

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Dr Challoner's Grammar School**

Amersham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110514

Headteacher: Dr Mark Fenton

Lead inspector: George Knights

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 259805

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Grammar (Selective)  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years  
Gender of pupils: Male  
Number on roll: 1243

School address: Chesham Road  
Amersham  
Buckinghamshire  
Postcode: HP6 5HA

Telephone number: 01494 787500  
Fax number: 01494 721862

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Lawrence

Date of previous inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Dr. Challoner's Grammar School is a selective school for boys aged 11 to 18 years in Amersham, Buckinghamshire. It is a specialist science college. There are 1243 boys on roll, making the school larger than average. Its pupils come from a large area in South Buckinghamshire and beyond and have attended over 50 primary schools. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well above average. The school is very popular and is heavily over-subscribed. Most pupils come from homes with well above average socio-economic circumstances. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. Around a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, though very few have English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is very low, and no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Almost all pupils remain in the sixth form on completion of compulsory schooling and almost all then proceed to higher education.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3268	George Knights	Lead inspector	
32698	Steven Barker	Lay inspector	
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
32251	Peter Bratton	Team inspector	Mathematics
30433	Christopher Corp	Team inspector	Science; biology; chemistry
32216	Annie McCabe	Team inspector	Design and technology
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages; French; geography
30317	Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector	History; business education
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
11021	Leonora Davies	Team inspector	Music
2866	Robert Battey	Team inspector	Art and design; citizenship education
3266	Peter Baker	Team inspector	Theatre studies
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	Physical education; sports studies
24453	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector	Physics
15485	Roger Bulter	Team inspector	Religious education
13217	Malcolm Butterworth	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education Limited

102 Bath Road  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL53 7JX

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>10</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>46</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Dr. Challoner's Grammar School is a **very good** school with some outstanding features. Standards are **high** because teaching and learning are **very good** and pupils and students achieve very well. Leadership and management of the school are both **very good** and the school gives **very good value for money**. The greatest aids to achievement are the vision of the headteacher and the talents and dedication of teachers, who are excellent role-models for pupils and students.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, together with the able support of staff and governors, is enabling the school to meet its aim of 'excellence with integrity';
- Pupils and students attain high standards because teaching is challenging and stimulating;
- The school creates an ethos whereby pupils and students have an enthusiasm for learning and very positive attitudes towards all aspects of school life;
- The quality of both assessment and reporting are variable;
- Pupils and students are given very effective support and guidance throughout their time at the school;
- The choice of subjects offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not as wide as it could be;
- The school offers richly diverse enrichment activities, which are very popular and support pupils' personal development very well;
- The school has exceptionally strong links with the wider community, which have been further enhanced through its specialist school status.

**Overall, progress since the previous inspection has been very good. The school has improved on the very good standards reported previously and has dealt with the issues identified in the previous inspection report very well.**

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2003 were very high and better than those in the previous year. They were well above the average for similar schools. They represent very good achievement, given pupils' attainment on arrival in the school. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were very high and well above average for similar schools. GCSE results have been improving faster than nationally in recent years and students achieve very well. Sixth-form students gained very high results in 2002 and results in 2003 were better still, representing very good achievement. Results in national tests for Year 9 and in GCSE and A-level examinations were all in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally.

### Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A*	A*	A*	A
		2000	2001	2002	
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations		A*	A*	

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

Pupils currently in Years 7 to 9 are working at well above average standards and achieving well. Older pupils build well on previous study, work at high standards and achieve very well. Sixth-form students are achieving very well and reaching high standards in their chosen subjects.

Pupils' and students' personal development is **excellent** because teachers place a high priority on the development of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Both main school pupils and sixth-form students adopt **very good** attitudes to all aspects of school life and their behaviour is **very good**. Relationships, both among pupils and students and with teachers, are **excellent**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided in the school is very good.** Teaching and learning are very good, both in the main school and the sixth form. It is best in the sixth form and is better for pupils in Years 10 and 11 than for younger pupils. Pupils and students learn very successfully because a great deal of teaching is challenging and stimulating, so that pupils and students gain a real thirst for knowledge and understanding. Teachers know their pupils and students well and successfully meet the needs of those, who need additional support. Occasionally, teaching in the main school is unsatisfactory and pupils' learning is slower in these lessons.

The curriculum offered is very good, both in the main school and in the sixth form. It is enhanced by an excellent enrichment programme, including an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which are very popular with pupils. The arrangements for the care, support and welfare of pupils and sixth-form students are very good. Pupils and students are actively involved in the life and work of the school and their views are taken into account and acted upon very well. The school has good links with parents, very good links with other schools and excellent community links.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** Strong, visionary leadership is enabling the school to build on its many strengths. Senior members of staff provide excellent role-models for others. They are successfully working to improve evaluation of all aspects of school life as a means of identifying areas for further improvement. Management of the school is good, with some strong features. There is a need for greater rigour in the review of practice at departmental level. Governance of the school is very good, with governors fulfilling all their roles well, other than in ensuring that all pupils and students take part in a daily act of collective worship.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. They value what the school provides for their sons, both academically and through the range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities on offer. Parents strongly believe the school has high expectations of pupils and students. They recognise the strength of leadership and management in the school and are comfortable approaching the school on any issue relating to their sons. Pupils also hold positive views about their school, with almost all liking school and believing that they are taught well.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- enhance the quality and consistency of assessment and reporting;
- review the choice of subjects offered for pupils to study in Years 10 and 11;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- enable all pupils and students to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

## SIXTH FORM SECTION OF THE SUMMARY REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The sixth form is very effective.** Standards are very high because teaching is very good, enabling students to learn very effectively. Students are able to select their courses of study from a wide range on offer. Leadership and management are very good and the sixth form is very cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The sixth form is very well led and managed;
- Students have very good attitudes to all aspects of school life and readily take on responsibility;
- The very good curriculum is enhanced by an excellent enrichment programme;
- Sixth-form students are provided with very good support, guidance and advice.

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in both <b>English</b> and <b>French</b> is <b>very good</b> . In both subjects, students achieve high standards because teaching is very good. Students show excellent attitudes to work and the contribution made to students' personal development in both subjects is impressive.
Mathematics	Provision in <b>mathematics</b> is <b>excellent</b> . Standards are very high as a result of very good teaching. It is a very popular subject and students display extremely positive attitudes towards learning.
Science	Provision in <b>biology</b> , <b>chemistry</b> and <b>physics</b> is <b>very good</b> . Standards in all three subjects are well above the national average. Students learn well in all three subjects because they are taught very well. As a result, students are enthusiastic learners.
Information and communication technology	Provision in <b>information and communication technology</b> is <b>very good</b> . Standards are high and achievement is very good. Teaching is very good because teachers understand their subject and teach with enthusiasm.
Humanities	Provision in both <b>geography</b> and <b>religious education</b> is <b>very good</b> . Standards are well above average in both subjects, with students achieving very well. Teaching and learning are very good in both subjects.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in both <b>art and design</b> and in <b>theatre studies</b> is <b>very good</b> . Standards and achievement are well above average in both subjects. Teaching is excellent in art and design and very good in theatre studies and, thus, students make very good progress in both subjects.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in <b>physical education</b> is <b>good</b> . Standards are well above average. Students achieve well because teaching encourages independent learning and students have great enthusiasm for the subject.
Business	Provision in <b>business studies</b> is <b>very good</b> . Standards are high and all students make very good progress as a result of very good teaching.

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

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The provision of support, advice and guidance for sixth-form students is **very good**. The very good academic and personal support provided for all students makes a very positive contribution to the very high standards they achieve within individual subject areas. Very good guidance is provided for all students regarding applications to universities. This is provided early in Year 12 by the school working in partnership with the Connexions service.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Leadership of the sixth form is very good. Senior managers and governors have a strong sense of purpose in promoting high standards. Management is very good and the sixth form is very cost effective.

### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students are very enthusiastic and enjoy life in the sixth form. They overwhelmingly consider that teaching is challenging and demanding. Students strongly believe that they are encouraged to become independent learners and, by the time they reach Year 13, feel that they are given very good support and advice on the next step in their education.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were **very high**, as they were in previous years. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were also **very high**. Pupils achieve **very well** throughout the school.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in 2003, both in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations, were very high and were an improvement on those in the previous year.
- Results in GCSE examinations have been improving at a faster rate than nationally and are much better than those in similar schools.
- Pupils achieve very well because they are keen learners.
- All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs or from minority ethnic backgrounds, make equally good progress.
- The school sets challenging targets as part of its strategy for further improvement in standards.

#### Commentary

1. When pupils enter the school, they do so with standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average. In most other subjects, their attainment on entry is above average. Pupils make very good progress during their first three years in school and results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are very high. Pupils continue to make very good progress during Years 10 and 11 and achieve very high results in GCSE examinations. At the end of both Year 9 and Year 11, the school's results are in the top 5 per cent nationally.
2. In English, mathematics and science tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, pupils did much better than would have been expected, given their attainment on entry. Results were better in 2003 than in the previous year, maintaining a pattern of steady improvement over several years at the same rate as nationally, though at a much higher standard. Results are well above the average for similar schools at the end of Year 9. Details of results are given in the table below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	41.9 (41.2)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	48.4 (47.9)	35.4 (34.7)
science	43.4 (44.3)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 177 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Pupils make such good progress because they are stimulated and challenged by skilled teachers. They gain an enthusiasm for learning and a strong commitment to doing well. This is true not just in the subjects in which national tests are taken. Indeed, pupils achieve very well in most other subjects during Years 7 to 9 so that standards by the end of Year 9 are well above average in information and communication technology (ICT), history, art and religious education and above average in all other subjects.
4. One of the strongest features of work in the first three years is that it lays firm foundations for study in Years 10 and 11. As a result, pupils continue to make very good progress during these two years. The very high GCSE results in 2003 maintained a pattern of improvement in GCSE results at a faster rate than nationally in recent years. Results in GCSE examinations are also well above the average for similar schools. Details of GCSE results are set out in the table below.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades	99.5 (100)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades	99.5 (100)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	56 (55.7)	35.9 (34.7)

*There were 185 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- As part of its strategy for raising standards still further, the school sets challenging targets both for performance in national tests at the end of Year 9 and for GCSE examinations. The work of pupils currently in the school suggests that the challenging targets set for 2004 are achievable because pupils in Year 11 are achieving high standards in almost all subjects. Only in design and technology are standards relatively lower, though they are above average and reflect good progress, given the subject ability of pupils starting the GCSE course in Year 10.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the strengths of each pupil and are aware of those, who may need extra support. Both through their teaching and the monitoring of pupils' performance, teachers are able to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. Very good arrangements for inducting those new to the school ensure that these pupils are quickly able to settle to work. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are carefully monitored and supported. They are, therefore, able to perform as well as their peers. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are speedily identified and given very good support so that they are able to do as well as expected.

### Sixth form

Results in the sixth form are **very high** and sixth-form students achieve **very well**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in 2003 were an improvement on those in the previous year.
- Students in the sixth form achieve very well because of very good teaching and because they are keen and effective learners.

### Commentary

- Sixth-form results in GCE A-level examinations in 2002<sup>1</sup> maintained a pattern of very high results established in recent years and results in 2003 were even better. Results vary a little from subject to subject and from year to year, but this reflects differences in attainment on entry to the courses rather than different rates of progress.
- The work of students currently in the sixth form is also of a very high standard, suggesting that the pattern of very high results will be maintained. This pattern is due to two factors. Firstly, students are very keen to learn and have developed very effective approaches to their studies. They are confident about taking responsibility for their own learning and so are active participants in lessons and very effective independent learners. Secondly, teachers are stimulating, challenging and hugely supportive of their students so that lessons are characterised by a thirst for knowledge and a quest for understanding. Thus, students achieve very well overall, with particularly high achievement in mathematics.
- A significant number of students in the sixth form join the school at the beginning of Year 12 and many of these are students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very good induction

<sup>1</sup> 2002 is the most recent year for which nationally validated results are available and against which reliable comparisons can be made.

procedures help new students to settle well and all are quickly integrated into the dynamic learning culture that is the sixth form. Teachers monitor the progress of individual students very carefully and discuss work and progress with students on a regular basis. Careful analysis of the performance of standards and progress enables teachers to be sure that all groups of students make very good progress.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

### **Main school**

The development of pupils' attitudes and behaviour is **very good** and the overall contribution made by the school to pupils' personal development is **excellent**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are encouraged to adopt very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life.
- Pupils behave very well and relate well to one another and to their teachers.
- The attention paid to all aspects of pupils' personal development is very impressive.

### **Commentary**

10. The school's vision statement of 'excellence with integrity' aptly describes the aspirations, and to a great degree the achievement, of the overwhelming majority of students in the school. Students are uncommonly polite and helpful to staff, peers and visitors to the school. They have high expectations of themselves and have an excellent attitude to their learning and the environment in which it takes place.

### **Attendance**

Attendance in the year 2002-2003

Authorised absence	
School data:	3.5%
National data:	7.2%

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0%
National data:	1.1%

11. Attendance is very good. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very effective. Prompt action is taken when absences are identified. The school matron, working in close liaison with an assistant headteacher, the heads of year and the school counsellor, effectively follows up and deals with any issues that arise in connection with attendance. Punctuality is similarly very good.
12. Pupils feel proud to belong to the school and are enthusiastic about the educational experiences, both within the curriculum and in the rich and diverse range of extra-curricular activities, that it offers. Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. In all lessons, pupils are very keen to learn. The very low number of exclusions reflects both the very good behaviour of pupils and the well thought-out and effective strategies used in the school to support good discipline.

## Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White - British
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Black or Black British - Caribbean
Any other ethnic group
Parent / pupil preferred not to say

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
919	10	0
125	1	0
1	1	0
4	1	0
50	1	0

13. The work undertaken to promote pupils' personal development is a great strength of the school. In lessons, in extra-curricular activities and in assemblies, great care is taken to provide support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is particularly well provided for both in religious education lessons and in the programme of assemblies. Other subjects also make significant contributions. Pupils' moral and social development is promoted throughout the daily life of the school and is seen in the orderly and considerate way most boys interact with peers and adults. The very significant and highly successful efforts made by the school to contribute to charity are further evidence of the school's commitment to pupils' moral and social awareness, with the support of a school in Ethiopia being a remarkable example of efforts that go beyond raising money. Extra-curricular activities contribute greatly to pupils' personal development.

## Sixth form

The development of students' attitudes is **outstanding**. Sixth-form students are impressive role-models for the younger pupils and are excellent ambassadors for the school.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students relate very well with each other and their teachers, and this helps to create a very positive ethos for teaching and learning.
- Students demonstrate a very strong commitment to their studies and to the aims and purpose of the school.
- Students willingly accept responsibilities and carry out their duties with maturity and sensitivity.

## Commentary

14. The very positive attitude of students is a major strength of the sixth form. The large numbers, who continue their studies at the school, demonstrate a very strong commitment for learning. Students' successful relationships with teachers are built on trust and mutual respect, creating an extremely successful culture for teaching and learning. Students conduct themselves maturely and sensibly and present good role-models to others younger than themselves. They play a full part in the wider aspects of school life, organising events for themselves and main school pupils. They willingly accept responsibilities as prefects and mentors and take on leadership roles in some extra-curricular activities.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Main school

The quality of education provided in the main school is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good**, as is the curriculum. Enrichment activities are **outstanding**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in the main school are **very good**. The assessment of pupils' work and the use made of assessment information are both **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide range of learning methods stimulates pupils to engage fully in their learning.
- Very good teaching means pupils make good progress and achieve very high standards.

- Marking and assessment do not consistently give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.

### Commentary

15. Teaching and learning are very good and have improved since the last inspection. The proportion of very good or excellent teaching has risen to a half of all lessons. As a result, pupils achieve very well and reach very high standards. The school has involved pupils in recent steps to develop more varied and challenging teaching approaches. These developments in approaches to teaching and learning have been successful. As a result, teachers have increased their understanding of how pupils learn best and levels of pupil engagement and motivation in lessons have improved. Details of the teaching observed during the inspection are given in the table below.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 157 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12 (8%)	70 (45%)	43 (27%)	25 (16%)	6 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages. The figures include 53 lessons, which were observed in the sixth form.*

16. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, together with a good understanding of examination requirements. They use these well in planning and preparing lessons. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and convey this to their pupils, who are, in turn, inspired to learn. Teaching is particularly good for older pupils. Lessons in Years 10 and 11 are more challenging, questions are better focused and expectations of pupils' responses are more rigorous. In these lessons, pupils make faster progress. Pupils successfully develop and apply their very good speaking and listening skills in lessons and, as a result, they develop the confidence to express and explain themselves well.
17. Good steps have been taken to develop a programme of monitoring teachers' work. This is already having some benefits, enabling good practice to be shared. However, some subjects have yet to be the focus of detailed review and hence the sharing of good practice has not benefited all departments. Some unsatisfactory teaching occurs in those subjects where detailed monitoring is not commonplace, such as information and communication technology and personal, social and health education.
18. Teachers are very good at giving pupils clear oral guidance in lessons about how to improve their work. However, marking and assessment processes are not consistent enough, either within or across departments, and are not systemically monitored. As a result, assessment information is sometimes not yet well used to guide curriculum planning. The assessment of pupils' work by some teachers does not often enough result in individual pupils being given targets for improvement. This limits the scope of those teachers to evaluate pupils' subsequent progress.

### The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. Enrichment of the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, is **excellent**. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is very good, but that for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not as broad as it could be.
- The richly diverse range of lunchtime, after-school and holiday activities enhances the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well so that they can benefit from all aspects of the curriculum.

## Commentary

19. The curriculum very successfully meets the needs and aspirations of pupils. The overall structure of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 meets the needs of all pupils. It is particularly strong in science, where pupils can study three sciences from Year 8, and all pupils take information and communication technology (ICT), personal, social and health education and citizenship as part of their overall programme. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum does not include examination courses in subjects such as physical education, drama and food technology. However, the curriculum is kept under regular review and consideration is currently being given to widening the range of subjects on offer.
20. The very good and sensitive support given to pupils with special educational needs ensures that they, like all other pupils, can benefit from every aspect of the curriculum. In Year 9, pupils are given good advice to help them choose examination courses of study that are well matched to their interests. Pupils in Year 11 are provided with very good careers guidance, both from the careers service and from a very experienced teacher. Work experience is undertaken voluntarily, with the result that only two-thirds of pupils benefit from a placement.
21. The range of extra-curricular activities provided to enrich the curriculum is excellent. It includes many activities directly related to classroom studies, such as trips, visits, and fieldwork studies. Pupils have very good access to information and communication technology at lunchtime and after school to enable them to extend their studies. The range of clubs, activities, residential visits, expeditions and exchange trips is extensive. Teachers give freely and generously of their time to provide these activities, which are well received by pupils and are very popular. There are many ways for pupils to put forward their views. Through activities such as debating societies, drama clubs and the school council, pupils develop their skills in expressing their views.
22. The match of the teaching staff to the requirements of the curriculum is good, and good support is provided by non-teaching staff, particularly in the areas of technical support for science, information and communication technology and physical education. Significant improvements have been made to the range and availability of ICT equipment, particularly in geography, and the mathematics department makes very good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning.
23. The accommodation for design and technology is out of date and makes it difficult for teachers to meet curriculum requirements. The playing fields are frequently waterlogged and hinder progress in physical education.

## Sixth form

The overall quality of education in the sixth form is **very good**. Teaching, learning and curriculum provision are all **very good**.

## Teaching and learning

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and their high expectations of students contribute to the achievement of high standards.
- Teachers apply their very good knowledge of examination requirements to plan lessons that help students make very good progress.
- Students have high expectations of themselves and respond very well to the high level of challenge the teaching provides.

## Commentary

24. Teaching and learning have improved and are now very good. In mathematics, French and art they are excellent. This is an improvement on the last inspection, as there is now a greater proportion of good, very good or excellent teaching. This is because teachers bring a high level of challenge, fast pace and stimulating learning styles to their lessons so that students learn at a fast pace and have to think beyond the immediate work in hand.
25. The very good overall pattern of teaching in the sixth form is shown in the table below. Teaching is consistently impressive across the subjects inspected, where nearly two-thirds of teaching was very good or excellent.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons in the sixth form

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (13%)	27 (51%)	16 (30%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

26. Students have high expectations of themselves and very good attitudes to their learning. They are stimulated by teachers' excellent subject knowledge and the variety of teaching skills they consequently use in lessons. As a result, they apply themselves fully, develop very good independent and collaborative learning skills and achieve high standards.
27. Sixth-form teachers give regular tests and valuable verbal feedback to students on how well they are doing and how to improve. In some subjects, work is marked in great detail, but this is not always the case. Where students are involved in their own target setting and ongoing assessment, for example in business education, targets for improvement are particularly useful to students.

## Curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision in the sixth form is **very good**.

### Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Students are given a wide choice of A-level subjects.
- Enrichment and extra-curricular activities for students are excellent.

## Commentary

28. The school provides a very good choice of A-level subjects, though there is only one design and technology course on offer. Although the school does not provide students in the sixth form with vocational options, very good guidance about alternative providers is given to students wishing to follow such courses. Recent additions to the curriculum, such as theatre studies, human biology and sports science, have enhanced choice well and students welcome such additions.
29. An exceptionally large number of enrichment and extra-curricular activities are available for students. These considerably support learning, effectively engage students beyond the classroom and make a very strong contribution to students' personal development. Students greatly appreciate all of these activities, but especially being able to participate in residential visits all over the world.
30. Teachers are well qualified and generally have good access to resources, although some lack easy access to information and communication technology (ICT). Accommodation is good overall, though out-of-date facilities in design and technology limit the range of activities possible.

## Care, guidance and support

### Main school

The school's provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is **very good**, as are procedures to ensure pupils' care and welfare. Very effective support and guidance are provided for pupils. Steps taken to involve pupils in school life are **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements to care for pupils' pastoral and academic interests are very well structured.
- The monitoring and support of pupils with special educational needs is becoming increasingly effective.

### Commentary

31. Pupils' academic work and personal development are considered to be equally important in the school and, hence, both are given equally good attention. A well-structured system to monitor progress and development involves all form teachers. Regular discussion, coupled with good record-keeping, means that each pupils' development and needs are very well known. As a result, all pupils are given very good support and guidance. Those with particular needs are well known to all teachers and, thus, support for them is effective. The carefully constructed rewards scheme operating in the school recognises pupil achievement and is used creatively and successfully as an incentive to improve behaviour. Pupils' homework diaries are used well, regularly checked by form teachers and signed by parents. They provide a very valuable means of communication between teachers and parents. Sound, impartial advice is given to those pupils, who are progressing either into the sixth form or employment. Pupils appreciate the caring ethos created by their teachers, with whom they have very good relationships.
32. The school council functions effectively and is well regarded by pupils across the age range. It is a valuable aid to both teachers and pupils in the sharing of ideas and views. It encourages a strong sense of self-worth among pupils and enables staff to have a clear idea of matters concerning pupils. The success of the school council in identifying and communicating its concerns is illustrated well in the much-improved toilet facilities. Members of the council had requested this improvement in facilities. The impact that the council is having in the school is testimony to the determination of the headteacher that pupils' views should be sought and acted upon.
33. In the past, pupils with special educational needs were not consulted about their learning targets. Recent changes have dealt effectively with this weakness and new arrangements ensure that pupils and their parents are fully and properly involved in all aspects of identification of needs and subsequent planning and review of support.
34. Child-protection procedures meet requirements. The school responds quickly and appropriately to the needs of individual pupils. The school matron deals very well with pupils' medical needs. The school responds quickly and effectively to any emergencies. Effective arrangements have been made to prevent unsuitable Internet access.

### Sixth form

The provision of support, advice and guidance for sixth-form students is **very good**. The school values students' views and responds to them **very well**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good personal and academic support and advice.
- The school seeks students' opinions and takes notice of what they say.
- It gives them good support when they join the sixth form and guides them very well into further study when they leave.

## Commentary

35. A key element of the very good leadership of the sixth form is that each student is valued as an individual. Tutors know them well and, consequently, provide very good personal and academic support. Sixth-form teachers maintain very good records of students' progress, both manually and through the use of information and communication technology, and these are regularly shared with the students. This good-quality mentoring programme does much to support students to take responsibility for managing their own learning.
36. The school uses questionnaires, small-group meetings and the school council effectively to determine students' opinions. The improved facilities within the sixth-form social area arose from students' suggestions.
37. Good induction arrangements are in place for all students entering the sixth form. This enables all students to settle quickly into the new routines and demands that studying to a higher level places on them. The school, in partnership with the local Connexions service, provides early careers guidance and advice to prepare students to understand and meet the requirements set down by the universities. All Year 12 students visit Birmingham University as part of this programme.
38. The school has succeeded in working effectively with a number of support agencies to provide additional support to students when necessary. It recognises there is a need to develop and extend these links to broaden the range of support available to all students studying within the sixth form.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, **excellent** community links and **very good** links with other schools, all of which have a considerable impact on pupils' and students' learning and personal development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed an exceptional network of links with the wider community.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work.
- Specialist School status has significantly enhanced links with other schools.
- The school regularly seeks and acts upon the views of parents.
- Reports do not consistently provide parents with sufficient information.

## Commentary

39. Parents hold the school in very high regard and actively support it in a variety of ways. Strong parental support is well illustrated by the fact that the active Friends of Dr. Challoner's Grammar School raises large sums of money for the school each year. Attendance at all parent consultation evenings and at specialist events, such as a drug awareness evening, is very good.
40. The school seeks the views of parents and acts upon them well. The use of a commercially available parental opinion research service enables the school to identify and act upon parents' views. Consultation with parents at parents' evenings and through drop-in sessions gives the school a valuable insight into parental satisfaction with its work. Parents, staff from other schools and members of the community all benefit from a programme of community education, including computer courses and public lectures, offered by the school.
41. Annual reports on progress are not consistent in providing parents or pupils with enough detailed information on how well pupils and students are doing. Nor do they always give enough clear and specific guidance on the steps pupils need to take in order to improve their learning. This means that not all parents are able to give the support they would like to their sons.

42. The school has an impressive network of links with many schools and colleges in the area. Through its Specialist School status, the school has developed an effective programme of activities to share teacher expertise and significantly enhance the curriculum offered to pupils and students. Liaison with partner primary schools is handled effectively and sensitively and very good links with all partner schools ensure a smooth transition and induction into the school.
43. Specialist School status has also enabled the school to develop an impressive range of community links that have a very positive impact on the learning and development of pupils and students. These links have been effectively developed and managed to meet the needs of the school and other partner schools and colleges in the community. A range of special events and initiatives has helped forge close links with these institutions. This makes a major contribution to raising achievement for all schools involved in the programme.
44. The school draws extensively on its community to provide a rich and diverse range of activities for pupils and students. The school capitalises on its close proximity to London, organising trips and visits to the capital and attracting a wide range of visiting speakers and presenters to the school. These significantly enhance the taught curriculum and make a major contribution to achievement. Sixth-form students benefit from mock interviews, made possible by the close links with the human resources department of a local multinational company. Excellent personal development of sixth-form students results from their participation in a community improvement team that regularly undertakes voluntary work in local hospitals, care homes for the elderly and charity shops.
45. The school has a long-standing link with a school in Ethiopia, which makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' and students' moral and cultural awareness and personal development. The entire school community gets involved in raising considerable funds to support this link through a variety of innovative methods. Sixth-form students make regular visits to Ethiopia and a gap-year programme enables post-18 students to work in the school for extended periods.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### Main school

Leadership of the school by the headteacher is **outstanding** and the leadership of key staff is **very good**. Management of the school is **good**, with some very good features. Governance of the school is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirations of the headteacher ensure that the quality of what the school provides is very good and improving.
- Leaders in the school provide excellent role-models for other staff and pupils.
- Governors are very effective in helping to shape the future of the school.
- Very good strategic planning is central to enabling the school to achieve its ambitions and goals.
- Management of the school is good, but there is scope for more consistently effective self-evaluation at departmental level.

### Commentary

46. The leadership given to the school by the headteacher is outstanding. Aply supported by his colleagues and by the governing body, he has created a community that is striving to improve on already very successful practice. A very strong focus on self-evaluation by senior managers ensures that strengths are identified and built upon and areas for further improvement become priorities.
47. The school is fully achieving its aim of 'excellence with integrity'. Not only are academic standards very high, but the school also provides very well for pupils' personal development.

This is because there is a very strong sense of teamwork throughout both teaching and support staff. The school's plan for improvement accurately highlights priorities for future work and provides a clear framework to guide developments. It carefully ensures that the focus remains on the overall aims of the school and it establishes a good balance between maintaining and improving on high academic standards and the desire to provide all pupils with a rounded education.

48. The headteacher and his senior staff work very well together to motivate and encourage others. Very good lines of communication contribute to ensuring that middle managers and other members of staff are very committed to what the school seeks to achieve. Teachers and support staff work together very well, providing mutual support and encouragement. As a result, teachers and support staff give unstintingly of their time and energies.
49. Governors are actively involved and are very committed to enabling the school to achieve its aims. They have a very good grasp of the strengths of the school and are clear about those areas where further improvement is possible. Governors and senior managers work very closely together and the recent establishment of a strategy group of key governors and staff is further enhancing the effectiveness of this partnership. The work of this group is just one of the many ways in which governors very effectively hold the headteacher and his staff to account. Governors fulfil all their responsibilities, other than to ensure that all pupils and students are able to take part in a daily act of collective worship.
50. Management of the school is good. At senior level it is very good, ensuring that the school operates very efficiently. Led by the headteacher and ably implemented by senior teachers, self-evaluation is becoming more rigorous. Teachers are becoming more self-critical, not only through performance management processes, but also in the more general evaluation of what is happening in classrooms. There is still some variation in the quality of internal departmental self-evaluation because not all subject areas have yet been the focus of review. Steps are being taken to improve this situation. What is impressive is that all middle managers now understand and accept the need for rigour in the review of what is happening in school.
51. Heads of departments and heads of year manage their teams well. As a result, pupils are confident that their teachers and tutors work very closely together to support their education. Careful attention is given to the needs of individual pupils and the effectiveness of the monitoring of pupils' progress is a good example of the success of this collaborative working. Teachers also ensure that the needs of those pupils with special educational needs or, who come from minority ethnic backgrounds, are well catered for. Effective steps have been taken to improve the management of support for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are now supported well so that their learning is as effective as that of other pupils.
52. Governors and staff manage resources very well. The induction of teachers and support staff new to the school is good and measures taken to ensure the recruitment and retention of well-qualified staff are very effective. The management of the workloads of teachers and support staff is sensitive, recognising the high level of commitment of staff to meeting the needs of all pupils. The management of financial resources is very good, with priority in spending plans being given to meeting the school's priorities for further improvement.

*Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3 837 258
Total expenditure	3 814 809
Expenditure per pupil	3 181

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	24 047
Balance carried forward to the next	46 496

53. Financial management of the school is efficient, with governors ensuring that the principles of best value are very effectively applied to the overall management of resources. Good steps have been taken to improve accommodation since the previous inspection and further plans

are in place to add additional classrooms and to bring about other improvements to the school buildings and sports facilities.

### **Sixth form**

Leadership and management of the sixth form are both **very good**. Governance of the sixth form is also **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body ably challenges and supports senior managers in leading the sixth form.
- There is a strong sense of purpose in promoting high standards in the sixth form.
- The leadership of all aspects of the sixth form by key staff is very good.
- The sixth form is very cost effective.
- Management of the sixth form is very good.

### **Commentary**

54. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are all very committed to the sixth form and their leadership and management are very effective. As a result, the sixth form is very successful, both in gaining high academic standards and in promoting students' personal development. Sixth-form students are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school as a whole. They do this very successfully, thus, ably assisting the creation of a very harmonious whole-school community.
55. Aspirations for the sixth form are high and so a strong emphasis is placed, as in the main school, on self-evaluation. Teachers are becoming more self-critical and this has led to improvements in teaching and to what the school is able to offer students. The monitoring of teachers' work in the sixth form is improving and this has been identified as a priority for further development. Tutors and sixth-form managers are also constantly looking at how the work and progress of sixth-form students can be further improved and this, too, has enhanced the overall contribution made to sixth-form students' development. Great care is taken to ensure that the needs of all students are met. This is illustrated well in the successful arrangements for the induction and integration of students joining the school at the beginning of the sixth form, many of whom are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
56. Very good management of resources means that the sixth form is very cost effective. Governors and senior managers ensure that teachers are highly skilled and effective in teaching to the high standards demanded by students. The school has the material resources necessary for the courses offered and teaching accommodation is adequate for the sixth form.

# **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 for pupils in Year 9 and are high in Year 11.
- Pupils achieve well and learn very well in response to very good teaching.
- Very good leadership and management contribute to rising standards.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work in English.

#### **Commentary**

57. Results in the national tests for Year 9 pupils in 2003 were well above average, and were an improvement on the 2002 figures. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing in Year 9 are well above average and very good in relation to similar schools. Pupils discuss their work with clarity, confidence and a wide vocabulary, whilst their writing is well constructed and accurate. Pupils also enjoy reading and cope with challenging texts. They enjoy creative writing, such as poetry, displaying imagination and ingenuity. Particularly pleasing is the way in which pupils have responded well to developments in teaching strategies that focus on a range of learning styles, which motivate boys. GCSE results in 2003 were high, as they have been in recent years. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in Year 11 are high, with a particular strength being the depth of critical analysis in English literature. This is evident both in lessons and in coursework.
58. Pupils of all levels of ability, including the gifted and talented and the minority with special educational needs, achieve well throughout their time in school. This is principally due to the challenging expectations of teachers and the very positive attitudes of pupils, who are keen to learn and to participate in lessons. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also achieve as well as other pupils.
59. Teaching and learning are very good. The combination of high expectations, very good subject knowledge and good working relationships between teachers and pupils results in very good learning. Teachers give very useful feedback to pupils on how they can improve their work. Another strength is the priority that teachers give to active participation by pupils and the development of very good literacy skills, including a strong emphasis on speaking and listening.
60. Leadership and management are very good. The quality of self-evaluation is impressive. The department has taken the necessary action to improve teaching and learning, which previously affected results in the lower school, and the impact has been evident in the improved standards in Years 7 to 9. The department has adapted very well to the demands of new syllabuses and has a clear vision of how to develop further. The high standards and good progress found at the previous inspection have been maintained, and the overall quality of teaching has improved. Therefore, there has been good improvement overall.

#### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

61. Standards of language and literacy are well above average for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 years, and high for those between 14 and 16 years. Pupils' command and use of language are impressive across a wide range of subjects. Pupils undertake extensive writing in most subject areas, for example, when they write up experiments in science, and teachers in these subjects, thus, support the development of pupils' writing skills well. Occasionally, in

subjects such as design technology and information and communication technology, teachers miss opportunities to allow articulate pupils to talk about what they know and can do. However, the high quality of debate is a feature of many lessons. Teachers encourage good research skills. The high level of pupils' literacy contributes directly to the high standards attained in a wide range of subjects by the age of 16 years.

## Modern foreign languages

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in French are high at the end of Year 11 as a result of very good teaching.
- Teaching is not as good in Spanish and German and standards are not so high.
- Pupils achieve very well in French in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to work.
- There is a minority of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment in Years 10 and 11 to show pupils how to improve their work.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Commentary

62. GCSE results in 2003 were high when compared to national averages. Results were above those for other local grammar schools.
63. Pupils can choose to study either Spanish or German as their second language from the start of Year 8. Standards in French are well above average at the end of Year 9. Standards in Spanish and German are not as high. Pupils achieve well in French and satisfactorily in Spanish and German. There is a marked decline in pupils' progress during Year 8, but, by the end of Year 11, standards are high in French, but lower in German. No pupils were studying Spanish in Year 11 at the time of the inspection. There are no wide differences in attainment across the four aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers.
64. By the end of Year 9, pupils understand the foreign language when spoken at normal pace. Pupils are confident speakers and carry out sophisticated conversations with a range of vocabulary. They vary their use of language effectively to fit different situations and can read authentic passages of texts and answer questions on them. In their written work, pupils write using a range of tenses and with accurate grammar. By the end of Year 11, pupils confidently vary their spoken and written language to fit a range of different and unknown situations. Nearly all pupils produce very good-quality written pieces of extended writing. Few pupils choose to study two languages in Years 10 and 11.
65. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in all three languages. There is more unsatisfactory teaching and less that is good or better in German and Spanish. This is a strong factor in the lower standards achieved and in the choices of pupils not to study two languages for GCSE. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, a number of factors may be present. In a small number of lessons, pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes to work and teachers do not to control their behaviour well enough to ensure good learning for all the class. In other lessons, the work is not challenging enough to ensure that pupils achieve well. An important factor in these lessons is that too much English, rather than the language being learned, is spoken.
66. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan to use the language being taught all the time and to provide a high level of challenge in work set. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. They have very good subject knowledge for work at this high level and know how to prepare pupils thoroughly for examinations. There is an emphasis on grammar in

most lessons and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. Relevant homework is regularly set, supporting pupils' learning well. Pupils usually behave well in lessons and have excellent attitudes to work. Working relationships between pupils and with their teachers are generally excellent.

67. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Trips abroad and the school's strong exchange links with schools in France and Germany are an important factor in this development. In Years 10 and 11, especially, teachers make very good use of marking to give pupils advice about strengths and weaknesses in their work. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but the co-ordinator has not ensured a consistent quality of teaching or reviewed pupils' curriculum choices in Years 10 and 11. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous report.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils attain very high standards as a result of good teaching.
- The positive attitudes of pupils are a key factor in their very good achievement.
- Good teamwork and good teaching create a positive culture for learning.
- Procedures for assessment do not adequately inform pupils of their progress.

### **Commentary**

68. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were very high when compared with all schools nationally and well above average when compared with similar schools. Results in mathematics tests have been improving in recent years at about the same rate as improvement nationally.
69. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 results were very high. Pupils' achievement is very good, with those at the top end of the ability range producing some outstanding work. The overall standard of work seen is very good, with some that is excellent.
70. Teaching is good overall and, in some lessons, it is very good or excellent. In the best lessons, teaching is challenging and pupils are encouraged to collaborate with each other to share their knowledge and understanding. The department is making very effective use of recently installed interactive whiteboards. The use of this technology proves a stimulating teaching resource and pupils find it a valuable support to their learning. Occasionally, teaching lacks pace and challenge. Most pupils take a pride in their work and present it in a neat and orderly style. The marking of pupils' work lacks consistency, with some teachers offering diagnostic comments to assist learning and others simply marking work as correct or otherwise. This results in some pupils having much better guidance on how to improve their work than others.
71. There has been considerable improvement in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) within the department since the time of the last inspection, with particularly effective use being made of interactive whiteboards to enhance pupils' learning.

### **The effective use of an interactive whiteboard**

In a lesson with pupils in Year 8, the teacher made extremely effective use of the interactive whiteboard when teaching the formula for the area of a circle. His thorough preparation made use of a software package to produce a series of colourful images of increasingly smaller sectors of the same circle to impressively demonstrate the equivalent rectangular area. These convincing images inspired and captivated the interest of the pupils, who were immediately able to understand the origin of the formula.

72. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in lessons are very good. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm and genuine interest in the subject. Those, who are most able, are encouraged to enter external mathematical competitions, such as the *Maths Olympiad* in which the school has a considerable record of success. The popularity of the subject is demonstrated by the fact that around two-thirds of pupils choose to continue to study the subject in the sixth form.
73. Both leadership and management are very good. A large and committed team of highly qualified teachers work well together. The school's recently awarded Science College status has resulted in improved resources to enhance the quality of teaching. It also enables teachers to observe each other teaching so they can share good practice.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

74. The high level mathematical ability of pupils allows them to apply their knowledge well in many other subjects. Particularly good practice was seen in science, with some impressive graphical work related to radioactive material. Good practice was also seen in art, concerned with proportion and tessellations, and in business studies, involving the use of statistics. Several other subjects successfully integrate aspects of mathematics into their work as a consequence of the high level skills of pupils in the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

Overall, the provision in science is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Years 7 to 11 are very high and the achievement of pupils is very good.
- Teachers are very well qualified and experienced, and form a very effective team.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- The attitudes of pupils in lessons are very good.
- The range of teaching and learning styles used by teachers is extensive.

### **Commentary**

75. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were very high in 2003 and have been maintained at this level for the past five years. GCSE results in 2003 were also very high, as they have been since the last inspection. The standard of work seen in lessons and pupils' folders during the inspection is very high.
76. Pupils enter the school with attainment, which is well above average, and make very good progress throughout Years 7 to 11. They are set challenging and stimulating tasks that they approach with great enthusiasm and a determination to succeed. Thus, the achievement of pupils is very good. This is due to the combination of very good teaching and the very good attitudes of the pupils to the subject. Teachers plan lessons very effectively and use a very wide range of learning styles, including the use of computers. This variety in approach results in pupils being stimulated and actively involved in their own learning. The very mature and sensible approach by pupils is seen especially when they undertake practical tasks. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and they work in a very co-operative manner.
77. The achievement of the small number of pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils are well known by the teachers, who give good support when needed. The most-

able pupils also achieve very well because they are challenged by teachers to reach the highest standards possible.

78. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has a very clear vision of what needs to be improved to enhance the learning of the pupils further. The teachers within the subjects are very well qualified and enthusiastic, sharing a commitment to pupils' success. The progress of all pupils is monitored, based on test results, and support is given to those pupils, who start to struggle. The marking of pupils' work is good, but there is some variation in the quality of this work between teachers because it is not monitored closely enough. The awarding of Science College status has had a very positive impact on the department in several areas. It has allowed, for example, a start to be made on the much needed refurbishment of the accommodation and extra staffing so that teaching groups are smaller. The department offers many extra activities and support lessons that pupils value highly. Contacts with local industry and junior schools are very good.
79. The improvement since the last inspection is good. The standards have been maintained at a very high level and the teaching is better, as is the use of computers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment in all years is very good and high in Years 10 and 11.
- By the end of Year 9, pupils achieve well and, during Years 10 and 11, achievement is very good.
- Specialist teachers have a very good command of the subject, which they use to encourage and engage pupils.
- The subject has progressed very well since the previous inspection.
- The use of assessment and the monitoring of teaching performance are not well developed, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of non-specialist teachers and lack of planning in Year 7 reduces the consistency and quality of education provided.

### **Commentary**

80. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment in ICT. However, many have access to computers at home and have developed above average skills in certain aspects of the subject. Standards are well above average for pupils aged 14 years. Pupils receive a very good grounding in industrial standard software during their first three years and are beginning to understand how and when to use technology. They show a good awareness of the responsibilities of using the World Wide Web. Those pupils identified with special educational needs are enabled, through additional assistance, to attain above average standards.
81. Results in GCSE examinations are high. In 2003, all pupils gained at least a B grade. These results are particularly impressive when compared with those of boys nationally.
82. Achievement is good throughout the first three years and especially in Years 8 and 9. Pupils work well to make gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding. All groups of pupils achieve better than expected. Pupils build further on their knowledge and understanding during Years 10 and 11, striving for and, in many cases, achieving the highest grades. This is because pupils receive great encouragement and guidance from highly committed teachers.
83. Teaching is very good. Teachers are well supported by highly competent technicians, who have the respect of pupils for their expertise. Pupils value the commitment of staff and the chance to use the computer rooms outside lessons. In the very good lessons observed, enthusiasm and clarity of purpose motivate pupils, encouraging them to do their best. In the least effective lessons, particularly where non-specialist teachers are used, planning is weak.

Lesson objectives are not always clear and pupils struggle to understand what is required of them.

84. Competent and committed leadership is taking the subject forward. The technician support is very well integrated and specialist staff work as a cohesive unit. Monitoring of teaching is not well developed and this limits possibilities for sharing good practice. Management of the subject is effective. Whilst considerable data is available on pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, it is not widely used to guide curriculum planning or staff development.
85. Since the previous inspection, the ratio of computers has increased to match the national average for secondary schools. All pupils have ICT lessons and successfully make use of their skills in other subjects. Standards have improved significantly, with pupils making very good progress. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

86. Competence in ICT is high across the school and particularly in Years 10 and 11. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is good. The school has an effective and well used intranet, which is continuing to develop, giving pupils access to work via their home computers. The use made of ICT across the curriculum is variable. It is very good in geography and good in several other subjects. The lack of suitable equipment for computer-aided manufacture limits ICT use in design and technology.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership provides a clear direction for the subject.
- Standards are high at the end of Year 11 because of the very good teaching in history.
- Assessment techniques are not yet fully developed.
- A lack of access to computers limits the range of resources available for use within the classroom.

#### **Commentary**

87. The very good standards at the end of Year 9 are as a result of very good teaching. Very effective teaching is also the main reason why GCSE examination results in 2003 were high, with two-thirds of pupils gaining A\* and A grades. All members of the department are specialist teachers and have high expectations of the pupils. As a result, attitudes to learning in lessons are good. In very good lessons, teachers use a range of different activities to challenge pupils' thinking and questions are used effectively to both broaden and consolidate knowledge. Whilst marking is usually undertaken regularly, written guidance given to pupils to help them improve their work is inconsistent. Good marking is diagnostic and provides clear guidance to show pupils what they need to do to improve their grades.
88. Analysis of results achieved through regular assessment tasks is good, but as yet does not lead to target setting at an individual pupil level. At present, teachers do not routinely provide pupils with the opportunity to assess their own learning in lessons. As a result, they are unable to set their own targets for further improvement. All teachers make good use of most of the resources available, but do not do enough to support the development of pupils' ICT skills through history.
89. The current head of department, appointed in September 2003, has already determined the areas in which improvement is needed. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 are being rewritten to include specific opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills and citizenship awareness

through history. Teachers in the department are now sharing ideas and expertise, which is helping to broaden the range of teaching strategies and, therefore, enhance learning.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results are well above average.
- Teaching is very good, leading to well above average standards.
- Pupils behave very well and have excellent attitudes to work.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Very good assessment procedures help teachers guide pupils well, though the use of marking for assessment is not so good in Years 7 to 9.

### **Commentary**

90. GCSE results in 2003 were well above the national average, as they have been since the previous inspection.
91. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. They achieve well in Years 7 to 9, so that standards are above average by the end of the first three years in school. Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 and, by the end of the course, standards are well above average. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils.
92. By the end of Year 9, pupils have acquired an extensive geographical vocabulary and a thorough understanding of patterns that exist throughout the world. By the end of Year 11, pupils extend their factual knowledge and vocabulary in preparation for GCSE examinations. A criticism at the time of the previous inspection was that pupils had limited opportunities to investigate and work out answers for themselves. In order to deal with this, the department has successfully carried out a thorough audit of its curriculum and teaching methods and put in place a systematic programme of fieldwork and case studies. It is this improvement in curriculum and teaching that has led to the very good standards now being seen.
93. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The main difference is in assessment procedures. Marking of pupils' work is very good in Years 10 and 11 and pupils are given detailed information of how they can improve. It is not quite so good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers all have very good subject knowledge for work at this level and show particular skill in the way that they prepare pupils for examinations. Working relationships in lessons are excellent. Pupils show excellent attitudes to work. They develop a high level of independent learning skills through fieldwork and case studies. Relevant homework is regularly set. The use of information and communication technology for research, for presenting information and for recording data is very good.
94. Geography makes a very good contribution to citizenship, to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the enhancement of numeracy and literacy skills. Department review procedures are very thorough and make a strong contribution to raising standards. The department is very well led and managed. A strong team of teachers work very well together in joint planning. The subject has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

## Religious education

Overall, provision in religious education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are outstanding.
- Highly knowledgeable and committed teachers engage and enthuse pupils.
- Very good relationships and attitudes to learning promote an atmosphere in which sensitive issues can be freely raised and explored.
- The religious education department is very well led and managed.
- Assessment practice is not well developed.

### Commentary

95. Pupils enter the school with a wide variation in their previous experiences of religious education. However, teachers ensure that all pupils make good progress and attain standards that are well above those anticipated by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11, those pupils, who follow the GCSE course, achieve very well. Results in 2003 were very high. It is a feature of lessons that both written and oral work is of a very high standard, with specialist subject vocabulary being used very well by pupils.
96. Teaching and learning in religious education are very good. Teachers have considerable expertise in conveying their high level of knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject to pupils. Relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils are exceptionally good. These facilitate a very productive working environment in which sensitive issues can be explored in a thoughtful and productive way. Assessment that contributes to pupils' further learning is not yet as well developed as it might be, particularly with regard to using assessment information to guide pupils in what they need to do to improve.
97. Both leadership and management of religious education are very good. The head of department has created and is developing a very effective team. Recent initiatives, such as a departmental review by senior management, have been introduced in a sensitive way and have contributed well to members of the department knowing how they need to develop, both individually and as a group.
98. The previous report was very positive about the subject, which has made good further progress since that time. Only the comparative shortage of time made available for the subject in Years 10 and 11, for those pupils not following an examination course, is a matter of concern.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and results in public examinations are good.
- Subject management is good.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of assessment and marking is not well developed or consistent enough.
- Out-of-date accommodation and resources limit the breadth and quality of curriculum offered.

### Commentary

99. Teaching is good overall, though there are some inconsistencies. Teaching is very good when it caters well for the learning styles of all pupils because they are then motivated to achieve high standards. Where teaching is only satisfactory, pupils are not stimulated to do their very

best and, hence, achievement levels are lower. Most of the inconsistency occurs in lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils respond best in lessons where teachers combine good subject knowledge with stimulating teaching approaches.

100. Assessment and marking are not used well to analyse pupils' strengths and weaknesses or to guide teachers' planning. Assessment information is not used consistently to provide pupils with specific targets or guidance on how to improve. Nor is it used to help teachers to monitor pupils' progress.
101. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. A prolonged period of instability in staffing design and technology has been well managed by the school so that the negative impact on standards and quality of work has been minimized. The school's solution to recruitment difficulties, by training their own teachers, is proving fruitful and a stable staffing situation is beginning to help improve consistency. Accommodation and resources are out of date. Their poor quality restricts the curriculum that pupils experience and also affects their attitudes to the subject.

## **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 the national average by the end of Year 9 and high by the end of Year 11.
- Very good teaching supports pupils' very good achievements by the end of Year 9 and their excellent achievements by the end of Year 11.
- The management and leadership of the head of department are very good.
- Pupils do not provide enough written justifications and evaluations of their work in their sketchbooks as they progress. Work in sketchbooks is not well marked.

#### **Commentary**

102. On entry to the school, pupils have a very varied range of experiences of art and standards are broadly average. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average. In GCSE examinations and by the end of Year 11, standards are high. Across the school, pupils respond in an excellent manner to the wide range of two- and three-dimensional materials and experiences available to them. In all lessons, the very good learning partnership between teachers and pupils promotes very good progress, leading to the excellent achievements by the end of Year 11. Standards, and the progress pupils make, have improved since the last inspection.
103. Assessment is good where teachers share targets with pupils. Work is unevenly marked, however. As a result, pupils are not given enough encouragement to further develop and finish work or to provide written justifications and evaluations in their sketchbooks.
104. The management and leadership of the department are very good. The head of department generates excellent teamwork amongst staff and this is reflected in the outstanding attitudes of the pupils. A very good range of enrichment activities, community links and visits abroad improves the knowledge and understanding of the pupils and contributes well to many aspects of pupils' personal development.

## Music

Provision for music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are above average.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good.
- The department is very well led, but monitoring and evaluation within the department is underdeveloped.
- Impressive numbers of pupils enjoy instrumental tuition and this is incorporated into classroom activities.

### Commentary

105. Standards are above average at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils are very articulate and are able to use appropriate terminology at every level. Teachers skilfully use activities that enable pupils to develop aural memory as well as pulse and rhythmic skills. This understanding is clearly demonstrated in pupils' practical work and in their compositions. GCSE examination results are good, though numbers taking the course are modest. However, a large number of pupils continue to take part in the very good extra-curricular activities that are run by the department and, thus, contribute well to the musical life of the school.
106. All pupils achieve to the best of their abilities and progress well. The curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to engage enthusiastically in tasks, whatever their level of experience, and to feel successful. Literacy and speaking and listening skills are encouraged and developed within the music lessons. Pupils are encouraged to use their instrumental skills in their compositional curriculum projects. Large-scale public performances outside lessons provide important incentives and set high expectations.
107. The quality of teaching is good with some very good features, especially in Years 10 and 11. Classroom management skills are impressive and all pupils understand classroom routines and rules. Assessment procedures, including pupil self-assessment, are understood and valued by pupils, who take this aspect of their work very seriously. Homework is regularly set and marked. High expectations are set for singing, and vocal activities take place in most lessons, where pitching skills are carefully coached. Listening tasks form an integral component of all project work and this aspect of the department's work has been carefully thought through and improved since the last inspection.
108. The head of department is a very skilful practitioner, who is also a dedicated and committed teacher. He conveys his passion and love of music to all his pupils. He is very aware of pupils' wide range of abilities and continually strives to develop a curriculum that engages and involves all pupils. The department has yet to develop rigorous internal monitoring and evaluation systems as a means of improving overall teaching standards.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the core physical education programme are above average in all years and pupils' achievement is good.
- Assessment procedures and curriculum planning require further development.
- The number and range of extra-curricular activities are excellent.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers.
- Indoor facilities are very good, but the fields are frequently waterlogged and hinder learning.

## Commentary

109. Pupils' standards on entry to the school are average. By the end of Year 9, pupils reach above average standards in most activities and their achievement is good. The boys develop a secure knowledge of fitness and are able to warm-up effectively. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 attain above average standards because they continue to improve their games skills and develop higher levels of fitness. The fitness booklet used in these lessons is a good resource that consolidates knowledge and understanding. Pupils' analytical and leadership skills are not as well developed as their performance skills because these two aspects are not adequately planned for and taught in lessons. As part of the excellent extra-curricular programme, many individual pupils and teams achieve very high standards in district and county competitions in athletics, cricket, rugby, football, hockey and basketball.
110. The overall good achievement of pupils is directly attributable to good teaching and to the boys' excellent attitudes and very positive relationships with their teachers. Pupils benefit in their learning because teachers circulate well to extend the more able and to help those pupils finding the activity difficult. This is a positive strategy that gives great encouragement and promotes the learning of all pupils. The support assistant helps teachers by ensuring time on activity is high and tasks are matched to the ability and needs of individual pupils. Teachers and the assistant have very good subject expertise and give pupils a good visual image on which to base their performance. However, pupils are not consistently required to take responsibility for their own learning or to evaluate their own and others' work and this limits their progress in these aspects.
111. Leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. The new head of department has a strong desire to raise the profile of the department and make improvements and, in these aspects of his work, he is being successful. Currently, there are areas of assessment and curriculum planning that are not detailed enough to establish a clear link between the two. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The Sportsmark award has been gained and the new sports hall and weights room have helped pupils to attain good standards in a wider range of activities. There remains a major problem with the drainage of the field, which has a negative impact on standards in games and athletics.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Provision in business studies is **very good**. This subject is offered as an optional course in Years 10 and 11.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in high standards at the end of Year 11.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Very good assessment procedures enable pupils to make very good progress.
- Learning is constrained by unsatisfactory accommodation and inadequate use of information and communication technology (ICT).

## Commentary

112. Standards in business studies are high. Results in 2002 and 2003 were high when compared to national results. All pupils begin this GCSE course without any prior knowledge of business concepts and knowledge. As a result of good teaching by subject specialists, all pupils learn and achieve well and display good attitudes to learning in lessons. Teachers give good support and guidance to all pupils, motivating them to improve further.
113. Very good leadership is successfully focused on improving teaching and learning. This is supported by good management of curricular planning, of resources and of assessment procedures. Pupils are involved in assessing their own progress through the completion of a skills map that identifies areas for improvement on an individual basis. Teachers then plan

work that matches pupils' needs. Regular assessments are made of the progress pupils make, including diagnostic and helpful marking.

114. Teachers do not use rooms and furniture flexibly enough to enable pupils to work in pairs or groups and this restricts the range of learning activities used in the department. Whilst the business studies rooms do not have direct access to computers, teachers do not exploit the close proximity of business studies to a computer room. Hence, pupils do not make enough use of ICT to support their studies. The two business studies rooms, although close together, are in separate buildings and this makes sharing of resources difficult. Concerns regarding the negative impact of accommodation on learning were highlighted at the time of the last inspection and have yet to be adequately dealt with.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good progress has been made in developing a course in citizenship for all pupils, linked to the personal, social and health education course.
- A good scheme of work guides teachers well, but there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- Monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the subject are in the early stages of development.

### **Commentary**

115. Standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 are above average and pupils' achievements are good. Pupils' attitudes are very good and behaviour is excellent. Teaching is well supported by the dedication of the subject co-ordinator, who has put into place a scheme that successfully links citizenship within the personal, social and health education lessons and with school assemblies. Standards are further enhanced through the many ways in which pupils can practise aspects of citizenship, for instance, in debating societies, the school council and, for older pupils, acting as mentors for younger pupils. Many ways are also provided for pupils to see how other citizens throughout the world live and work, such as in the links with a school in Ethiopia. Pupils from Year 10 onwards have enrolled in very large numbers for the Duke of Edinburgh award and this, too, makes a strong contribution to the personal development of the pupils involved.
116. Teaching and learning are good because pupils are often required, in lessons, to explain and justify their developing views. Pupils are given very good encouragement to engage in activities and good use is made of the rich cultural experiences of the pupils attending the school. The course is at an early stage of implementation and, therefore, not all teachers are confident enough about the content or the most effective teaching styles to use and this leads to some inconsistency in the quality of lessons.
117. Management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator does not have enough time to assist teachers with the teaching of the subject and its effectiveness has not yet been monitored and evaluated across the school. This further contributes to inconsistency in teaching. Assessment is satisfactory, but the pupils are not given enough guidance on what they should do to improve.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002, which is the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
French	11	100.0	85.4	36.4	35.2	36.4	34.9
Mathematics	25	100.0	74.2	68.0	34.3	48.4	31.3
Biology	7	100.0	81.6	0.0	33.2	30.0	33.2
Chemistry	8	87.5	84.8	25.0	36.9	40.0	35.2

### Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
General studies	73	97.3	90.1	39.7	29.1	81.4	69.3
English/English language	25	100.0	98.3	80.0	36.5	105.6	80.1
English literature	12	100.0	98.5	100.0	43.7	116.7	84.3
French	24	100.0	96.2	54.2	46.1	90.8	83.0
German	13	100.0	96.3	61.5	44.3	98.5	82.1
Mathematics	106	100.0	93.3	84.0	52.2	108.5	84.7
Biology	46	100.0	91.6	78.3	36.3	101.7	74.1
Chemistry	41	100.0	94.0	70.7	45.9	98.0	81.1
Physics	62	100.0	92.8	71.0	42.8	99.0	78.6
Other sciences	19	100.0	94.7	100.0	40.1	116.8	78.7
Information technology	34	100.0	89.1	41.2	22.4	80.0	64.1
History	34	100.0	97.1	79.4	41.0	105.3	81.2
Geography	45	100.0	97.1	64.4	40.5	95.6	80.9
Religious studies	16	100.0	96.3	68.8	44.0	95.0	82.2
Economics	24	100.0	96.2	75.0	45.8	99.2	83.1
Other social studies	16	100.0	94.3	43.8	38.9	85.0	77.7
Design and technology	10	100.0	95.3	40.0	35.5	90.0	76.5
Art and design	12	100.0	96.1	83.3	48.7	105.0	85.1
Music	7	100.0	97.7	42.9	41.8	88.6	82.2
Sports/Physical education studies	8	100.0	95.4	25.0	29.5	77.5	73.2
Business studies	29	100.0	96.4	79.3	32.8	103.4	76.5

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The main focus in this curriculum area was on English and French. Work was also sampled in German. In the one lesson observed in German, committed Year 12 students made very good progress in developing above average skills in response to challenging teaching in the target language.

## English

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high.
- Students achieve well and their personal development is impressive.
- Students respond very positively to the very good teaching they receive.
- Leadership and management of this successful department are very good.

### Commentary

118. The 2002 A-level results were high, and well above those for similar schools. Results in 2003 were similar to those in the previous year. The inspection confirms that standards in Year 13 are high in knowledge and understanding of a range of literary texts, and in the skills of critical analysis. Students enjoy discussion of a variety of topics and frequently achieve mature insights, which they express well, as seen, for example, in a Year 13 lesson focusing on characterisation in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Students' writing conveys a similar depth of critical understanding, both of themes and of writers' use of language and structure. Students work independently as well as collaboratively and gain a very good understanding of the context in which various texts were produced. They join the course with high standards and continue to achieve well, showing an excellent attitude towards all aspects of the subject.
119. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers feed back their assessment of students' work very effectively so that students know how they can further improve what is already very good work. The high expectations and very good subject knowledge of teachers are evident in the questioning and explanations, which draw out students' understanding. However, the greatest strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers develop students' independent thought and critical skills so as to produce well informed, but also strong personal responses to individual texts.
120. Leadership and management are very good. The department has adapted very well to syllabus changes, and reviews its provision in detail. It has succeeded in improving on what were already very good standards at the time of the previous inspection.

### Key skills in language and literacy

121. Students in the sixth form have an impressive array of literacy skills, which help them achieve high standards in a good range of academic subjects. They have very good independent learning and research skills, which enable them to find out and summarise information in subjects such as geography and English. Students also have the ability to discuss confidently and articulately, as seen to very good effect, for example, in an upper school debate on drugs in society.

## French

The quality of provision is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are high.
- Teaching is excellent, resulting in high standards.
- Students have excellent attitudes to work and show a high level of motivation. As a result, they achieve very well.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Few students choose to study two languages in the sixth form.

### Commentary

122. In the 2002 GCE A-level examinations, all students passed at high levels and results were, therefore, high compared to national averages. Students achieve very well in relation to the high grades they gained previously at GCSE.
123. Standards are high both at the end of Year 12 and at the end of Year 13. Students understand the detail of authentic spoken and written French about topical and political issues in France. They have a wide vocabulary and discuss important issues in depth and detail. They have a thorough understanding of grammar for work at this level. Students write at length about such topics as their work experience in Marseilles and problems with illegal drugs in France. Written work shows a wide range of vocabulary and a high level of accuracy.
124. Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have a very high level of expertise, both in the level of their spoken and written French and in knowing the technicalities of how best to prepare students for examinations. Teachers have very high expectations of students' work and use marking very well to indicate how each individual can improve still further. Very good assessment of written work gives students a clear indication of their present performance and likely grades. Students are attentive and highly motivated. They work hard and develop very good individual and research skills. There is a relaxed, but very businesslike, atmosphere in lessons.
125. Although students can opt to study two languages in the sixth form, very few choose to do so. Students' work experience in France clearly has substantial benefits in terms of their learning, experience and spiritual, social and cultural development. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Clear policies and schemes of work contribute to raising standards. Teachers and students work hard together and show a high level of mutual respect. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Outstanding leadership promotes successful teaching.
- Very good teaching results in very high standards.
- Positive relationships in lessons promote good attitudes to learning.
- Good subject knowledge of teachers is a major contributor to high standards.

### **Commentary**

126. Results in the A-level examinations in 2003 were marginally lower than those of 2002. The latter were very high when compared with all schools nationally. Those students entered for the AS level examination also gained very high results. Results in further mathematics examinations were also very high.
127. The teaching of mathematics is very good, with some that is excellent. Teachers have an inspiring command of their subject and their enthusiasm for it is successfully transmitted to the students, who clearly enjoy their learning. The most successful lessons are well structured, challenging and move at a good pace, with teachers checking regularly that students are acquiring the key learning points. A good range of teaching strategies is used to promote learning, including discussion and collaborative work. This frequently produces a high level of mathematical dialogue between teacher and students and among the students themselves. Some teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboards that have recently been installed in several classrooms.
128. Teachers know their students well and establish good relationships with them. This promotes a confident and enjoyable learning environment. Students develop very positive attitudes and a strong commitment to learning and want to do well. They are absorbed in their work and

show clear respect for their teachers. Mathematics is a very popular subject in the sixth form, with around two-thirds of students including it as one of their A-level subjects.

129. Leadership and management of the subject in the sixth form are outstanding. The head of department is a highly experienced and well-qualified teacher, whose clear enthusiasm for the subject inspires his colleagues to produce very good teaching. He is extremely supportive of his colleagues and, in return, they regard him with considerable esteem. The significant success of the subject at this level is as a consequence of his leadership skills.

### **Key skills in mathematics**

130. The very high level mathematical skills of students are frequently applied in other subjects. These skills support their study and enrich their learning. Very good evidence of this was seen in calculations performed in chemistry and graphical work in biology. Effective use of mathematics occurs in business education and also in physical education through the application of students' knowledge of graphs and statistics. Concepts of perspective and scaling are used successfully in art.

## **SCIENCE**

131. The focus was on biology, chemistry and physics. Electronics and human biology were also sampled. In human biology, the teaching is very effective and the standard of work seen was above average. The attitudes of the students were very good and they showed an enthusiasm for the subject. In electronics, standard are very high. Teaching is very effective and students are achieving very well.

### **Biology**

Overall, the provision in biology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards are very high at both AS and A-level.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- All students share very good relationships with their teachers.
- Some students need more support and guidance.
- The achievement and attitudes of the most-able students are excellent.

### **Commentary**

132. The attainment of students at A-level was very high in 2002 and high at AS level. The number of students taking biology in 2003 was higher with a wider range of prior attainment. The results at AS and A-level were subsequently lower. The standard of work seen in lessons and students' files was well above average. Students make good progress overall from their GCSE courses.
133. The achievement of students in biology is good overall and the achievement of students expected to gain the highest grades is excellent. This outstanding achievement is due to a variety of factors. Firstly, teaching and learning are very good, with some excellent teaching being observed. Secondly, these students have an excellent attitude to learning and are very keen to succeed. Some students, who take the subject after gaining lower grades at GCSE, find the course more difficult and they achieve less well. The attitudes of these students are good. The department has recognised this issue and has plans to identify these students earlier and give them further support and guidance.
134. Teachers are very enthusiastic and very well qualified. They share very good relationships with the students and work in a very co-operative manner. All students perform practical investigations in a very sensible and mature manner.
135. Both management and leadership of the department are very good. The experienced head of department has a clear vision of how the subject can improve further. There are plans to

improve the monitoring of students' work and analysis of assessment results to identify the progress made by individual students. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory and is a recognised area for improvement. The lessons are well planned and involve a wide range of learning styles, including the use of computers. The department's intranet site is a very good resource, which enables students to access detailed notes and information directly related to the topics covered.

## Chemistry

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high.
- Students have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Some students, who find the subject difficult, need more support and guidance.
- The teachers are very well qualified and have very good subject knowledge.

### Commentary

136. The standards at both AS and A-level in 2002 were high. However, the results were lower in 2003 due to the larger numbers of students, who commenced the course with lower GCSE grades. The standards seen in lessons and students' folders were, overall, well above average.
137. Overall, achievement of students in chemistry is good and that of the highest-attaining students is very good. This is due to their excellent attitudes to the subject, linked with very good teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned and taught by well-qualified teachers with a very good knowledge of the subject. Some students achieve less well. These students are expected to obtain the lower grades at A-level, having started the course with lower GCSE attainment. They find some aspects of the subject difficult to understand and do not always receive the level of support and guidance they need.
138. A wide range of learning styles is used, including many practical investigations and the effective use of computers. The practical work is performed in a very mature and safe manner. Students work together in a very co-operative way and share very good relationships with their teachers. They appreciate the quality of teaching they receive and feel they are doing well, even though some found the transition from GCSE difficult.
139. There is, at the moment, no head of department, but the team of experienced teachers are following the agreed sequence of lessons so the students are not disadvantaged. The appointment of a new head of chemistry is expected soon. Once appointed, the department must review ways in which those students, who are struggling, can be identified as early as possible and then given the support they require. The monitoring of learning must also be extended to ensure consistency, especially in the areas of students' achievement and motivation.

## Physics

The overall quality of provision in physics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The team of enthusiastic and well-qualified specialist teachers has a shared commitment to the success of the students.
- Very good examination results, which include a high proportion of A and B grades, result from consistently very good teaching.
- The very strong learning culture shown by the students contributes to high levels of achievement.

- Greater emphasis needs to be given to monitoring and supporting the less-able students, including checks made on the quality of notes in student files.

### **Commentary**

140. The 2002 A-level results were well above the national average. This high level of success continues the pattern established since 1998. The 2003 results were equally impressive and the targets set for the department were easily exceeded. Physics results compare favourably with the other science subjects. AS level results are equally impressive and results indicate good student achievement. The subject is very popular, as shown by the large number of students taking it.
141. In lessons, students show a high level of interest in the topics under discussion and their motivation and desire to do well is clearly evident. Overall, their levels of understanding are very high, as is their recall of earlier information. Students' files are essentially working files and mostly contain rough notes obtained from lessons and results of experimental work, together with completed homework, which is marked constructively. Students in Year 13 are well supported by the course text and by the course CD-ROM.
142. Teaching is very good. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and are frequently intellectually challenging. This impressive teaching leads to very good levels of learning and achievement. This is due to the enthusiasm, experience and very good subject knowledge of the teachers. Lessons are frequently based on skilled teacher demonstrations, which aim to stimulate interest in the subject. Teachers use questioning well to develop understanding and to extend students' knowledge. However, occasionally, some less-able students do not take part fully in answering the questions, indicating levels of incomplete understanding amongst these students. Strategies to ensure that all students are involved in providing responses are not well developed and this restricts the feedback available for teachers. The good relationships between students and teachers contribute to the success of the teaching and to the overall progress made, and help to explain the very high retention figure for physics.
143. The recently appointed head of physics has already shown good leadership qualities by his decision to follow an alternative syllabus for Year 12. This should help to reduce some of the pressures on laboratory facilities and resources. Good management is also in evidence as new schemes of work and a new department handbook have been produced, which give good guidance to the team of teachers. Procedures are in place to monitor the work of the department and effective use is being made of assessment data to follow the progress of students and to guide the teaching. There is a vision for the future development of the department, based on the further development of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching tool. The head of physics and his colleagues share the same goals and form an effective team. Their efforts are well supported by the department's two technicians.
144. Since the last inspection, the department has continued to make good progress. Examination standards have been largely maintained and the popularity of the subject remains very high, with almost half of Year 12 studying AS level physics. The provision of interactive whiteboards has contributed to an increase in the use of ICT in lessons.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are high in the sixth form and student achievement is very good.
- Students' very good attitudes to work show in their commitment to high achievement.
- Teachers have a very good command of their subject and have high expectations of students.
- High-quality technical support contributes greatly to students' success.

## Commentary

145. Standards are high. In 2003, over four-fifths of students achieved an A grade pass and no student gained less than a C grade. Students enter the sixth form with well above average knowledge and understanding in ICT and continue to improve. All students have a very good understanding of the main industrial standard software. During their A-level course, they become conversant with different operating systems. Coursework projects are, for many, at a level that would fit comfortably with that seen in higher education.
146. Achievement is very good. All students speak with confidence about their work, using technical language with ease. Students in Year 13 fully appreciate the importance of the consumer of the product in the development process. They can evaluate software using well-established skills, together with their understanding of problem-solving techniques. Work in Year 12 prepares them very well for the final coursework project. Based in real contexts, these projects show good levels of complexity. Students thrive on the challenges presented and develop their skills beyond those required by the A-level course.
147. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are enthusiastic, ensuring that students are stimulated and keen to learn. Lessons are introduced with clarity and conciseness. Students are attentive, although sometimes reticent about contributing unless prompted by the teacher. Students gain much from the excellent technician support and their technical expertise. Teachers recognise the value of utilising this expertise to supplement their own very good knowledge. Whilst students are highly motivated, they do not always take enough responsibility for their learning within lessons. Relationships, both between students and with teachers, are very good. The relaxed, but businesslike, atmosphere achieved in lessons provides for pacy and productive sessions. There is a high level of respect for teachers and their commitment to ensuring that students reach their potential.
148. Leadership and management are good in the sixth form. Teachers have high aspirations for students and a clear vision of what is to be achieved. There is a readiness to be innovative and to experiment to increase students' enjoyment of the subject. The work of students is constantly reviewed and good written feedback ensures that they know how to improve. Students are able to access course notes using the developing school intranet.

## Key skills in information and communication technology

149. Sixth-form students do not have specific ICT provision, but use technology when needed. They have well-developed skills, resulting from the successful completion of GCSE ICT in Year 11. The facility to book equipment helps to ease the issue of access, which on occasions frustrates those in Years 12 and 13. The school benefits from excellent technician support that makes a major contribution to students' progress in gaining and applying ICT skills.

## HUMANITIES

The focus in this curriculum area was on geography and religious education. Work was also sampled in history, law and government and politics. In history, examination results in 2002 were very high when compared to those achieved nationally. In 2003, similar results were achieved. Students achieve these high standards as a result of the excellent teaching they receive. A group of Year 12 students is studying government and politics. This is the first time the subject has been offered in recent years. Teaching is very good. Results in law, which has been examined since 2001, are very good because of good teaching.

## Geography

The quality of provision is **very good**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision has improved considerably since geography was a key issue for action at the previous inspection.
- Standards are well above average as a result of very good teaching and students achieve very well.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.

### **Commentary**

150. GCE A-level results are well above average. Few students, who sit the examinations, do not achieve either grade A or grade B. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are well above average at the end of Year 12 and Year 13. There is good take-up for the subject in Year 12 and a good proportion of students carry on with their studies in Year 13. Students achieve very well in relation to their previous high GCSE grades.
151. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge for work at this high level. They also have very good knowledge of how to prepare students for examinations. Teachers' planning for lessons is thorough and detailed. Working relationships between students and with their teachers are excellent and teachers give very good extra support where this is needed. Teachers' marking of students' work is very detailed and gives very good information to students about their likely grades and how they can improve their work further. Data from formal and informal assessments provides good information to students. Students show excellent attitudes to work and develop very good independent learning skills. Teachers and students make very good use of information and communication technology to enhance the quality of their work and to provide up-to-date information.
152. Extensive use of trips and fieldwork enhances the curriculum and contributes to raising standards. Comprehensive systems are in place to improve standards and check for potential weaknesses. All the issues raised at the previous inspection have been corrected. The head of department has shown very good leadership and management in dealing with the issues from the previous inspection, in identifying priorities for development, and in leading a strong team of teachers. The subject has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

### **Religious education**

The quality of provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good and highly motivated students work very hard.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge that enables them to prepare students well for examinations.
- The number of students, who study the subject at A-level, is increasing and results are good and are likely to improve.

### **Commentary**

153. Standards for those taking examination courses are well above average. The number of students entered for AS and A-level examinations has been increasing in recent years. In 2002, results at A-level were well above average and, in 2003, results at both A-level and AS level were impressive. Students show their commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the subject in the high proportion, who build on their AS level study in Year 13.
154. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge for work at this level. This applies not only to the level of factual knowledge required, but also to the advice given to students about how to maximise marks in examinations. In lessons seen, there was a very high level of familiarity with, and facility in using, specialist philosophical vocabulary. Students work very productively in group and whole-class discussions and have

highly developed note-taking skills. Teachers are not afraid to draw on illustrative material from a wide range of sources and students themselves make good use of information they have gathered from other subjects they study, such as history and English literature. Students are highly motivated, work hard and show good independent learning skills.

155. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Teachers support students well and provide very good support if students find difficulty with their work.
156. For students not taking the subject to examination level, the religious education department successfully contributes units to a general studies course followed by all sixth-form students. This is supplemented by a programme of lectures, sometimes given by external guests and sometimes by members of staff.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

There was no focus subject in this curriculum area.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

Both art and design and theatre studies were focused on in this inspection. Work was also sampled in music. Standards in music are above average. Students' knowledge and understanding are very secure and, in the lessons observed, students responded to advanced, analytical questions with accuracy and confidence.

### **Art and Design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and continue to improve as a result of very good teaching.
- The students' attitudes are excellent and they make very good progress, achieving very well.
- There is insufficient storage space for students' work.
- There is a very good use of information and communication technology.

### **Commentary**

157. Standards are well above average and continue to improve due to very good teaching. An analysis of work presently being produced indicates that standards will be at least well above average when they are examined in 2004.
158. Students understand what they are doing and produce work of a high level of originality and quality. They achieve very well when working in both two- and three-dimensions. They show excellent attitudes, striving to produce of their best. Students make good use of computers and a digital camera to modify and develop their images and they show a very good understanding of how their styles are influenced by the wide range of artists they study. They produce very detailed sketchbooks with extended written justifications and evaluations for what they are doing as they finish their practical work.
159. Teaching is excellent. Teachers expertly apply their subject knowledge when they evaluate the work of each student. They make an excellent analysis of work and suggest further developments and how standards can be improved. Regular references are made to the work of artists and cultures and this raises the creative and visual appreciation of the students and an understanding of how their own style might be developed. Expectation and challenge are very high and they very effectively support the students' acquisition of skills and their application and productivity.
160. The clarity of vision and sense of purpose shown by the teachers is excellent. The subject co-ordinator provides an excellent role-model for other staff and students. The teachers work very

effectively as a team. The present accommodation is rather cramped and there is not enough storage space for the students' work. High standards of display around the school celebrate the students' very good achievements.

## **Theatre studies**

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

### **Main Strengths and Weaknesses**

- Standards are very high and achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Relationships between teachers and students are excellent and enhance learning.
- Opportunities to participate in drama productions and to visit theatres are excellent.
- Written assessments of students' work are inconsistent.
- Topic planning is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

161. Theatre studies is a new A-level course now in its second year. AS level results in 2003 were impressive as a result of the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of the teachers. Students make very good progress in lessons and are able to use what they have learned about drama, both in and out of school, to contribute effectively to discussion, textual analysis and performance.
162. Teaching is very good and consistently challenging. Teachers' detailed practical and theoretical knowledge of theatre, and skilled interpretation and analysis of texts, enables them to make incisive interventions to move the learning on. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of activities designed to strengthen learning. Occasionally, some activities are too extended and the pace is not sharp enough to maintain students' focus on tasks.
163. Students work extremely hard in lessons. Their ensemble and group work is very effective when they concentrate and focus. They read parts well and have a high level of acting skills, enabling them to demonstrate a good understanding of character. They are enthusiastic about drama and very articulate in discussion. Students particularly appreciate performance opportunities, theatre and other cultural visits, and residential trips and visits.
164. Students' coursework is very well written and presented, but written assessments of students' work are inconsistent. This makes it more difficult to review progress against objectives. However, students value the detailed dialogue they have with teachers about their work. The course is well managed and topic planning is being developed around a very detailed syllabus. This planning does not yet ensure that students comprehensively cover drama and theatre terms, concepts, genres and skills.
165. Girls from the neighbouring girls' high school have regularly participated in drama productions at the grammar school and this has led to a small number of girls joining the theatre studies course. This is an immensely beneficial development, broadening the scope of what is possible.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus in this curriculum area was on physical education.

### Physical Education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement in lessons is good.
- Standards are well above average.
- Good teaching leads to effective learning.
- Students have excellent attitudes and form very good relationships with others.
- Analysis of examination results is not good enough.
- The sixth-form games afternoon and extra-curricular provision are excellent aspects of provision.

#### Commentary

166. Results in A-level examinations in recent years have been above average, and the 2003 AS level results indicate well above average standards. Students' achievement is good in relation to their abilities and overall GCSE performance. The course is becoming more popular, despite students not currently being able to study physical education at GCSE level in the main school. Analysis of results shows that students attain the highest level in portfolio and practical work and attain less well in the physiological aspects of the course.
167. Students are very good performers and take part in at least one sport to a very high level. When teachers manage discussions skilfully, as in a Year 13 lesson on aggression in sport, students enjoy the topics and their knowledge and understanding increases rapidly. Students research well for presentations, using a wide range of resources and references. They make thoughtful and perceptive comments and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. Students' good achievement is largely the consequence of their ability to work independently. Progress is firmly rooted in the very good relationships, which teachers establish with the students, and the students' real enthusiasm for the subject.
168. Teaching is good and a productive work ethos is a common feature of lessons. Students' work is marked in an informative manner so students understand the examination requirements. Students use information and communication technology effectively, for example, in the production of their personal exercise programmes. Lessons are well structured and taught at a good pace. Teachers use a variety of independent, and often practical, activities that strengthen learning. The department's review identified these teaching strategies as an area for development and teachers are now fully aware that sixth-form teaching must stimulate independent and collaborative learning. However, teachers do not always question and give feedback in enough detail to promote further learning or to improve students' presentation skills.
169. Both leadership and management by the newly appointed head of department are satisfactory and developing. The analysis of statistical information and the monitoring of sixth-form teaching are recognised to be priorities. Students enjoy and learn from the extensive extra-curricular activities provided for them and the recreational games programme open to all the sixth form. Improvement has been very good with the introduction and establishment of the AS and A-levels. Some teaching takes place in a variety of rooms that sometimes restrict styles of teaching and learning.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus in this curriculum area was on business studies, but work was also sampled in economics. At the time of the last inspection, standards in economics were below national expectations. Examination results in 2002 were high and similar results were achieved in 2003. This represents very good improvement. Satisfactory teaching enables all students to reach or exceed expectations based on prior performance at AS level.

### **Business studies**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards achieved by all students are high.
- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Procedures for assessing work and reviewing students' progress are very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

#### **Commentary**

170. In 2002, results at A-level were high. The number of students achieving A and B grades has risen steadily in recent years. Students reach high standards and achieve very well as result of the very good teaching they receive.
171. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan thoroughly the case studies and assignments they set for students. This approach enables students of all abilities to achieve the highest levels for each unit of work they complete. The regular use of challenging and focused questioning in lessons helps all students to develop their skills of analysis. Assessment of students' work is very good and progress is monitored very closely. At the beginning of Year 13, all students predict their own final grade and students and their teachers monitor the standards of the student's written work against this grade. This approach results in well-motivated students, who work productively in lessons and independently.
172. The subject is very well led and managed. A clear vision and direction has been established within the department that has a firm focus on raising the standards achieved by students year on year. There is a strong commitment to improvement, which has been very good since the last inspection.
173. In lessons, teachers successfully use methods that involve students in their own learning, including group and pair work and the application of ICT, though the business studies classrooms do not have direct access to computers.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

There was no focus subject in this curriculum area.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

Work was sampled in general studies. Overall, the provision is very good. In general studies examinations, standards are well above average. In the three lessons seen, students achieved well as a result of stimulating teaching, the use of very good resources and their very positive attitudes to the subject.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth-form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>1</b>
Pupils' achievement	2	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	1	1
Attitudes	1	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>2</b>
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		1
Accommodation and resources	2	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	3

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