning. The most able pupils are also challenged and encouraged to extend their thinking beyond the confines of the syllabus. The evidence from pupils' work over a period of time confirms the consistency of the very good teaching that pupils receive.
26. Pupils are keen to achieve well. They make clear advances in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Their intellectual, physical and creative efforts are developing well.
27. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. The improvement is largely due to the way the school has focused on pupils' learning. Staff training has been directed towards encouraging pupils to think about how they learn and to be fully involved in their learning.
28. The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Where pupils receive individual tuition from teaching assistants, learning is consistently good. The teaching assistants know the needs and learning characteristics of their pupils very well and use a good range of strategies to reinforce learning. In lessons, pupils generally benefit from teaching which ensures that work is highly motivating, with a very good variety of well-chosen activities to engage their interest. Where pupils are supported in classes around the school, the quality of teaching for them is significantly enhanced by the very effective deployment of the high quality teaching assistants, whose presence often provides additional benefits to pupils other than those identified for support. There are good arrangements to ensure that subject teachers are aware of, and plan to meet, the targets in pupils' individual education plans. For example, subject teachers identify the required subject vocabulary and these key words are carefully taught to improve pupils' access to learning in the subject.
29. The improvement in both the quality and use of individual education plans means that this provision is now good. The content of individual education plans is constantly reviewed and updated, and targets are sufficiently focused to enable subject teachers to address them in their planning.

Sixth form

30. The overall standard of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good. The sixth form provides a good environment where students have the opportunity to develop intellectually and to be well prepared for higher education courses.
31. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge effectively to set clear objectives for their students. Very effective planning ensures lessons are well paced and structured. In the best lessons, students are engaged in challenging activities that help them develop intellectually as well as personally. As a result, they are enabled to sharpen their critical thinking and deepen further their interest in their chosen subjects.
32. Very good classroom relationships underpin the best teaching seen in the sixth form. Where students are actively involved, they make good gains in knowledge and understanding and their

contributions enliven the quality of learning. Teachers know their students well and set appropriate targets for individuals.

33. Based on inspectors' discussions with students, it is clear that they feel the standard of teaching in sixth form to be high. They particularly appreciate the fact that teachers willingly provide extra help and further advice when it is required.

Assessment

34. The overall quality of assessment procedures is good. In all subjects, work is thoroughly marked. In some subjects, such as science, pupils' evaluation of their own work contributes significantly to their understanding of their achievements. However, in music the assessment procedures for Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory. In most subjects effective targets are set for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Pupils in the first three years of the school do not always clearly know about the standards they are achieving in relation to the levels of the National Curriculum. Whilst pupils may know the next steps for improvement, they are less likely to be aware of exactly what they should do to reach the next National Curriculum level. The current school policy is not to use such levels in assessment. This also results in parents not being able to evaluate fully the progress being made by their child. This is a weakness; a greater coherence is needed in whole-school procedures. Currently, a group of teachers, drawn from all subjects, is reviewing the school's assessment policy.
35. Test and examination results are used effectively to evaluate the school's performance. This information is used to good effect. One recent example was in religious education. When it was discovered that some boys were not doing as well as expected at GCSE, teachers decided to change to a different course. The school is participating in a national pilot programme to assess the achievement of pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. The first outcomes from this show the school performing very well.
36. Heads of year and form tutors are provided with detailed information on the performance of each pupil and use this information well to take action should a pupil fall below expected levels of achievement.

Sixth form

37. There are good arrangements for assessing students' attainment and progress. There is a well-established system that identifies students who may be underachieving. In all subjects, work is marked well. Effective targets are set for students in the sixth form. The head of sixth form and sixth form tutors have detailed information on the performance of each student. They use this information well to take action should a student fall below expected levels of achievement.
38. Students have a good understanding of how well they are doing in the sixth form and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. In addition, teachers who give them individual time and attention to discuss progress enhance students' understanding of their learning needs. At whole-school level, good use is being made of national assessment information to determine targets for students in their subjects. Developing use is being made of the national A-level Information System (ALIS) to predict achievement at GCE A-level and to show evidence of value added in Years 12 and 13 in examinations taken.

Curriculum

Curriculum provision is very good overall. The curriculum is very well planned, has much improved since the last inspection, shows innovation and response to needs, is inclusive and widens access to learning. It underpins the ethos, mission and high standards of the school. The accommodation and provision of resources for learning are unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provision is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
- The curriculum is innovative, flexible and responsive to needs.
- Religious education is central to the ethos of the school and its activities and is a broadening and enriching feature of the curriculum for all pupils.
- The link with Newcastle College is a strength, particularly in respect of vocational courses.
- Enrichment of learning in the sixth form is very good. Extra-curricular activities support the personal development of the students very well.
- In Years 7 to 9 the teaching of key skills needs further development.
- Access to the facilities for ICT needs to be improved.
- The number of computers is less than seen nationally
- The lack of a library facility is restricting pupils' and students' opportunities for research.
- Accommodation problems pose difficulties for the full implementation of the curriculum but measures taken to overcome the difficulties are generally successful. In physical education accommodation is having a limited effect on the development of practical skills.

Commentary

Main school

39. The overall quality of the curriculum provision is very good. The school's Catholic ethos permeates all its activities, academic, pastoral, personal, spiritual, social, moral and physical, and the curriculum plays an important part in ensuring the success of this shared vision. The religious education provided for all pupils in all years, which was inspected separately by diocesan inspectors, obviously plays an important part within the curricular and wider life of the school and its enriching influence is a strength.
40. The curriculum is very well planned, managed and evaluated by a senior member of staff and by a committee of the governing body. The provision has been greatly improved since the previous inspection when it was found to be lacking in breadth in Years 7 to 9 and lacking in vocational subjects for the 14-18 age group. All these weaknesses have been effectively addressed. The curriculum provision is now very good and fulfils statutory requirements. It shows flexibility and innovation and is responsive to pupil needs, including the vocational. It is inclusive and widens access to learning experiences. Newer courses have a good take-up but the established academic courses have maintained their standards. The school has productive working relationships with other institutions including the neighbouring college. This helps to overcome some barriers to learning, and the difficulties presented by the accommodation available. The absence of a library is a drawback to learning in some of the more literary subjects, and to independent learning. Personal, social and health education and citizenship education is well covered by the religious education and science programmes. A large number of pupils participate in sporting or artistic activities, particularly in the musical and the competitive sporting activities.
41. Provision in Years 7 to 9, previously restricted in breadth and with insufficient provision for the aesthetic, creative, and expressive arts, has been improved so that pupils now get increased time for art. Music is strong, drama is studied within the English programme and there are opportunities for dramatic presentations in assemblies, masses and other school events and occasions. There is the possibility of a second language for children and for booster lessons in English for those in need. The provision is good overall for children of all abilities and talents but provision for the development of key skills is an aspect that needs further development.
42. Provision in Years 10 and 11 was previously narrow in terms of the arts and vocational subjects but is now very good. Some subjects did not previously fulfil statutory requirements. These weaknesses have now been remedied and there has been a very big improvement in the 14-18 curriculum with the introduction of vocational courses and a fruitful partnership with the local

college. Courses such as hair and beauty, product design, electronic products and business studies have catered for real needs and increased numbers of pupils without diminishing the very high standards previously achieved in more traditional subjects. There is a two-way relationship with the college that is flexible enough to embrace twilight sessions and that will allow from September 2004 for religious elements to be provided for some college students. A GCSE course in ICT has been taken up by a large number of pupils. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and some pupils regarded as gifted and talented were entered in Year 11 for an AS course in critical thinking.

43. A strength of the provision is the flexibility of the option system. Instead of fixed option blocks into which the pupil must fit, the blocks are only finalised after consultation about the best groupings, so, in a real sense, the curriculum is inclusive and meets pupil needs as well as leading to fruitful links with the college. Twilight courses with the college include: applied GCSE courses; ICT; engineering; art and design; health and social care, plus a big take-up in vocational NVQ Certificate in Working Skills. Eighty-nine pupils in Years 10 and 11 study vocational subjects at Newcastle College. Further plans are in hand for other courses, in manufacturing and tourism, in conjunction with a neighbouring high school. Effective careers advice is provided in Year 11 particularly, with the help of outside agencies.
44. Overall, sporting provision is just satisfactory. Only Year 7 pupils and Years 8 and 9 band 'B' pupils have access to two hours of timetabled sporting provision. In Years 8 and 9 band 'A' pupils and those in Years 10 and 11 who follow the general course receive only one timetabled period per week. Further opportunities are provided by extra-curricular provision throughout the year. However, the range of activities is restricted because of poor quality accommodation and the main focus is on competitive team activities. During the previous school year 40 per cent of boys and 32 per cent of girls in the main school represented school teams; they were particularly successful at local level.
45. There are good arrangements to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. The specific additional curriculum required to support literacy needs is well planned and assessment is very effectively used to ensure that teaching takes appropriate account of pupils' progress and prior learning. Teachers ensure that pupils with visual impairment have full curriculum access by modifying materials and ensuring that their difficulties are taken account of in lessons. The school makes good provision to ensure that pupils with a range of special needs are appropriately supported in externally accredited examinations, including negotiations to secure extra time or reading and scribing support. The school takes good care of pupils with special needs giving rise to physical or emotional difficulties.
46. The provision for pupils with special educational needs which was just satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection has shown good improvement and is now good overall. The nature of pupils' difficulties, usually related to specific literacy problems but also including physical or sensory difficulties, means that, in general, they arrive with attainments slightly below the levels expected for their age.

Sixth form

47. Curricular provision has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is now very good. Traditional academic courses have continued but new vocational courses, more option choices and a greater range of enrichment courses have been added. As a result of links with a local further education college, students study a range of courses there and students from the college attend St John Fisher for religious education, classical civilisation and music. The curriculum now offers greater breadth and choice for students. Personal, social and health education, including aspects of citizenship education, are covered by the general studies course and religious education. This makes an impressive contribution to the enrichment of learning for all students. The religious education course is central to the ethos of the whole

school and includes the study of human rights and responsibilities, and political and moral philosophy as well as ethical issues.

48. Careers advice is integrated into sixth form work. Students are well advised about entry to university, especially the local ones; an access course for the University of Keele is useful in this respect.
49. Many extra-curricular activities also enrich students' personal development. These are often connected with the religious ethos of the school but musical and sporting activities feature well. There are also opportunities for students to take part in voluntary work. Visits to nursery schools, helping pupils with special educational needs in the lower school and supporting a reading club first thing in the morning are some of the activities undertaken. Students are also involved in Young Enterprise activities. Sixth form teams have been very successful in the Young Consumer Competition and, last year, were national champions. The spiritual ethos of the school is strong with opportunities to participate in religious services and retreats, holy day activities as well as St Vincent de Paul charitable work. Some students have also helped to support the sick on trips to Lourdes.

Accommodation

The accommodation provision is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The accommodation for music and science is good.
- There is no main school library and insufficient rooms for ICT.
- The accommodation for physical education is inadequate and is having a negative effect on the development of practical skills.

Commentary

50. The school, when built, was intended for 700 pupils. There are now 996 pupils and as a consequence the available accommodation is under pressure to teach the planned curriculum. A consequence of this pressure on space has been not to have a central library but to have smaller specialised 'libraries' in departments. The school recognises that the absence of a central resource is unsatisfactory and has plans to rectify the matter. Although most departments have specialised areas the restriction on space means that some subjects are taught away from the subject areas. The accommodation for music is good with quiet areas for individual practice. The accommodation for science is also good with spacious laboratories. Although ICT has designated areas for the delivery of discrete lessons these rooms are in constant use and access by other subjects in the curriculum is restricted. The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory and is having a negative impact on the curriculum balance and is restricting the development of practical skills. There are no dedicated rooms for teaching theory. The art department has one large room that is adequate for teaching whole classes; however, the other room is too small to accommodate large groups and is restricting the activities. Many of the rooms are in poor decorative order. The school has detailed and extensive building plans to address the issues outlined above.
51. There is no specific accommodation for pupils with special educational needs and pupils are still offered withdrawal support in the special educational needs co-ordinator's office, but the school has plans to address this in its development plan.

Sixth form

52. The accommodation for the sixth form is unsatisfactory. There is no library. Although there is a study area it is poorly equipped and they only have a small number of computers. Computers

are available to students in other areas of the school but the school is under-resourced for ICT as a whole. Some lessons are taught in mobile classrooms which are in a reasonable condition. The strategic plan seeks to replace the mobiles with a new build programme to improve circulation, to provide suited rooms for subject areas, and designated SEN accommodation.

Resources

Resources for learning are overall **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The number of computers is less than seen nationally.
- The lack of a library is restricting pupils' opportunities for research.

Commentary

53. Until recently the school has been running a deficit budget and as a consequence the amount of financial resources allocated to subjects has been reduced. Although departments have sufficient books to support learning they are in a state of disrepair and resources have not been renewed for some time. The number of computers is lower than seen nationally. As a consequence the use of ICT is considerably restricted. The most significant shortfall in resources is the lack of a library or learning centre. Although the school has access to the library facilities of the neighbouring college the lack of a central library in the school is restricting pupils' opportunities to engage in reading and independent research.
54. Staffing for special educational needs is largely funded by the LEA in response to the need for support specified in pupils' statements. At present there is funding for five teaching assistants who work individually with pupils or support them in the classrooms. Good support is provided for their professional development. Resources for special educational needs are satisfactory and improving, but there is still limited access to dedicated ICT resources.

Care, guidance and support

Staff at St John Fisher School ensure that pupils are very well cared for and supported. This is enhanced by the application of Christian values and the well-developed links between the school, families and local parishes. There are effective procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. Pupils' views are satisfactorily addressed. In the sixth form, high standards of support and guidance promote good achievement and high academic standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral system, based on strong Christian values, is a strength of the school.
- Relationships between pupils and students and staff are caring and supportive.
- There is a comprehensive understanding of each pupil's and student's achievements and development.
- Vulnerable pupils are very well supported.
- Good advice on entry to the sixth form results in a very low drop-out rate. There is very good support for university applications.

Commentary

Main school

55. Pupils' personal and educational well-being is a priority for staff. The system of year heads and form tutors continues to work very well. Year heads are very committed and well established

and have developed a very comprehensive understanding of pupils' achievements and development. This is enhanced by strong family and parish links. The school's Christian values are reflected in the very caring and supportive relationships that have developed between pupils and pastoral staff. Subject teachers are also very keen to support pupils' learning and give additional support to pupils who are struggling with particular aspects of their schoolwork. Each pupil knows and trusts a range of adults who are concerned about them.

56. Induction procedures are good and help pupils who are new to the school settle in quickly. There is a good programme for careers education and guidance. However, due to a shortage of accommodation, the careers library is located in a corner of a classroom and pupils report that occasionally this can make it difficult to access information.
57. Statutory requirements for health and safety are met. There are regular risk assessments and the policy for visits meets the latest requirements. The school is aware of shortcomings in certain aspects of accommodation such as changing rooms and showers and some mobile classrooms but caretaking staff work very hard to ensure that repairs are carried out and the building is kept clean. The large amount of litter left behind by pupils after break and lunch, although cleared fairly quickly by staff, still constitutes a hazard. Office staff are caring and sympathetic towards pupils who are ill or injured. The accident book is well kept but improvements need to be made to routines for the administration of medicines. The school has good arrangements in place for child protection and vulnerable pupils are very effectively monitored.
58. The school did not issue the Ofsted questionnaire, which seeks pupils' views. The opportunities by which pupils express their views are through year councils but these ideas do not feed into a school council. Some year councils are very active but pupils are aware that there are variations in the quality of year councils. However, pupils do feel that their views are taken into consideration and that most teachers listen to them and welcome their ideas.
59. Pupils with special educational needs value the support they receive and try hard to make effective use of it. Whether working in class or when individually withdrawn from lessons, they behave well, co-operate with the teacher and support each other well. They are aware of the extent of their own learning and they take pleasure and pride in the improvement they make. A significant number of pupils from Years 10 and 11 as well as sixth formers support pupils with special needs in reading sessions with positive benefits to the social development of all concerned.

Sixth form

60. There are high standards of support and guidance, which promote good achievement and high academic standards. Students stay with the same tutor and this enables tutors to know their tutees well and encourages very good relationships to develop. There is a very strong caring Catholic ethos in the sixth form, which is appreciated by students and their parents.
61. There are good arrangements for assessing students' attainment and progress. Subject teachers provide very good academic support for students including those who may find the work difficult. There is a well-established system that identifies students who may be underachieving. Students report that they receive very good support from subject teachers and sixth form staff. There are regular reports to parents about students' progress but these contain insufficient indication about how improvements can be achieved.
62. Students have access to high quality information about course requirements and expectations, including individual advice from subject teachers before they embark on sixth form study. As a result of very effective advice and guidance regarding course expectations there is a very low drop-out rate. The vast majority of students complete Year 12 and continue their studies into Year 13. Most take a full complement of GCE AS or GCE A-level courses but a small number take fewer if it is more appropriate to their learning needs. Tutors and the head of sixth form

provide students with very high quality advice regarding university applications. This, together with very high academic standards, has resulted in many students attending well-regarded universities, including Oxford and Cambridge. Students report that they have found the external careers advice, which is assessable in school, to be less effective. They have resolved this by accessing careers advice at the local college or attending a local Connexions centre.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents who are very supportive of the school and their children's education. Links with the local college successfully enrich the curriculum. The school has good relationships with feeder primary schools but curriculum links are underdeveloped in many subject areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's education.
- Parents receive a good range of information about the work of the school.
- Reports to parents about their children's progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 need improvement.
- There are very good links with a neighbouring college of further education.

Commentary

63. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Parents are very satisfied with the high standard of education provided. Parents support their children's academic achievement and personal development in many ways including encouraging the completion of homework, ensuring their children have access to computers and the Internet, reinforcing the school's approach to discipline and ensuring their children attend school regularly. There is also an active Parents' Association. Parents receive good information about the work of the school and are supplied with very useful information about supporting homework, and coursework expectations and deadlines. Annual reports to parents about pupils' progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 contain insufficient information about attainment and progress relating to national expectations and focus on pupils' attitudes rather than their achievement. There are insufficient targets or strategies for improvement. Reports in Years 10 and 11 are better as they focus on progress towards success in GCSE examination. Most parents report that their concerns are acted upon and that there is particularly good support from tutors and year heads.
64. The school is outward looking and has productive links with the community. Parents appreciate the very good links with local parishes. A particularly good link is the school's work with the St Vincent de Paul's Society which involves pupils visiting the elderly or supporting children with special educational needs at their adventure playground. The school is very mindful of its good reputation in the local community and respects its neighbours. Senior staff are involved in regular patrols of local streets to ensure that pupils behave equally well out of school. The music department has particularly good links with the local community in addition to performances in the local vicinity and further afield. Music groups also use the school's facilities.
65. The school has good relationships with its feeder primary schools. Pastoral staff try to visit all primary schools who are sending pupils to St John Fisher. Mechanisms for the transfer of information are good and allow pupils to be grouped appropriately and to settle quickly. There are good curriculum links in science and music but a general absence of curriculum links and bridging units in other subjects.
66. The school has sought to enrich its curriculum through successful links with a neighbouring college of further education. Links have resulted in vocational education such as car maintenance and hair and beauty courses being made available to pupils. Pupils can also access twilight courses delivering vocational GCSEs such as art and design, engineering, and ICT. The 14-19 curriculum is starting to develop well. High quality links with the college have

been used well to expand choice for sixth form students and college students are also able to access courses at the school. Different timings of timetable schedules can be a difficulty but both parties work hard to overcome problems. Although these links are very good there are missed opportunities to share good practice between the different sixth form provisions.

67. There is an effective partnership with parents, particularly of pupils with statements, who usually attend the annual reviews. There are good systems to ensure parental and pupil involvement in the setting and monitoring of individual education plan targets. There are good links with the LEA and its support services, which ensure that specialist advice is regularly received by the school and communicated to all staff involved with the pupils concerned. Links with other mainstream schools recognised for their good practice and with local special schools are well used to increase the expertise available and there are very good liaison arrangements to support pupils transferring to and from the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **effectively led and very well managed**. The management skills of the headteacher are very good. Strategic planning has improved significantly. The leadership and management of senior managers and other key staff are good. Governors carry out their responsibilities appropriately. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher provides a clear vision and sense of purpose for the school.
- The monitoring and review of performance data are of a high standard.
- Senior staff are very experienced and provide good role models for other staff.
- Strategic planning is very good; this is reflected in comprehensive development plans.
- The good quality of leadership shown in pastoral care adds significantly to the school's ethos.
- Sixth form provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March year 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2558150.00	Balance from previous year	-13730.00
Total expenditure	2544248.65	Balance carried forward to the next	-171.35
Expenditure per pupil	2537.00		

Commentary

Main school

68. The relatively recently appointed headteacher provides a clear vision for the school. There is a clear ambition to build upon existing strengths and success. She has been very effective in establishing a greater coherence in relation to the infrastructure systems within the school. The school is well led; there is a sense of common purpose amongst the staff and the desire to improve. The overall quality of management is very good; the head shows a strong commitment to strategic planning. Financial management is now more secure. The school has placed considerable emphasis on improving the quality of teaching, learning and self-review.
69. An effective senior management team ably supports the headteacher. The team works well together and shows a firm commitment to the objectives of the school. It exercises its delegated responsibilities well, conducting monitoring and review activities systematically and

efficiently. The quality assurance procedures that have been introduced into the school continue to maintain high standards. This review of performance for each subject leads to targets being drawn up for both the whole school and individual subjects. Each target has clear criteria so that its success or otherwise can be measured and the level of planning for meeting these targets is appropriately detailed.

70. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors show commitment and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. They support the school well and have been particularly active in promoting improvements to the school buildings and surrounding environment. Governors have been encouraged to be more proactive in the monitoring of financial matters. The governing body is now more effective and working relationships with the staff are good. The information given in the annual report is relevant and meets statutory requirements.
71. The school's staff performance management process is effectively structured and is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers and teaching assistants thrive on an efficiently delivered programme of professional development, taking account of individual, department and whole-school priorities. The headteacher, senior managers and governors have worked hard to recruit, train and deploy staff appropriately.
72. The school meets all the requirements of the 1993 Education Act and the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. There is an effective structure for identifying and assessing needs and appropriate arrangements for ensuring that these needs are met. Procedures for pupils' annual reviews are secure and ensure that provision is reviewed and updated appropriately. The special needs department is very well managed by the recently appointed special needs co-ordinator who oversees and monitors the work of teaching assistants well in addition to promoting the links with subject departments. There is a strong commitment on the part of the governor with responsibility for special educational needs and the senior management team to promoting a strong culture of recognition of special needs across the school through making it a priority in the school's development plan. This is further supported by the nomination of a link person within each subject or department to ensure effective liaison and the inclusion of the special needs co-ordinator in meetings of heads of departments.
73. Arrangements to identify and support pupils who are particularly gifted or talented are also good and improving although there is no formal recording of these. The school has a strong commitment to high attainment and provides a good range of additional opportunities for high attaining pupils. These include accelerated courses and access to additional subjects as well as provision in the sixth form to assist pupils in gaining access to high status universities. There is now a policy for identifying potentially gifted pupils who may be underachieving and this is being appropriately promoted, but is not yet firmly embedded. Where pupils demonstrate particular aptitudes in specific areas, a particularly physical or creative talent, the school is alert to this and provides a range of opportunities for development.

Sixth form

74. Governors fulfil their statutory duties relating to the sixth form. The strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form are clear to both governors and senior management.
75. The sixth form is effectively led and managed. Good leadership has resulted in a sixth form where the number of students has increased and academic results have improved from good to very good. The sixth form is becoming more inclusive and there are more opportunities for vocational courses. Links with a local further education college have resulted in more choice for students. The head of sixth form and tutors form a strong team, which is respected and appreciated by the students.

76. Monitoring of teaching is addressed within departments; however, the school has no clear picture of the quality of teaching of lessons delivered in other institutions. Sixth form issues are addressed by the whole-school improvement plan and there is no separate plan of action for the sixth form. There is, though, a clear sense of direction to continue to promote and develop a more inclusive sixth form. The income from the sixth form exceeds its running costs and the quality of education it provides is very good, therefore provision within the whole-school context is very cost effective.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average because of strong, focused leadership.
- Teaching and learning are very good and so pupils achieve very well.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and pupils are encouraged to think and reflect.
- Pupils are not all aware of their standards or of how to improve.
- Pupils do not have equal access to the ICT facilities.

Commentary

77. Results and current well above average standards reflect continuing improvement. Pupils' achievement is very good, taking into account the 2003 results as well as work seen. The head of department has succeeded in developing a shared vision for the improvement of teaching and learning.
78. In work seen, pupils' attainment by the end of Years 9 and 11 is well above average. This represents very good achievement and improving and sustained high standards because when the pupils joined the school, their overall standards were above average. Standards in literacy, especially at level 5, have improved markedly, showing particularly good achievement. Most pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of literacy skills by the time they have been in the school for three years. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and in formal situations. Writing standards are well above average; most pupils have developed key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and their work is very well presented. They produce writing that is not only creative and poetic but is also critical and analytical, reflecting the department's encouragement of reflection. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing differentiation in lesson planning. The use of ICT is very good when the department can use the facilities but they are not available for all.
79. By the end of Year 11, pupils write with understanding and critical appreciation of Shakespearean texts and literature from different cultures. They can evaluate character and theme to a sophisticated level. A minority of pupils rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is lacking in detailed understanding and insight. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English achieve very well.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In a small minority of otherwise satisfactory lessons, pupils learn less than in others because they are not involved enough in their own learning or classroom management strategies are less strong. In the very good lessons, there is a brisk pace, pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. They respond well to their teachers' care for their achievement and this helps develop the very good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 10 lesson on war poetry, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed exchanging sensitive, reflective ideas and analysing the historical context of the poems. Consequently, they presented their findings in a deeply felt and expressive manner, because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their

thinking. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils spoke meaningfully to the class and each other, and rejoiced in the enthusiastic response of the teacher and their peers.

81. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department has developed a cohesive team and has a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and pupils. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they are regularly discussing what is best for the pupils. Resources are unsatisfactory because there are insufficient texts and it is only the commitment and dedication of the teachers that ensure a variety of well-presented worksheets and copied resources to replace a lack of books. The head of department uses assessment to develop teaching and learning. Marking is helpful and detailed. Grading, however, is unclear and does not match the school's assessment policy in the improvement plan. Some pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils, are not aware of their standards or targets and therefore are not sure how to improve.
82. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Literacy teaching has been used very effectively to target improvements in spelling. This exemplifies the department's commitment to avoid complacency and further improve standards. Standards are rising, and, with the shared commitment to sharing good practice and attention to identified areas for improvement, the department has the capacity to succeed even further.
83. Management in departments has been consistent in putting into practice the improvement of pupils' literacy skills. The lack of a literacy co-ordinator to cover the post-holder's leave lessens the impact because evaluations are incomplete and targets are unclear. Nevertheless, the school provides good provision for the improvement of literacy skills as reflected in improving standards. Spelling is still a problem, even for higher attaining pupils. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary, especially in modern foreign languages, science, history and English. The English department has dictionaries available in each classroom; key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail although insufficient ICT resources are limiting. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly and show respect to their peers and staff by listening attentively. More developed analytical writing is not consistent, however, in subjects where literacy teaching is less emphasised. In mathematics, for example, opportunities were missed to correct mathematical terminology. Reading fluency is encouraged and seen to particular effect in English and history. The vast majority of subjects undertake the teaching of basic literacy skills conscientiously as a means of improving standards.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average; pupils achieve well.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Leadership is very good.
- The use of ICT is limited due to problems of access.

Commentary

84. Standards are well above average. Results in assessments at the end of Year 9 in French and in GCSE in 2003 are well above average, as in previous years. In German, standards are above average (after two year's teaching) in Year 9, and well above average in the GCSE examinations in 2003, particularly in relation to higher grades. Pupils achieve well in both languages. They have a very good understanding of grammar and apply it well to written and oral work, expressing views and opinions in accurate language and with fluency. They use a wide range of securely memorised vocabulary and structures for both the content and conduct

of the lesson. Reading and listening skills are also well above average: pupils understand simple instructions and explanations in the target language with ease. The development of ICT skills is limited.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with very good and satisfactory teaching in a minority of lessons. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, concentrate hard in lessons and learn effectively. Lessons are well planned and sequenced, with clear objectives which enable pupils to build on previous learning. Regular learning homework and tests, taken seriously by teachers and pupils, ensure vocabulary is memorised well. In the best lessons in both languages, teachers have high expectations, radiate enthusiasm that motivates pupils and use only the target language. Pupils respond by improving the quality of their work in response to skilful questioning and prompting, and they enjoy their work. In less effective lessons, the pace is slower and there is too much use of English for simple instructions, so pupils do not have the same opportunity to improve their speaking and listening skills for spontaneous communication. Teachers have a good knowledge of examination requirements and pupils are prepared well. Good quality marking and feedback in lessons help pupils to improve the quality of their work.
86. Leadership is very good and the head of department is well supported by an effective team. Management is good. Teachers are well qualified for their roles. There are good opportunities for language learning and extra-curricular activities. The department makes a good contribution to the development of cultural awareness through educational visits abroad and lesson discussions.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average, representing pupils' very good achievement.
- Very good teaching leads to very good learning.
- Very good leadership ensures consistency in the work of the department.
- Pupils do not make enough use of ICT to help them learn.
- The development of mathematics across the curriculum is not co-ordinated.

Commentary

87. Pupils enter the school with standards above the national average. They achieve very well in Years 7 to 9. By the end of Year 9 the standard of their work is well above the national average. Higher attaining pupils understand significant figures and draw lines of best fit. They cannot yet draw curves of trigonometric functions. Average attaining pupils calculate volumes and draw pie charts. Lower attaining pupils calculate perimeters and areas. Pupils continue to achieve very well throughout Years 10 and 11. The higher attaining pupils in Year 11 find the turning point of a quadratic curve and use vectors. Average attaining pupils solve simple quadratic equations and use 'stem and leaf' diagrams to show probabilities. They do not yet know about vectors. Lower attaining pupils use scatter diagrams to show correlation and have generally sound arithmetical skills. They do not yet use trigonometry. Standards of writing, listening and speaking are above average and at least sufficient for the demands of the work.
88. Standards seen during the inspection reflect the 2003 results from national tests taken at the end of Year 9 and from GCSE. Boys and girls achieve equally. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other pupils because they are well integrated into their classes. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They achieve as well as other pupils when supported in class but this support is not always available. In some instances, a different teaching assistant supports a pupil with special educational needs for consecutive lessons.

This means that the assistant cannot provide as good quality support because of lack of detailed knowledge about what was covered in the previous lesson.

89. At all ages, pupils' learning is very good because of very good teaching. A key feature is the consistency of quality. Teachers set realistic yet demanding expectations and pupils respond very well. Lessons move forward at a lively pace. There is no unnecessary repetition of work. Teachers understand well how pupils learn. A Year 9 class overcame a difficulty from the previous lesson because the teacher selected the first activity of the lesson skilfully to clarify the misunderstanding. At the end of this lesson, the teacher gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on their achievement. On occasions, teachers pass by such opportunities. Homework is well used to extend learning. Teachers mark work thoroughly and give pupils informative comment about how they can further improve their work. However, pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not always know how to reach the next National Curriculum level because these are not recorded for pupils. Spelling errors are often left uncorrected by teachers.
90. Leadership of the subject is very good and so teachers share a clear vision of the standards to which pupils should aspire. The work of the department is thoroughly and regularly evaluated. Good improvement has taken place since the previous inspection because standards have continued to rise and achievement is better. However, whilst there has been some improvement in the usage of ICT, pupils would learn more efficiently with greater use of computers. At the moment they cannot do so because there are not enough computers available. The department is well managed because it is efficiently organised. Reports do not tell parents what mathematical skills a pupil has learnt during the year or inform parents of pupils in Years 7 and 8 the National Curriculum level their child has reached. Whilst teachers work very effectively to reinforce the very positive attitudes pupils bring to their lessons, this is not made any easier by the poor decorative state of classrooms and the neglected appearance of textbooks as a result of overuse.

Mathematics across the curriculum

91. Pupils have sufficient mathematical skills for the demands of their other subjects. Pupils use their skills in history to calculate property values from the Domesday Book and to compare death rates. They analyse graphs of performance in physical education. Measuring skills are used accurately in science and in design and technology.
92. However, there is no co-ordination of the development of mathematics across the curriculum. As a consequence, opportunities to use mathematical skills may be missed. Teachers cannot be certain that pupils have the skills required for a certain piece of work. Pupils apply their skills in other subjects but they do not develop them.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in public examinations are well above national averages and those of similar schools.
- Good teaching and very positive attitudes of pupils enable them to achieve well and make good progress.
- The subject is very well led and managed. Teachers are deployed most effectively.
- Assessment is very good. Pupils know what they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- There are not enough opportunities for teachers to share good practice by observing each other.
- A lack of some ICT resources and insufficient access to computer rooms are limiting development of skills.

Commentary

93. In 2003 and in the previous four years the results in the national tests for 14-year-olds were well above the national averages and well above those of similar schools. The GCSE results in 2003 were also well above the national averages and well above those of similar schools. The proportion of those gaining A* or A grades was significantly above the national averages of 2002 and 2003.
94. Pupils enter the school with attainment levels in science that are above average. At the end of Years 9 and 11 standards are well above average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 7 quickly learn how to work safely and productively in the laboratory. Planning, observational, measuring, predicting and recording skills are above expected levels by the end of Year 9 and well above by the end of Year 11. Analysis and evaluation skills are also well above expected levels by the end of Year 11. Pupils have adequate numeracy skills to enable them to process their experimental results. Graphical results are very well developed. Pupils take care to use correct terminology and units. Standards of presentation are high.
95. Pupils achieve well throughout. This results mainly from their very positive attitudes, very good behaviour and the good teaching taking place. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well. Teachers give them individual attention when able to and make very effective use of support staff. These staff are well briefed in advance of the lesson. The gifted pupils identified by the teachers are given extension work and they also achieve well.
96. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and almost always good or better. A particular strength is the quality of relationships between pupils and teachers. This is a major factor in helping pupils learn well. Lessons are well planned and cater well for the differing needs of individual pupils. Teachers know their subject well and make it comprehensible often by using examples to which pupils readily relate. Pupils are managed extremely well and are kept busy throughout lessons. Most teachers exploit their very good knowledge of individuals by targeting questions to check understanding. Very occasionally the exposition is too quick for the pupils to absorb the information. The best lessons have three parts to them. A starter activity is effectively used to focus them. Objectives are shared with pupils for the main part of the lesson. This often involves demonstrations involving pupils, lively exposition, group activities and occasionally role-play exercises. By skilful targeted questioning teachers check understanding in the final part. Assessment and marking are particular strengths. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and detailed comments on their work help them to move forward. Teachers do much to develop pupils' literacy skills. Key words are frequently emphasised and the meanings of new ones are carefully explained.
97. The department is very well led and managed. Almost all of the teachers have considerable experience and expertise. They are deployed most effectively making very good use of specialisms. The newly qualified teacher is receiving good support. There is a united commitment to raising standards with a focus on further improving the quality of teaching and learning. Some monitoring of teaching is taking place through lesson observations and informal discussions. However, there are not enough opportunities for teachers to share good practice by observing each other. The technicians are very well organised and provide much appreciated very effective support.
98. The national Key Stage 3 strategy is being successfully implemented with a good focus on development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills. Assessment procedures are very good and much use is made of the information obtained. All pupils have individual targets. The cover arrangements for absence of teachers are very good. The development of pupils' skills in ICT is hindered by a lack of resources and limited access to computer rooms.
99. The accommodation has improved markedly since the last inspection. Three new laboratories have been built and another completely refurbished. All of the science teaching is now done in

laboratories. Much more use is now being made of ICT to support learning. Well above average standards have been maintained in public examinations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The overall quality of provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their good specialist knowledge effectively to guide pupils' learning.
- Students' positive attitude to the subject contributes well to their progress.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards of pupils studying the GCSE are above the level normally seen.

Commentary

100. The teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards were well above the national average. These results are generous and not a true reflection of pupils' attainment; the standard of work seen is broadly average. Results in the most recent GCSE ICT course examination were above average.
101. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with varied previous ICT experience and have overall below average skills. However, with the benefit of good teaching and teachers' high expectations, by the time pupils reach 14 years old they are at the expected level at this point in the academic year. Because of this good achievement and pupils' positive approach to the subject it is likely that many will exceed this level by the end of Year 9.
102. Pupils have good knowledge of how to present information using a variety of applications. They are confident users of the word-processing application and use desktop publishing techniques to add art images to improve their documents. They also have a good understanding of a multi-media presentation presenting slide shows. Although pupils are taught how to use spreadsheets in ICT lessons they do not have the opportunity to use the application in other subjects to consolidate their learning. As a consequence their skill level is low. There is a similar situation with data handling. Pupils' understanding of the use of ICT in its wider sense beyond the school is too narrow, few being able to give examples of where it might be used. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve appropriate targets.
103. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils studying the ICT GCSE course are above the level normally seen at this point in the academic year. They are confident users of a range of applications, using them with understanding in projects to include data handling, hyperlinks and formulae for mathematical calculations with spreadsheets. Higher attaining pupils have an understanding of the use of a macro.
104. Teaching overall is good and as a result pupils learn well. Lessons are generally planned well by teachers, building on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers have good discipline allowing lessons to proceed without interruption. A strong feature within lessons is the way teachers move round classes advising pupils on how to develop their skills and improve their work, leading to good learning. Teachers do not question pupils sufficiently before starting work to make sure they understand. The outcome of this is that pupils start the task without full understanding and time has to be spent visiting individuals to re-explain the task, slowing the pace of the lesson. Although lessons finish with sessions to ascertain learning, these are often brief with limited opportunities for pupils to present and talk about their own work and lacking reference to the learning objectives.
105. The leadership of the subject is good. Since being appointed, the head of department has overseen many changes; these include the introduction of a GCSE course and the national ICT

strategy for 11 to 14 year old pupils. With her clear vision and level of commitment, the subject is well placed for future developments. Progress since the previous inspection has been good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

106. The previous inspection stated that the use of ICT in other subjects was limited due to the lack of resources. Although use is clearly embedded in most subjects there are still some subjects where use is not identified. The total number of computers in the school is less than normally seen. As access to the well-used computer suites is limited and not always available when needed, this is presenting a problem for some departments that do not have the appropriate resources within their own areas. Good use, however, was seen in design and technology, using a range of applications for the design process and contributing positively to pupils' learning. The head of the technology department has devised an innovative interactive program to support pupils' learning. The humanities department has its own mini-suite of computers that are used extensively, making use of the Internet facilities for research purposes and for word-processing coursework. Use in art is unsatisfactory mainly due to the lack of resources. There are limited opportunities in music for 11 to 14 year old pupils to use ICT.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject and achieve well.
- Good teaching drives learning.
- Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection.
- The subject plans its contribution to citizenship and to developing literacy and integrates it very well into its teaching.
- Leadership is not afraid of being self-critical and is committed to raising standards.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 know their test results but cannot relate them to National Curriculum levels.
- Planning of lessons does not always cater for the full range of capability in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

107. High standards are being achieved. Pupils enter the school with varied prior exposure to the subject. Their very limited knowledge of where places are is progressively strengthened. By Year 9, attainment is above national expectations and pupils are achieving well. They can identify key features on a map. The most able can comment on the geography of the place based on knowing where it is. All pupils have a growing subject vocabulary which they use with accuracy to enrich their descriptive writing. They retain current knowledge well but the opportunity to briefly revisit earlier topics would reinforce their understanding of them.

108. Geography is a popular GCSE choice. Results in recent years have been above national averages; there are many high grades and few low grades. This demonstrates both the success of enquiry exercises in extending the most capable and also the effectiveness of the support given to the least able and those with special educational needs. Lower band pupils in Year 10 are particularly well taught. Depth and challenge have given them a thorough understanding of this term's topics but, as yet, many lack the confidence to express their understanding with sufficient clarity. The challenge of providing for all pupils in some classes in Years 7 to 9 is not yet fully met but is well in hand.

109. Overall, teaching is good. Lessons are planned to give variety. Interesting resources are selected. Consequently most pupils enjoy geography and remain on task. They are eager

participants in question and answer sessions and collaborate well when working in group situations. Some teachers still have a tendency to talk too long which frustrates pupils' eager to tackle the task. This also denies them the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes. A Year 7 class, however, moved quickly into an exercise designed to strengthen their use of map keys. Learning was driven by the careful preparation which caught pupils' attention and ensured they knew what to do so that they worked quickly and accurately.

110. The use of ICT as a source of information and for the presentation of course and project work is much better than previously reported. The subject makes a planned contribution to citizenship. It deals specifically with today's multi-ethnic Britain and challenges prejudices. Role-play is well used and contributes to the strong and planned contribution the department makes to developing pupils' literacy. Assessment is rigorous throughout but in Years 7 to 9 it needs to be tied to National Curriculum levels.

111. Management is in experienced hands. The five members of the department work closely together. They have specific delegated responsibilities for aspects of management. Very strong leadership ensures that the team has a strong commitment to improvement. The work of the department and the quality of teaching are regularly reviewed. Some classes are taught in rooms away from the departmental hub. Some of these are poorly resourced for geography teaching. The importance of fieldwork is fully recognised and is now an integral part of the course in Years 7 and 9.

History

The provision of history overall is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching consistently produces results well above the national figures in all key stages.
- The pupils display very good attitudes to their work.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good and help to produce the very good learning environment.
- A particularly strong feature is the very good departmental self-evaluation designed to maintain high standards and to produce improvement.
- The improvement of literacy skills is well integrated into the historical learning objectives.
- The absence of a school library is an impediment to learning in a subject such as history.

Commentary

112. By the end of Year 9 the attainment of the majority of pupils is well above national expectations and this represents good overall achievement in the light of their attainment on entry to the school. In the case of some identified pupils it represents very good achievement.

113. By the end of Year 11 the attainment of the pupils entered for the GCSE examination in history is consistently well above below national averages and this represents very good achievement in the light of their recorded prior attainment.

114. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress with the help of adapted materials and modified teaching styles but without much in-class support. All pupils benefit from good strategies to improve their skills in numeracy and ICT but particularly in literacy. Most pupils, including those designated as being gifted, achieve their predicted grades in examinations and some exceed them. The history courses and the extra-curricular activities make a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils studying history.

115. The work seen in lessons and in exercise books confirms the judgement that pupils in Years 7 to 9 can demonstrate some very good knowledge and understanding of topics such as Julius Caesar, some developing skills of source evaluation and some thinking skills associated with problem solving. This helps to lay the foundations for the success of the subject in later years. Whilst the pupils receive consistent learning experiences, the individual teachers bring their own styles to the lessons. In one or two cases the precise learning objectives of lessons in Years 7 to 9 needed to be spelled out more clearly.
116. In Years 10 and 11 the work seen showed very conscientious attitudes and a very good build-up of knowledge and understanding of the topics studied. Older pupils in particular would benefit from the facilities afforded by a school library in this literary subject but the department uses other libraries to good effect.
117. Overall the teaching is very good. The teachers bring very good subject knowledge, very good planning and enthusiasm to the task in hand. The teaching is usually characterised by its brisk pace, purposeful delivery and very good relationships. In every class observed the pupils responded accordingly and co-operated fully. One of the best lessons, with Year 7, was specifically aimed at improving literacy skills at the same time as giving historical knowledge and understanding. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good and pupils co-operate well in the learning process. The teaching is purposeful and is often aimed at improving examination techniques.
118. Underpinning the very good results, relationships and teaching and learning are very good leadership and management. Some aspects of it, such as the documentation, schemes of work, policies and development plans, are exemplary. A particularly good feature is the way in which the department looks in on itself with a view to maintaining high standards and bringing in improvements. The mechanisms for assessing and tracking pupil performance are good. The good features mentioned at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and improved.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning overall are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- There are significant developments in the use of ICT and CAD/CAM to improve standards.
- There is a need for more consistent planning and expectation in Key Stage 3.
- The food technology room is in need of refurbishment.

Commentary

119. In 2002, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher GCSE grades (A*-C) was well above average and remained broadly the same in 2003. All pupils who entered gained a pass. Pupils' average point score was above average in 2002 and rose significantly in 2003. In 2002 they did broadly as well as they did in their other subjects, but significantly better in 2003, by an average of almost one grade. Only a small percentage of pupils, and no girls, took a design and technology subject in 2003. In 2003, teacher assessment of the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or above in Year 9 was above average and this complies with observations of current work.
120. By Year 9, standards of work seen are above average overall. Standards vary, however, with expectations of the design element of units of work across the department. On entry to the department pupils' attainment is average because of their varied prior experience, and achievement is therefore good. They can work safely with a wide range of tools, materials and

processes including elements of systems and control, ICT and CAD/CAM. Pupils experience batch production techniques, and generally produce products of high quality.

121. By Year 11, standards of work seen are well above average overall. Pupils apply ICT well, and use prototyping and CAD techniques when developing their ideas. They use CAD/CAM very effectively when designing and making their products and this improves the standard of their work. The standard of pupils' work clearly improves from Year 10 to Year 11 and they make good progress. Pupils could concentrate more on evaluating the needs of clients when designing. All groups of pupils, including those with special needs, make equally good progress from Year 7 to Year 11.
122. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good overall. The department has developed a number of excellent pupil workbooks, which allow pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding and concentrate more on designing and making. These should be developed to support all units of work and provide a clear progression of expectation in elements of the design process, matched to National Curriculum expectations. Good use is made of writing and designing frames to define expectations.
123. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good, and this improves lesson pace. Where product analysis techniques are used pupils gain a clear understanding of the design aspects of real products and a better concept of their own designing.
124. In both key stages interactive ICT is being developed and used to set clear expectations, aid learning, and give pupils access to sophisticated teaching and learning opportunities. This is starting to impact upon learning styles, and pupils are developing very positive attitudes.
125. Leadership and management are very good. The department has identified clear priorities and has made very significant developments recently in CAD/CAM through the 'Set-Point' partnership, and the innovative application of ICT to learning styles. Links with industry are underdeveloped. Both technicians make significant contributions to organisation, and to teaching and learning. Assessment and monitoring practices are good, but need to match National Curriculum levels more closely in Years 7 to 9, and communicate these to pupils. The breadth of curriculum offered is limited to electronic products and product design at GCSE level and product design in the sixth form, but vocational and other courses are offered elsewhere.
126. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and lesson pace is now good. The Years 7 to 9 curriculum now covers National Curriculum requirements. The deployment of skills and match of teachers to courses are now appropriate and there are closer links between contributory subject areas. The food room is still in need of refurbishment. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher grades has risen significantly, and much better use is now made of ICT overall.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and rising.
- Achievement is very good.
- Pupils' very good attitudes contribute to their learning.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good with good capacity to improve yet further.
- Although pupils draw well they do not use sketchbooks or drawing well enough for research.
- Development work and annotation do not figure enough in pupils' work.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

127. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were very high. These assessments were generous. GCSE results continue the improving trend with almost every pupil gaining a pass between A* and C.
128. Current work is well above average. Pupils achieve very well because of their positive attitudes in class. Sketchbooks do not reflect the increasing importance of development work in art, although Year 10 pupils used them to assist in constructing very good quality relief sculptures of fruit. Few pupils vary line quality to record light, space or texture when drawing. Year 7 pupils used cross-hatching to emphasise tone. Annotation in sketchbooks is not evaluative. European, American, African, Indian and Aboriginal art influence pupils' work. Those who are least able achieve very well because the challenging work allows everyone to enjoy lessons. Sometimes teachers are not sure which pupils have special educational needs. Those who are most able make unsatisfactory progress because undeveloped research skills prevent independent learning. Well below average numbers gain the highest GCSE grades. The most able pupils in the current Year 10 are making very good progress because of a greater emphasis on personal research.
129. Teaching and learning are good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers work closely with pupils, encouraging them as they circulate, maintaining progress. Teachers require pupils to reflect on their work and appreciate their classmates' efforts. Occasionally learning is slowed by gossip, or immaturity in a minority of pupils, mainly boys. Normally the pupils' very good attitudes to learning support their teachers' work. Lessons begin with an explanation of planned activities and well-staged demonstrations. Lesson endings are less effective and opportunities for pupils to review learning or discuss their work are often missed. The best lessons build progressively on learning and discovery. In one lesson in Year 10, pupils made excellent progress, re-cycling cardboard to produce large-scale relief sculptures of fruit, influenced by O'Keefe and Cézanne. Assessment is well used in Years 10 and 11, to provide pupils with guidance on attainment and progress towards their agreed targets.
130. The department is well led and managed by a head of department who values her pupils and allows her staff to develop their interests. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Planning aims to raise standards. There is insufficient detail of ICT in schemes of work. The capacity for further improvement is good. The curriculum includes two and three-dimensional processes with very good use of artists-in-residence, especially in Year 10. The displays around school add to the cultural and spiritual quality of school life. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, one of the rooms being too small for large groups, while the leaking roof causes ongoing problems. The difficulty accessing computers makes full delivery of the National Curriculum problematic. The good departmental library supports pupils' learning. The

department has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards have risen and achievement is now very good. Teaching and learning are now very good.

Music

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average.
- The range of extra-curricular activities and performance opportunities is extensive.
- Standards of performance by extra-curricular groups are very high.
- The contribution to pupils' personal development is very good.
- The improved accommodation supports practical work more effectively.
- There is still a lack of planning for the use of ICT in Years 7 to 9 to meet National Curriculum requirements.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 are not fully in place. Assessment information is not used enough to raise standards.

Commentary

131. GCSE results for 2003 were well above national averages. Results have remained consistently high since the previous inspection but numbers are small. The end of key stage teacher assessments for 2003 show pupils attaining well above average but these are unreliable because procedures for assessing pupils' work are not fully in place.
132. Standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 9 are average. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school in Year 7 is broadly average and over the key stage they make satisfactory progress. When listening to music pupils in Year 9 show understanding of different styles of music. They can compose successful pieces using the pentatonic scale.
133. Standards by the end of Year 11 are well above average because the quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Pupils receive instrumental tuition which contributes very effectively to all aspects of their GCSE work. They create very well structured compositions and show very good understanding of the instruments for which they compose. In their mock GCSE listening and appraising paper they show very good understanding of the areas of study and technical terms.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is satisfactory. Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and to reinforce learning. Activities are varied with opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively when composing. However, teachers' expectations of pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not always high enough and planning does not always take into account the prior learning of different pupils, especially the more musically able. Consequently, pupils do not always make enough progress with their performing and composing skills in lessons. Pupils learn more effectively in Years 10 and 11 because teachers' expectations are higher and the key learning is more clearly identified. Teachers know the pupils very well and take more account of individual pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. In a Year 10 lesson this resulted in pupils contributing very confidently and developing a very good understanding of the musical influences on gospel and soul music.
135. Music teachers work very hard as a team to provide an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and performance opportunities, involving a good number of pupils, students and staff, which have a strong impact on pupils' personal development as well as their musical development. These vocal and instrumental groups achieve very high standards, particularly the excellent standard of the concert band. The good range of instrumental tuition provided is

developing well but vocal tuition is not offered to support the interest in singing evident in the choirs.

136. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is clear understanding of the areas for development but strategies for improvement are not yet fully in place. Since the previous inspection the accommodation has been much improved and now supports group composing and performing activities well. Music ICT resources have increased and are used very effectively to enhance pupils' composing in Years 10 and 11. However, there is still a lack of planning for the use of ICT in Years 7 to 9 to meet National Curriculum requirements for music. Assessment procedures are not yet fully in place in Years 7 to 9 and assessment information is not used well enough to track pupils' progress and improve standards. Planning for Years 7 to 9 does not include sufficient detail about the key knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils are expected to learn. Overall, improvement is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the compulsory course by the end of Years 9 and 10 as a result of good quality teaching and learning.
- Poor quality accommodation restricts the range of curricular and extra-curricular activities that can be offered; this makes it very difficult to raise standards further for the full range of pupils.
- In Years 8 and 9, band A pupils have less time allocated for physical education than band B pupils; this makes it difficult to raise standards even further for the less physically capable pupils.
- School teams are very successful, particularly at local level.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result in a positive learning atmosphere in lessons.
- Teacher assessment procedures at the end of Year 9 are not yet fully effective.

Commentary

137. Recently, results in the GCSE examination have been above the national average. However, in 2003, these fell and were below. Department analysis shows that fewer band A pupils, as well as fewer girls, opted to take the course but that results were broadly as expected.
138. The range of activities observed in practical lessons was limited because the gymnasium was not available during school GCSE mock examinations. In lessons seen in Year 9 standards in invasion games are average for the majority. Achievement is, however, good because standards on entry were below what was expected for pupils' ages. In association football lessons most boys have secure individual skills and techniques. The more capable control the ball well and pass accurately. Teamwork skills are less secure with the less capable not using space as well as they should. In netball, most girls know the basic rules such as footwork but their teamwork skills such as the importance of movement into space to receive passes is less well developed, particularly for the less capable. Overall, for the more physically capable, standards are above average as reflected in the success of school teams in local competitive fixtures whereas, for the less physically capable, they are very variable because of differences in time allocation for pupils in Years 8 and 9. On the whole, though, good quality teaching and learning have led to good improvement for the great majority who are working at appropriate levels for their age.
139. No lessons were observed in the Year 11 compulsory course. In lessons seen in Year 10 standards are as expected for their age for the majority. In hockey, boys are improving well both their individual and teamwork skills. The more capable pass accurately but some of the less capable are still not controlling the ball sufficiently well before passing. In netball girls successfully plan set-piece play from a centre pass and their secure all-round individual skills

are applied well in games. The use of signalling and communication in games could be used to better effect. In relation to their physical capabilities the majority of pupils achieve well. No practical GCSE lessons were seen in Year 11. A scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work shows standards to be average and predicted grades suggest the proportion of pupils expected to attain grades A*-C to be broadly in line with this year's national average. Some pupils make use of ICT to present their work. In Year 10 GCSE practical lessons pupils are developing both their individual and teamwork skills well: boys in association football and girls in netball.

140. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good across all years and results in good progress for pupils. Teachers have a good command of the activities and there is a consistent approach as regards standards of behaviour. Purpose, progression and challenge typify the good quality teaching. In a Year 7 association football lesson, for example, well-planned and structured activities ensured boys and girls were all actively involved and improving their skills and techniques well. Clear learning objectives are generally shared with pupils in, for example, netball lessons; thus they know what is expected of them. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, which enhances the quality of learning and enables all to make good progress. Teachers circulate well in lessons and their effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils aware of their capabilities. Sometimes, however, there are insufficient structured opportunities for pupils to comment on each other's work to help them improve; this would deepen their knowledge and understanding even further.
141. Leadership and management of the department are clear and focused. There is effective monitoring of performance data, particularly GCSE. Good quality schemes of work, particularly for Years 7 to 9, enable teachers to plan their lessons effectively and to support well pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Good extra-curricular provision throughout the year broadens pupils' learning experience and enables the more capable to represent the school in competitive fixtures. As a result, individuals have gained representative honours at county level in a range of sports and a number are also currently individual champions in the local athletics championships. One is also currently a national champion. Numerous boys' and girls' teams have been successful locally in association football, netball and athletics. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above national norms.
- Teaching is very good.
- Achievement is good.
- A wide curriculum meets the needs of a wide range of pupils.
- Weaknesses in literacy lower performance in examination.

Commentary

142. In Years 10 and 11, the department offers business studies, and business and communication systems. This latter is a new provision, combining theoretical and practical ICT aspects of business and reflects the intention of the school to offer provision which meets all the needs of a widening cohort of pupils interested in the subject. As it is being undertaken for the first time in the school by Year 10, no public examination results are yet available. A perusal of the pupils' work in their notebooks and their work in class indicated that standards above national expectations are already being attained and pupils are making good progress, particularly in combining the practical and theoretical elements of the course.

143. At GCSE, overall standards in business studies are well above national averages. In the work seen and in class work (only lessons for Year 10 classes were available during the inspection), pupils continue to work at levels which are well above national expectations. Pupils confidently deal with business concepts and apply appropriate business terminology effectively. For example, in their studies of the organisation of businesses, pupils know the factors of production and refer to them appropriately in their work.
144. From a level of attainment at entry to the course in Year 10, which is above national levels, pupils' achievement is good, particularly in the maturation of conceptual understanding. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress, because their teachers know them well, use appropriate materials and provide effective guidance in lessons. However, pupils' overall achievement is affected by their general aversion to wider reading amongst all but the highest attaining pupils.
145. Teaching is very good. Teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious enthusiasm for it and this commitment is strongly communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Formal assessment is used well. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a range of methods that support teaching well. There is appropriate emphasis on literacy and the use of correct technical language. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of their colleagues and this provides a very good basis for awareness of their own levels and the steps needed to improve. Pupils' response and learning are very good and this reflects their good teaching.
146. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has produced a range of informed and informative documents that deal effectively with all aspects of the department's work, and gives very effective and very efficient leadership to the subject. In all her work, she is very well supported by her colleagues.
147. The department has made good progress along the pathways set down in the last report

Health and social care GCSE

148. In 2003, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher GCSE grades (A*-C) in health and social care was well above average. In one Year 10 lesson seen, standards were above average. Pupils are well informed and keen to discuss their opinions and what they have learnt. Teaching was good, and pupils used ICT well to present their research. They are encouraged to draw clear conclusions from their learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A teaching strength is the sensitivity displayed, universally by staff, when discussing sensitive or controversial issues.
- The school is very effective at providing a setting for active citizenship within its faith ethos.
- The recently appointed manager of citizenship has a strong sense of purpose concerning the subject and its future place in the school.
- Citizenship has not yet become fully embedded in the curriculum.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluation and reporting of standards are not yet firmly in place.

Commentary

149. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is above average. Higher attaining pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of the topical events they study and show awareness of the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens, and some can contribute to discussions and debate. For example, in discussions and lessons about global issues in geography, pupils have opportunities to discuss fair trading and its impact on the poor around the world, and continue the global theme in science, with discussions of environmental issues. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, particularly in their mature recognition of a world beyond self.
150. In Year 10, pupils' attainment is similar to what is commonly seen. They have a good knowledge of the topical events they study. In discussion, many pupils demonstrate a maturity of understanding, based on their own empathetic feelings. However, overall, pupils, whilst making progress in developing ideas, find the lack of wider reading around the subject prevents the debate from reaching full maturity. Their achievement therefore is only satisfactory.
151. Teaching and learning are good, and occasionally very good. Teaching is generally better in Years 7 to 9 than in Year 10. Some very good examples of effective teaching were seen in geography and physical education as well as in the discrete classes of citizenship in Year 7. The best lessons and tutorials are characterised by good planning and clear aims and objectives. In such lessons, the citizenship elements have specific references made to them. A teaching strength is the sensitivity displayed, universally by staff, when discussing sensitive or controversial issues. Successful lessons use a range of strategies which encourage pupil participation in activities within lesson, where pupils develop skills that can be employed outside lessons in active citizenship. For example, Year 9 pupils have established the St Vincent de Paul group of volunteers, who help with playground activities in a neighbouring special school.
152. Leadership is very good. The very recently appointed co-ordinator of citizenship is enthusiastic, committed and has a very clear vision of how the school can incorporate citizenship within a Christian ethos. She is aware of the strengths of the subject and the challenges concerning the establishment of an appropriate syllabus for Years 10 and 11.
153. Management is currently only satisfactory. In practical terms, the co-ordinator has already produced an action plan to formalise and enhance monitoring of teaching and assessment of citizenship, which incorporates the use of individual pupil log books, but systems for monitoring and evaluation and reporting of standards are not yet firmly in place. However, she has not yet been in post long enough to see the firm establishment of her programmes.
154. Citizenship was not reported on in the previous report. The steps already taken are very appropriate and can be seen as important signals which bode well for the future vibrancy of a subject which is developing rapidly, though it is not yet fully embedded in the curriculum.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 11 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. The validated data for 2003 is not currently available.

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	6	100.0	91.6	50.0	36.3	90.0	74.1
Business studies	12	100.0	96.4	50.0	32.8	90.0	76.5
Chemistry	13	100.0	94.0	38.5	45.9	89.2	81.1
Classical studies	5	80.0	98.5	60.0	52.0	76.0	88.0
English literature	18	100.0	98.5	44.4	43.7	90.0	84.3
French	5	100.0	96.2	40.0	46.1	92.0	83.0
Design and technology	5	100.0	95.3	80.0	35.5	100.0	76.5
General studies	48	100.0	90.1	62.5	29.1	99.2	69.3
Geography	11	100.0	97.1	81.8	40.5	103.6	80.9
German	8	100.0	96.3	37.5	44.3	82.5	82.1
History	6	100.0	97.1	100.0	41.0	106.7	81.2
Mathematics	16	100.0	93.3	62.5	52.2	96.3	84.7
Other Social studies	9	88.9	94.3	33.3	38.9	75.6	77.7
Physics	15	100.0	92.8	46.7	42.8	92.0	78.6
Religious studies	8	100.0	96.3	87.5	44.0	97.5	82.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature and French were inspected in depth. Two lessons of **German** were sampled and a scrutiny of a sample of work undertaken. In the lessons and work seen, standards attained by Year 12 and 13 students were well above average and achievement was very good due to very good teaching and very good student attitudes to learning.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is good and includes very good teaching where there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed.
- High expectations create a good learning atmosphere and an intellectual response from the students.
- The strong leadership of the subject provides a clear vision for staff and students.
- Some lessons are not as challenging or well paced as the very good lessons.
- Students are not given enough opportunity to be involved in their learning.

Commentary

155. Results in the 2003 GCE A-level English literature examinations were above the national

average. Results in AS examinations reflect the trend of above average attainment.

156. In the work seen during the inspection students' attainment was above average in both Year 12 and Year 13. This represents a good level of achievement because their attainment was average when they joined the sixth form. All students have good knowledge and understanding of their work and relish the subject. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and only falter when the teacher takes over the discussion and there is insufficient time for reflection. Students make valid and cogent observations and use sophisticated technical vocabulary in their writing. Extended writing is a strong feature of the students' work and their independent research skills are well developed. They read widely and choose challenging texts. Students make sophisticated inferences from texts and sustain detailed textual analysis. Many students make very good use of ICT to aid the presentation of their work.
157. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons there is a brisk pace, students are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. The retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13 is very good. Students enjoy their work with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. In a good Year 13 lesson, students studying *Othello* spoke confidently and accurately, placing the characters in an historical setting and developed their thinking to examine the role of spirituality and jealousy in the character of Othello. High expectations created a reflective atmosphere and provoked an intellectual response from the students. In a lesson that was satisfactory rather than good, students learnt less because the teacher answered the questions before the students had the chance to contribute. The department makes good use of assessment data for curriculum planning. The study of historical and multi-cultural texts deepens students' understanding of literature and life. Sensitive planning of lessons ensures that all students are given the opportunity to air their views in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Very good relationships are evident and students respond positively to their teacher and each other.
158. The strong leadership of the department provides a clear vision for staff and students that reflects the school's aims. Teachers are mutually supportive and respect each other and the students. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work, which encourages equality for the students, and the professional development of staff. Teachers are aware of the specific needs of male students and plan work accordingly. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained and teaching has improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

159. Although there are generally no separate lessons in communications skills this does not prevent students from studying their subjects well.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good: students achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

160. Results in GCE AS and A-level are consistently well above the national average for small numbers of mainly female students. Results in AS-level in 2003 were well above average and in line with students' prior attainment. In the current Year 12 and 13, work seen is consistently well above average and student achievement is very good. The insistence on the exclusive use of French in lessons leads to very good standards of speaking and listening. Students use a wide

range of vocabulary and have very good understanding of grammar. They produce a wide variety of well-organised, accurate and extended writing on social and cultural issues, which is enriched by independent research on the Internet. Reading skills are well above average and students skim, scan and draw inferences from the text.

161. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and students have very positive attitudes to learning. Challenging teaching and probing questioning and prompting demand a great deal of intellectual effort from students and causes them to extend and develop their responses, giving more reflective replies in more sophisticated French. Lessons are very well planned to build on previous learning and taught with energy and enthusiasm that motivate the students. Examination requirements are understood well and students are very well prepared. Careful marking and constant monitoring in class push students constantly to improve and develop the quality of their work.
162. Leadership and management are very good, focusing sharply on raising standards. There are good opportunities for students to have extended visits and exchanges abroad.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to standards that are well above average.
- Students enjoy the intellectual challenge in their work.
- Students have very mature attitudes to their studies.
- A few students are over-dependant upon their teachers.

Commentary

163. Students start the course with standards that are above average. They achieve very well so that, by the end of Year 13, standards are well above the national average. By this stage, the highest attaining students are fully competent with all aspects of the course. Lower attaining students can integrate and differentiate a range of functions, calculate moments, and apply a range of statistical techniques. However, they are not confident to combine different elements of their learning to be able to tackle more complicated problems. Students achieve equally well on all components of the course. Because of small numbers of students, it is not possible to evaluate the relative achievement of male and female students or to make valid comparisons between the achievement of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and other students. Students gain better results in mathematics than they do in their other subjects.
164. This very good achievement is made because students learn very well in their lessons. The main reason for this is very good teaching. Students are regularly presented with demanding challenges that require them to apply their knowledge. Students in Year 12 discovered the statistical concept of variance for themselves by being asked to comment on two sets of data. Students came up with different observations and learnt by considering each other's ideas. This results in students understanding their work and not just following a set of instructions. Consequently, they develop confidence to tackle demanding questions. Teachers provide a high level of support to students. Students praise their teachers highly and especially value the quality of information they receive about their progress. Teachers have very detailed knowledge of examination requirements, using this knowledge well to help students prepare efficiently. Most students are able to take full charge of their own learning but a minority seek more direct support from their teachers. Such students are, for example, reluctant to embark upon solving a problem until the teacher has given some indication of the first steps.
165. Students enjoy the challenge of the work, being well aware of what they have achieved. They display very mature attitudes, working at a highly productive rate. The lack of a library in the

school results in students not being easily able to undertake background reading in the subject, for example, to explore what a first-year university mathematics student might be studying.

166. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers work effectively together to teach the course. Students' progress is accurately monitored and effective steps are taken should any student not be meeting expectations. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the rise in standards compares favourably to that which has occurred nationally.

Mathematics across the curriculum

167. The school currently does not make any provision to develop mathematics across the sixth form. Nevertheless, in all subjects, students have levels of mathematical skills that more than meet the demands of their studies.

SCIENCE

168. Biology and chemistry were inspected in depth. One lesson was sampled in physics. This was very well taught. With lively exposition and much challenging questioning, students quickly gained a secure understanding of magnetic flux and how to manipulate the equations involved. The GCE A-level results in physics in 2003 were well above recent national averages with almost half of the candidates gaining A or B grades. One third of those taking the GCE AS-level examination gained A or B grades and well over three-quarters gained at least a grade E.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in public examinations are above average.
- Students achieve well and make good progress as a result of very positive attitudes and good teaching.
- Students' progress is carefully monitored. They know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- There is a shortage of ICT resources and some items of equipment.

Commentary

169. The GCE A-level results in biology in 2003 were above recent national averages. In the 2003 GCE AS-level examinations all candidates gained at least a grade E and one third gained A or B grades. Almost all candidates at both levels achieved at least as well or better in relation to their attainment in GCSE examinations.
170. Standards of the work seen are above average in each of Years 12 and 13 and students are making good progress. Achievement is also good in both years with almost all students attaining standards in line with or better than their performances at GCSE levels. Students in Year 13 competently operate rules in applications to inherited diseases. They know the factors affecting enzymes and most can explain them. Almost all have a clear understanding of glycolysis. By the end of one lesson, for example, all students had understood new terms and successfully classified examples of many species. Year 12 students have a good understanding of basic structure of large molecules and of that of DNA. Their practical skills developed well during an investigation where they produced chromatograms showing pigments in chlorophyll. When prompted most could explain the purpose of materials used in the extraction.

171. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and occasionally very good. High quality relationships between teachers and students together with their positive attitudes are major factors in helping students learn well in lessons and make good progress. Students respond well to the high expectations and challenge set. Teachers know their subject very well and deliver it in a lively informative manner. Lessons are well planned and proceed at a brisk pace. Questioning is skilful and well focused on individuals. Occasionally, however, more is needed to check understanding. Students are managed very well, kept busy throughout and given appropriate extra attention. Marking is a particular strength. Students appreciate the detailed comments that indicate what steps they should take to improve. They appreciate the extra help willingly given by teachers out of lessons. Students' views about the subject are extremely positive and they are pleased that they have chosen the subject.
172. The subject is very well led and managed. Monitoring of performance takes place regularly. An additional course, considered to be more suitable for some students, is planned. Assessment procedures are very thorough. The information provided enables each student to have a clear target. Technical support is of high quality. There is, however, a shortage of ICT resources, and of an incubator, a water bath and a centrifuge. Access to computer rooms is also limited and is restricting opportunities for using ICT as an aid to learning. Since the previous inspection a new laboratory for biology has been constructed. Standards in public examinations have been above average or better in recent years.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCE AS and A-level results in 2003 were well above recent national averages.
- Good teaching and very positive attitudes of students enable them to achieve well and make good progress.
- The progress of students is very carefully monitored and they are kept well informed.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Insufficient resources and a lack of access to computer rooms are limiting the use of ICT to support learning.

Commentary

173. In 2003, GCE A-level results in chemistry were well above the recent national averages with three-quarters gaining A or B grades. In recent years, the results have been at least in line with national averages. In the 2003 GCE AS-level examinations four out five students gained at least an E grade and a high proportion gained A or B grades.
174. Standards of work seen are above average. Students are making good progress and achieving well in relation to their prior attainment in the GCSE examinations. Year 13 students have a good grasp of rates of reactions and can manipulate the associated equations. In one lesson, for example, they successfully planned an investigation to determine the order of a chemical reaction. In the following lesson they skilfully carried out the practical procedures, carefully taking accurate measurements, and processed their results. Year 12 students competently calculate molar quantities and higher attainers work out the actual number of molecules involved. In a challenging practical investigation they developed titration skills very well.
175. Teaching and learning are good overall and occasionally very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and make it comprehensible in a lively, informative manner. They also have a very good knowledge of examination board requirements and, as a result, students rapidly acquire techniques needed for success. Teachers know their students extremely well and establish relationships based on general mutual respect. This promotes confidence and eagerness to fulfil teachers' expectations. Lessons are very well planned and conducted at an

appropriate pace. Questioning is skilful and teachers draw out information and check understanding very well. Students appreciate the frequent marking and informative comments on their work to help them to move forward. They also value the time readily given by teachers out of lessons. Students learn well mainly as a result of their very positive attitudes and the good teaching. Interest and concentration levels are always high. They willingly respond and put forward ideas. They co-operate very well in groups and help each other considerably. They carefully use apparatus and observe the necessary safety precautions well.

176. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear focus on seeking strategies to raise standards and achievement further. Assessment procedures are accurate and comprehensive and enable clear targets to be set for each student. Effective use is made of the module booklets issued to each student. A lack of ICT resources, together with limited access to computer rooms, hinders support for learning. Technical support is of the highest quality. Since the previous inspection standards have been in line with or above national averages. Variations over the years result from the differing attainment levels at GCSE of the year cohorts. Numbers taking the subject have increased recently. Accommodation is now good following the construction of a new laboratory.

Computer science

The A-level computing course was inspected in depth.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good specialist knowledge.
- Above average standards.
- Students' very good attitude towards the subject.
- Only a small number of girls follow the computing course.

Commentary

177. The most recent results for the AS-level computing examination show that only two of the four students entered student achieved a grade, one student the higher grade of A. In the A-level examination all the students achieved a grade, half gaining the higher grades of A and B

178. The work seen in lessons, examination of previous work and discussion with students in Years 12 and 13 show that standards overall are above average. Students have a good understanding of the database and are confident to enter the data. They have an understanding of the use of a macro and include the procedure in their projects. Students have an established knowledge of programming language and procedures. They are beginning to use the Pascal and visual basic language and are familiar with the syntax. Students use their very good communication skills to present coursework of a high standard. Discussion with students about their projects shows that they have a clear vision about the future developments and how to overcome problems. These projects have been well researched and students are aware that the application must be suitable for a non-literate ICT user. Students have a good understanding of the complexities of the use of ICT in larger organisations, benefiting from talks from visiting speakers.

179. Students' attitude to the subject is positive, showing a very good level of interest. They are confident to discuss their work, commenting that they find the work challenging and consider the teaching to be of good quality. In discussion all the students felt that they were well advised about the course and are well supported.

180. The quality of teaching is good and as a result students learn well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and computing skills, using their expertise well to guide students. Teachers have high expectations of students, planning work that is demanding and challenging. Students

respond well to this and enjoy the challenge. Teachers circulate well during lessons, intercepting when necessary, guiding and advising, discussing projects and using focused questioning to ascertain understanding. Students welcome the individual support they are given to develop their coursework and are confident to seek help when required, leading to good learning.

181. The leadership and the management are good. The head of department has a clear vision about the future development of the subject and the need to improve standards. The introduction of the computing course is proving successful and a popular choice with students. The course, however, is predominately being followed by boys. The department is very conscious of this imbalance and is investigating ways to encourage more girls to choose an ICT course with the possible introduction of an AVCE course.

182. The improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were inspected in depth. One lesson was sampled in **Latin**. Teaching and learning were good. Students are very committed to this after-school class. One **classical civilisation** lesson was sampled. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. One lesson in **law** was sampled. Teaching and learning were good. In the one lesson sampled in **psychology** the teaching and learning were satisfactory.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very high standards in examinations when compared to similar schools.
- Teachers challenge students and have high expectations of them.
- Thorough preparation ensures that independent learning is very effective and contributes both to geographical understanding and to personal development.
- Residential fieldwork gives reality to the subject.
- Relationships between teachers and students are relaxed and positive and built around mutual respect.
- Leadership and management come together in the drive to raise standards.

Commentary

183. The standards currently being achieved are well above average. Geography is a popular sixth form subject and recruits well. Students invariably complete the course and make very good progress. Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection. In 2003, AS results were well above national averages, half of a sizeable entry achieving the top grades. A-level results also show a rising trend over time. In recent years no student has failed and many have gone on to study geography in higher education.

184. Students speak highly of their experience in the subject. They enjoy geography and the relaxed yet purposeful relationships they have with each other and with their teachers. Relationships have been strengthened by shared experiences of residential fieldwork. Students accept that teachers have high expectations of them and, especially in Year 13, are happy and mature enough to meet the challenge with commitment. Students are very well taught. Teachers are knowledgeable and individual interests are appropriately deployed. Integration of study skills into the teaching programme enables students to rise to the challenge of independent learning. A Year 12 lesson, for example, began with guidance on how to write precisely. It progressed from an abstract example to the reality of a river basin. Students collaborated effectively in groups

revisiting earlier learning on erosion and slope formation. Much was achieved because the pace of the lesson sustained student interest. Learning was driven by the interaction of skills with gains in geographical knowledge and understanding.

185. Well-planned lessons are enriched by the use of case studies. Students are encouraged to make comparisons and form judgements. As a result, students achieve very well, making rapid gains in geographical knowledge alongside clear understanding of cause and effect. Their progress is well monitored. Folders are checked termly with written reports that set personal targets. Consequently, students know how well they are doing, how well they should be doing and how to improve. Coursework shows students' ability to draw from different areas of subject knowledge so as to make sense of primary data. ICT is well used for presentation and conclusions are properly evaluated. Students use terminology accurately and are increasingly incisive, and well tutored, in answering questions.
186. The subject is very well managed. Lessons are well resourced and students make much use of the mini-computer suite. Leadership imbues a strong sense of direction with a firm commitment to raising standards. The department's performance is regularly and critically monitored.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to consistently high examination grades and a pass rate of 100 per cent.
- There is good analysis of examination results and thought given on how to improve grades.
- The students are all very well motivated and their involvement contributes very well to their learning.
- The history course both requires and helps to produce high literacy levels.
- The absence of library provision is a barrier to historical learning that the department manages to overcome by making use of outside facilities.

Commentary

187. GCE A-level students and GCE AS-level students consistently achieve a 100 per cent pass rate at grades A-E and many regularly get the highest grades. Students demonstrate good achievement and progress.
188. Work seen in lessons and in files contains impressive notes and essays on the topics studied. A strength of the learning is the way in which teachers and students discuss examination requirements and methods of tackling different types of essay questions so that students build up reasoned, balanced answers. This, together with the fact that the department requires, and helps to produce, high literacy levels accounts for the fact that many students consistently gain passes with higher grades. Lessons make a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students. There is no library, which is a drawback to the effective running of a sixth form history course, but the department has helped to overcome this by effective use of other libraries, including that of the local university.
189. The teaching and learning are consistently very good. Very good, purposeful teaching, in a very good learning environment, promotes consistently high standards for well-motivated students who have the literacy skills to be able to convey clearly and concisely the complexity of historical interpretation and debate. Teaching is characterised by very strong competence in the subject, good relationships and planning, and a brisk, purposeful delivery that conveys information but also calls for challenge and individual response. Students are all very well

motivated and contribute to the learning experience. Mini-debates, in which certain students are asked to take up and defend a particular position, help promote learning very well.

190. Leadership and management are very good and result in very good standards, very good relationships and the pursuit of continuous improvement. Analysis of examination results in order to improve performance is thoughtful, assessment is very thorough, and predicted grades are reliable.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

191. No subjects were inspected in depth. Two lessons of **design and technology** (product design) were sampled. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning were at least very good and in one lesson they were excellent. Students are fully involved in stimulating debate about design issues and they develop their skills well, including the use of CAD/CAM equipment. Teachers are developing well their use of exciting new interactive ICT teaching methods.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

192. Art and design was inspected in depth. In **music** one GCE AS lesson was sampled. Teaching was good and students achieved well. They show a good understanding of the styles and instruments for which they are composing. The department takes well the responsibility for teaching music not only to students from St John Fisher but also students from the local further education college. One lesson of **textiles** was sampled. Teaching, learning and achievement were very good. Standards of experimentation and investigation into the design of a lady's bag were above average.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Students are inventive and innovative in their use of materials.
- They are very able when producing highly finished drawings but do not appreciate the need to draw for different reasons.
- Students are not well enough read to permit an informed personal view of art and artists.
- The dedicated studio space is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

193. Only two students sat the GCE A-level examinations in each of 2002 and 2003. Their results were below average. Those students who opt for art in the sixth form complete their courses.
194. Standards are close to average. Students are increasingly curious and experimental, using differently textured and coloured papers, including newspaper, as alternative surfaces for large-scale, very impressive drawing, collage and painting. Sketchbooks contain highly finished drawings of natural forms with strong tonal qualities, usually in pencil. Students do not fully appreciate the use of drawing to collect particular information, to develop ideas, or to experiment with composition. Instead of being investigative, drawings tend to be presentational and another method of making a picture. There is reference to Andy Goldsworthy's art in relation to students' own work with natural objects but few are able to talk about their influences in any critical way. Annotation in sketchbooks and design sheets is less evident than usual. Students are not well read. Surprisingly, a student engaged with an investigation of movement in art had not heard of 'futurism'. The most able students achieve well but the majority,

particularly in Year 12, although interested in their studies, lack the research skills and commitment to support independent study. Their achievement is satisfactory.

195. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work hard as they circulate, prompting and encouraging their students. Industry and attitudes are above average in class but progress between lessons indicates that students are not working hard enough in their own time. Students make very good use of simple resources to produce two and three-dimensional compositions. Following an arranged visit to the Tate Modern in London, one student produced a wide variety of work including a relief sculpture and a Sixties', Mary Quant-style dress influenced by reversed newspaper cuttings, Bridget Riley and Jackson Pollock. Very good assessment supports informative discussions, providing clear guidance on progress and improvement.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

196. No subjects were inspected in depth. A double practical lesson, involving both Year 12 and Year 13 students, was sampled together with a scrutiny of a sample of Year 13 students' work, in the recently introduced GCE AS and A-level **physical education** courses. Teaching and learning were good and students were developing well their analytical skills of quality of performance. Standards of work seen are average.

BUSINESS

Provision in business studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are well above national norms.
- Good value is added and students achieve well as a result of very good teaching and learning.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- A lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject impacts on performance in both class work and examinations.

Commentary

197. GCE A-level results are well above national figures.

198. Standards reached by current students, as seen in lessons and in their written work, are well above average. Students' projects and written work are interesting, well produced and, for the most part, professionally presented. Students confidently use a wide range of business terminology. They demonstrate clear understanding of key business concepts. Work is thorough and covers the requirements of the assessment evidence grid in a broad way. The strength of the students' class work is their basic understanding of the subject matter and the steady accumulation of knowledge, which is well organised in their files. Students are increasingly confident with the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data, though these still remain relative weaknesses.

199. Achievement is good overall. Good value is added and students make good progress. However, their progress is hindered by the lack of wider and in-depth reading around the subject because of additional interests outside school which impact on the time they can devote to learning.

200. Teaching and learning are very good. In the best lessons teachers have excellent rapport with students. Their expert subject knowledge underpins discussions very well and clear explanations are provided. Lessons are carefully planned, and effective use is made of case studies and other activities to allow students to apply and extend their learning. Students are very well supported academically. Teachers' methodical explanations promote considerable

gains in the lower attaining students' comprehension. However, in those lessons judged to be only satisfactory, a tendency to over-provide such help for the students means they do not have enough practice in the kinds of analysis that will enable them to become more independent learners. Progress is best where students apply assessment and evaluative criteria to their work.

201. Generally, students respond very well in lessons. Their attitudes are mature and they sustain interest. They listen attentively to each other's presentations, and they are mature and mutually supportive. Higher attaining students maintain intellectual rigour and they portray evidence of wider reading. Too often, however, some students are happy to be passive recipients rather than active participants in their own learning. Students have very positive views of the subject. They particularly appreciate the very clear organisation and structure of their courses, and the clear feedback on their attainment and progress.
202. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for the future of the department. This sensibly encompasses plans to strengthen both the academic and the vocational aspects of provision to meet the wide and differing needs and aspirations of future cohorts of students. There is a commitment to high standards and high achievement. Resources are good. The recent infusion of new computers, for example, has a good effect on learning, particularly of the lesser attaining students. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Provision in health and social care is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very high standards by the end of Year 13.
- The quality of teaching is very good and assessment is used very well to improve learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students currently have insufficient access to computers and have had inadequate previous experience of ICT.
- Many students engage in activities outside school; this impinges dramatically on the time they can devote to their studies.

Commentary

203. Standards in health and social care are well above average by the end of Year 13. Results in examinations show standards are well above national averages.
204. In work seen during the inspection, standards are above average in Year 12 and well above average in Year 13. In Year 12, students have a good understanding of the theories of human development. They use their good research skills and knowledge of ICT, not only to pursue information about Jean Piaget, Eric Erikson, and other theorists but also to prepare *PowerPoint* presentations for their chosen research. However, ICT facilities are insufficiently developed for them to present information to best effect. In Year 13, students have good knowledge of the law relating to equal opportunities and client rights. Their deeper understanding of potential societal dangers, inherent in stereotyping and theories of self-fulfilling prophecy, augment this. Students in both years have well-organised coursework folders, showing good contact with the groups of people they are studying.
205. Students achieve well in relation to their assessed potential on entry to the sixth form. The highest attaining students participate confidently in discussions. They ask questions to develop their ideas and understanding of health-related issues, such as how a healthy body maintains a stable temperature. Lower attaining students receive additional encouragement through direct questioning to enable them to contribute more to discussions. Relative weaknesses include the

tendency to be descriptive rather than analytical when answering examination questions. Achievement overall is affected by many students engaging in activities outside school that impinge dramatically on the time they can devote to their studies, particularly to the wider reading around the subject which would enhance their examination skills and results.

206. Teaching and learning are very good. Students benefit from the contributions of a small but strong and committed team of teachers. Teachers have high aspirations for students and communicate their enthusiasm for the subject and their confidence that students will achieve high standards. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Teachers assess students' work frequently and use the information to set targets for improvement. Students respond positively by acting on advice and also setting their own targets to improve their work. Relationships, which are very good, are based on mutual respect between teachers and students.
207. Leadership and management are very good. Teachers have kept up to date with their subject and this has resulted in high levels of improvement in standards and achievement. Very good links have been established with care establishments, so those students are able to have worthwhile experiences when they are working on their assignments, for example about care of young children. Accommodation is only satisfactory. This, together with the paucity of access to ICT, sets a challenging backdrop, against which the department makes very good provision. Overall, improvement year on year is good.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

208. Two **general studies** lessons were sampled. Teaching and learning were effective.

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

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