

INSPECTION REPORT

HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107785

Headteacher: Mr M Tweedle

Lead inspector: Mr B A Jones

Dates of inspection: 17 – 21 November 2003

Inspection number: 259821

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

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Terms used in this report

Students in Years 7,8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the sixth form, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students and students of all ages at school.

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

Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Type of school: | Grammar (selective) |
| School category: | Foundation |
| Age range of students: | 11 – 19 |
| Gender of students: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 1157 |

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| School address: | High Street Heckmondwike |
| Postcode: | WF16 0AH |

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Telephone number: | 01924 402202 |
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| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Dr K Swann |

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Date of previous inspection: | 14 th September, 1998 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a larger than average mixed selective grammar school with 1157 students on roll. There are 619 boys and 538 girls. The school has a large sixth form, comprising 399 students. Students are drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds, but overall they are above average in terms of socio-economic status. On entry to Year 7, students attain results in their Year 6 tests in English, mathematics and science that are in the top five per cent nationally. Attainment on entry is broadly average in relation to other selective grammar schools. Very few students join or leave the school other than at the ages of 11 or 16. The percentage of students whose mother tongue is not English is high at 12.6 per cent, but none are at an early stage of learning English. Around three per cent take up their eligibility for free school meals, which is well below average. Some three per cent of students have special educational needs, mostly for specific learning difficulties. There are no students with statements of special educational need.

The school has specialist Technology School status. It has been awarded the Sportsmark, the Young Enterprise, and the Engineering in Education awards. It also has a Schools' Achievement Award, (1999). The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and the Young Enterprise, Engineering in Education and Challenge of Management initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------|--|
| 18462 | B Jones | Lead inspector | |
| 9132 | J Godfrey | Lay inspector | |
| 30690 | G Allison | Team inspector | Information and communication technology. (ICT). |
| 33019 | S Aspinall | Team inspector | Geography. |
| 10160 | R Baggulay | Team inspector | Biology (sixth form). |
| 22695 | R Cardinal | Team inspector | Economics. Sociology. Provision for students with special educational needs. |
| 4689 | M Christian | Team inspector | Art and design. |
| 20287 | D Harris | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages. French (sixth form). |
| 30825 | K Hayton | Team inspector | Science. Chemistry (sixth form). |
| 22458 | G McGinn | Team inspector | History. |
| 2141 | J Oxley | Team inspector | Physical education. |
| 15678 | J Radford | Team inspector | Religious education |
| 24033 | J Ruse | Team inspector | English. English as an additional language (EAL). |
| 2079 | T Slack | Team inspector | Design and technology. |
| 1340 | D Wigley | Team inspector | Music. Citizenship. |
| 8341 | W Wimshurst | Team inspector | Mathematics. |

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a very good standard of education and provides very good value for money. Teaching is very good and students achieve very well. Much of the work of the school is excellent.

There are no significant weaknesses. The school's main strengths are:

- Excellent leadership from the headteacher, with very good support from the governing body and key staff, ensures a clear educational direction to the work of the school.
- Very high standards are maintained throughout the school.
- Very good teaching and students' excellent attitudes to learning combine to ensure that students achieve very well.
- The curriculum is very good and meets the needs and aspirations of students.
- The school is managed very well and data is used very effectively to set targets and monitor the progress of individuals and different groups of students.
- The pastoral system is successful in reinforcing students' very positive approach to school to produce an excellent ethos where all students are included and valued.
- The excellent support parents give to the school and their children's education makes a significant contribution to students' achievement.

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection. Existing high standards have been raised further, teaching is better and the higher numbers of students are served with an expanded curriculum that offers very good choice. The school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Performance compared with: | | all schools | | | Similar grammar schools |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|------|-------------------------|
| | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| Year 11 | GCSE/GNVQ examinations | A* | A* | A* | B |
| 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 students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Achievement is very good. The examination results indicated in the table above show that this group of students performed better than those in similar grammar schools and with whom they were broadly comparable in terms of attainment on entry to Year 7. Results are in the top five per cent nationally. Results in 2003 improved further. Standards seen during the inspection are very high at the end of Year 9 and Year 11, and well above average in the sixth form. Students achieve very well in all years, including those students with special educational needs, students whose mother tongue is not English and the highest attaining students. There are no significant differences in the results of boys and girls.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Students' attitudes are excellent and their attendance is well above average. Behaviour is excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is very good in all years.

There is a high level of consistency to the good and very good teaching and there is a significant amount of excellent teaching. As a result, learning is consistently very good. Teaching and learning are very good in most subjects throughout Years 7 to 11. The very positive qualities that students bring to their learning are significant in their very good achievement. The teaching of religious education to students in Years 10 and 11 who are not examined in the subject is satisfactory rather than good, largely because of the lack of challenge in students' written work.

The curriculum is very good and closely matches the needs and aspirations of students in this high achieving school. Pastoral care in the school is excellent because detailed attention is given to the care and welfare of students in general. Students receive very good, well-informed advice and guidance so that they take courses that best meet their choices and fit their individual needs. Students taking GCSE examinations have realistic and challenging targets to help monitor their progress. The school has very good links with parents and the impact of their involvement on the work of the school is very significant. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges and excellent links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good overall. Leadership by the headteacher is excellent, and key staff at senior and middle management levels provide very good leadership. The school is very well managed. Governors do a very good job overall, but the school does not comply fully in providing an act of collective worship on a daily basis, although most assemblies are of a very good standard and do meet the criteria for collective worship.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Comments are based on those students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting, supplemented by interviews held during the inspection. Parents are highly supportive of the school. They are pleased with the teaching standards and high expectations that enable their children to make very good progress. The parents' association thrives and the school is heavily oversubscribed. Parents and students are strong ambassadors for the school. Students thoroughly enjoy lessons and participate enthusiastically in all activities. They like the friendly atmosphere, the challenging work and helpful teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

As at the time of the last inspection, there are no areas of significant weakness that need to be tackled.

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

- Ensure a greater consistency in marking students' work and improve reporting to parents.
- The work that has started to supplement the process of performance management by formal monitoring of classroom practice by heads of department needs to be further developed to attain greater consistency and spread the best practice.
- In the sixth form, the school needs to find ways to raise the profile of teaching general studies so that the subject is valued more by students.

And, in order to meet fully statutory requirements:

- The school should provide a daily act of collective worship.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | THE SIXTH FORM AT HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL | |
| | The sixth form is larger than most other sixth forms. The large number of GCE A-level courses provided has been expanded to meet the needs of all sixth form students at the school. | |

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the sixth form is very good. Its cost effectiveness too is very good.

Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.

There are no significant weaknesses. The school's main strengths are:

- Standards are very high because teaching overall is very good and helps students achieve very well.
- Both leadership and management are very good.
- The curriculum is very effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of all students.
- Targets are used very effectively. As a result, students are very successful in making good progress through the sixth form and realising their ambitions on leaving the school.
- Students' attitudes are very positive and produce a very good working atmosphere in lessons.

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 | English literature is very good. Teaching is undertaken by specialists and is very good and students achieve very well. Standards are well above average. French is good. Students achieve well in response to the good teaching they receive. Standards are above average. In German , students are achieving very well in response to the very good teaching they receive. |
| Mathematics | Mathematics is very good. The high level of subject specialist knowledge of the teachers ensures that students make very good progress and are prepared well for their examinations. They achieve very well and standards are well above average by Year 13. |
| Science | Biology and chemistry are very good. Very good teaching and leadership in these subjects enable students to achieve very well, attaining well above average standards. In physics lessons that were sampled, there is a similar picture. Standards are well above average throughout. |
| ICT | ICT very good. Excellent attitudes engendered in students combined with very good teaching results in standards that are well above average. |
| Humanities | Geography very good. Standards are well above average. Very good teaching and learning and effective use of field course work ensures students enjoy the subject and achieve very well. History very good. A very popular subject that is very well taught and where students achieve very well and standards are well above average. Sociology very good. Some excellent teaching in the overall very good quality engages students. Learning enhanced by very good approach to independent study. Students achieve very well and attain standards that are well above average. Religious education and psychology were sampled and in both areas, provision is very good and students achieve very well. |
| Engineering, technology and manufacturing | Design and technology lessons very good. Students' excellent attitudes make the most of very good teaching to produce outstanding results. Students achieve very well. |
| Visual and performing arts and media | Art and design very good. Students' talents are capitalised upon by some very good and enthusiastic teaching. Students work hard, achieve very well and enjoy their art. Standards are above average |
| Hospitality, | Physical education and sports studies very good. Some excellent teaching in the |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| sports, leisure and travel | overall very good quality generates an enthusiasm in students for the subject. They enjoy their studies, achieve very well by the time they reach Year 13 and attain standards that are well above average. |
| Business | Economics very good. Very good specialist teaching is ensuring that students achieve very well in relation to their starting points and attain standards that are well above average. Law very good. In one lesson sampled, standards are very high, reflecting excellent achievement by students. |

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 school provides very good support, advice and guidance based on very effective monitoring. The very good relationships with subject teachers and tutors are very supportive and helpful. Students new to the sixth form settle very well. All students are encouraged to make their own choices and to develop independence and maturity. The advice and guidance given for higher education, training and employment are very good. Excellent care is taken of students' health welfare and safety.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The sixth form is led very well and management is very good. The head of sixth form studies and the team of teachers maintain the highest expectations of the students with regard to their personal development and their studies. The sixth form is very popular and continues to grow.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students like the sixth form. They appreciate the high expectations and challenge they receive from friendly, accessible and helpful teachers. They like the good working environment and friendly atmosphere where all students are well motivated to achieve. The school's provision suits their abilities and their career plans. In their questionnaire responses, students were critical of the careers advice and a high proportion stated that there is not an adult in school who knows them well. The questionnaire was completed early in the school year and the inspection team could not substantiate these criticisms in subsequent interviews with students. Students are encouraged to be independent in their career choices, but extra support is always available on request. Students were also critical of the sixth form common room that is too small for the numbers and gets very crowded during break times.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The main school

Students join the school with levels of attainment that are very high in English, mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects vary, but overall are well above average. Compared to other selective grammar schools, standards on entry are broadly average. By the time students leave Year 11, standards overall are **very high and are above the average of grammar schools, reflecting students' very good achievement**. Parents are very satisfied with the standards the school obtains and students, too, express their satisfaction with the quality of education they receive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 9, students achieve very well in English, mathematics and science. In all other subjects, students achieve very well, other than in citizenship, where time constraints are limiting and students achieve well.
- In Years 10 and 11, students achieve very well in nearly all subjects and attain very high standards. In religious education, the majority of students follow a non-examination course, and standards and achievement are lower because there is less time available to teach the subject.
- Students' very high levels of attendance and their excellent behaviour are important factors in their high achievement.
- Students achieve so well because of their very positive response to the very good teaching they receive.

Commentary

1. By the end of Year 9, standards are very high overall. In physical education and citizenship, standards are above average. In modern foreign languages, art and design, music and religious education, they are well above average. In all other subjects, including English, mathematics and science, standards are very high. Students achieve well in citizenship, where time is limited. In all other subjects, they achieve very well. There is a similar pattern by the end of Year 11, except that standards in modern foreign languages are very high, and in physical education and citizenship, standards are well above average. In all subjects, except religious education, students achieve very well. In religious education, those who take the examination course achieve very well and their standards are very high. However, the majority of students in Years 10 and 11 follow a non-examination course and standards are lower because of a lack of challenge in the students' written work. Overall, the level of students' achievement is clearly linked to the very good teaching they receive throughout Years 7 to 11.
2. Standards of literacy are very high. Students' well-developed skills ensure that they have full access to the curriculum and that they are able to respond to the learning demands that are made of them. Standards of numeracy are very high. Students attain very high standards in ICT because of the many and varied opportunities they are given to develop their skills.
3. The very highest attaining students achieve very well. This is because teachers plan their work effectively to challenge them. They are also given very good additional challenges through extra-curricular work and opportunities to study additional subjects and the chance to take examinations earlier than usual. Students with English as an additional language achieve very well, in line with their peers. The very small proportion of students with special educational needs achieve very well, for example, over half of students following the school's "successmaker" course increased their English test scores by two National Curriculum levels by Year 9, compared with results from Year 6 in their primary schools. Two Year 11 students

at the school action plus stage on the special educational needs register gained nine and eleven GCSE passes respectively, with the great majority of these passes in the A-C grade range. Two Year 12 students, who had formerly been at the school action stage on the special educational needs register, gained five and four AS passes respectively with nearly one half of passes in the A-B range.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 42.5 (43.6) | 33.3 (33.0) |
| Mathematics | 48.1 (46.9) | 34.7 (34.4) |
| Science | 43.2 (43.9) | 33.3 (33.1) |

There were 151 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

| | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades | 100 (99.3) | 50 (48) |
| Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades | 100 (100) | 91 (91) |
| Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades | 100 (100) | 96 (96) |
| Average point score per student (best eight subjects) | 54.2 | 34.6 |

*There were 153 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. * National results for 2003 were not available at the time of the inspection.*

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were very high. They were in the top five per cent nationally in English, mathematics and science. Students achieved very well to maintain these very high standards and a rate of improvement above the national trend. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were among the top five per cent nationally. These students achieved very well, maintaining a rate of improvement in line with the trend nationally. The improvement was above the rate of improvement in other selective grammar schools.

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with above average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 13, standards for the past two years have been in the top five per cent nationally and students have achieved very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 13 are very high in English literature. In all other subjects, at this stage in their courses, students' standards are well above average, other than in French where they are above average.
- Students receive very good teaching by specialists in their subjects and achieve very well.
- The students bring a great deal to their studies in terms of their attitudes, maturity and determination to succeed.

Commentary

5. During the inspection, work seen in the 15 subjects inspected, which included the relatively weaker subjects, was well above average overall. Many of the highest attaining subjects (of the total of 27 subjects offered) were not inspected. In the courses focused on in the inspection, students achieve very well in all subjects other than French, where their achievement is good. In the work seen, students are on target to reach the very high standards attained in GCE A-level examinations in the last two years. There is a similar pattern to the work seen in Year 12. Students achieve very well overall and are attaining standards that are well above average at this stage in the course and are on line to reach targets set that are very high compared to the national average.

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

| | School results | National results |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades | 100 | 94.8 |
| Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades | 50.1 | 39.4 |
| Average point score per student | 384.4 (310) | 263.3 |

There were 141 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Results in the 2002 examinations were in the top five per cent nationally. The results for both male and female students were very high. Results improved again in 2003; both males and females achieving a greater proportion of A and B grades and a higher average points score than in 2002.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The main school

Students' attitudes to work and their relationships with each other and with staff are **excellent**. This is a strength of the school. Behaviour is excellent and there are hardly any exclusions. Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools and punctuality is very good. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes are excellent. Students are very well motivated and enthusiastic learners.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. There are hardly any exclusions.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent. There is a very good degree of racial harmony.
- Students make the most of opportunities to take part in the wide range of activities on offer and exercise responsibility with maturity.
- Students enjoy school. Attendance is very high in comparison with other schools and punctuality is very good.

Commentary

7. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Exclusions are rare. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour to which students respond very well. Discipline is strict but fair and consistent. Students are honest and trustworthy and respect both the school's and each other's property. Relationships across the school are excellent and students support each other's learning very well. Students of different religious or ethnic backgrounds, sex or ability get on very well together. Students are considerate, polite and helpful to each other and to adults in the school. Students are sensitive to the issues of bullying and racism and do not

tolerate either. The need to treat others with respect is promoted very well in assemblies, lessons and in personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) in particular. Staff deal promptly and effectively with all reported cases of bullying and this results in a happy and harmonious learning atmosphere. Students in Year 7 appreciate the support they receive from older students, especially the sixth form prefects.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 910 | 2 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 109 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 71 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 13 | 0 | 0 |

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

8. Students learn very well as a result of their excellent attitudes. They are enthusiastic and conscientious learners who work very hard to achieve their best. Students feel some pressure from the large amount of homework and course work they are required to do, but cope extremely well with the workload. Students voice their views and opinions confidently in lessons and have a mature and thoughtful approach to learning. Students are keen to accept community responsibilities, such as taking part in performances, house competitions and debates, standing for the school council and supporting fund raising activities. Involvement in extra-curricular activities is very high as is participation in day and residential visits outside school, where students represent the school very well. The provision made for students with special educational needs makes a very positive contribution to the development of their confidence and self-esteem. Students with English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers. This is due to their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning as well as the very good teaching they receive.
9. Students' spiritual development is very good. Work in subjects such as English, religious education and music, provides valuable opportunities for students to take part in activities which have a spiritual dimension to them, such as discussions on poetry, creative writing, the study of different religious beliefs, and a wealth of music-making. Students are encouraged to develop self-awareness, and they respond very positively when given opportunities to reflect on spiritual matters in assemblies and tutor time. The school provides excellent opportunities to enhance their moral development. There is a very clear code of conduct that students

understand and accept and, in the daily routines of school life, students show thoughtfulness for the well-being of others. Assemblies are often based on moral themes, such as the care of the environment, and most subjects offer students of all ages a wide range of opportunities to explore moral issues. Social development is outstanding. Most students are well aware of the responsibilities of living in a community, and they work together in an exemplary way, particularly in music, drama and sporting activities. Throughout the school, students are encouraged to take on responsibilities, which they do very willingly. Students' cultural development is very good. The school is a harmonious multi-cultural community, and in English, religious education and the expressive arts, students gain a very good understanding and appreciation of the richness and diversity of their own and others' cultures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.3 | School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 7.8 | National data | 1.2 |

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

- Attendance is well above average in comparison with other schools and unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Students enjoy coming to school where they feel safe and secure and follow courses suited to their needs and interests. The school has excellent systems to monitor and promote good attendance and parents support the school's rigorous approach. The school has recently introduced calls to parents on the first day of absence if parents do not call school first, and attendance has improved from 96.7 per cent in 2001/2 to 97.3 in 2002/3. Students arrive punctually at the start of the day and for lessons, and are only occasionally late when heavy traffic delays buses.

Sixth form

Attitudes to learning are **very good** and behaviour is excellent. Students are very well motivated and have a mature and independent approach to their work, in response to teachers' high expectations. They contribute significantly to the life of the school. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have very good attitudes and their behaviour is excellent.
- Students like the courses available and are keen to make the most of the opportunities provided.
- Relationships with each other and with their teachers are excellent.
- Students make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. They are good role models for younger students.
- Attendance is very good.
- Students contribute significantly individually and co-operatively to the life of the school.
- Students undervalue general studies and are not well motivated to achieve in this subject.

Commentary

- Students' very good attitudes and excellent behaviour contribute very positively to their learning. Students' are very positive about their sixth form education. They have a mature approach to work and are very well motivated to achieve in their chosen subjects. Their commitment to general studies is less enthusiastic, as many of them undervalue this course. Students take increasing responsibility for their own research and learning. Different groups of students get on very well together. The excellent relationships between students and with teachers are supportive and the very good collaboration helps students make good progress. Virtually all

students complete their chosen courses and their very good attitudes enable them to continue their learning in adult life. Students are punctual and attendance is very good. Excellent procedures are in place to encourage good attendance.

12. Students make a significant contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. The school makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of sixth form students. The religious element in the general studies course gives them good opportunities to explore spiritual matters. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when there was no such provision. Students are keen to accept responsibility. They provide excellent role models for younger students, taking the lead in organising house competitions and charity collections, and representing the school in debates on ethical issues. Students also gain a very good understanding of citizenship and democracy through the student council, community service and house activities, such as debating competitions. The head boy and head girl and their deputies make a significant contribution. Students make the most of their opportunities to extend their learning via day and residential visits out of school and in extra-curricular activities. About a quarter of Year 12 students take responsibility to organise their own work experience and undertake the activity in their own time. Students become independent, mature and responsible adults. They are very well prepared for life as citizens in modern society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The school provides a very good education. The quality of teaching, the use of assessment, the curriculum and pastoral care are all of a very good quality. There are very good links with parents.

The main school

Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning. Students' very positive approach to learning is a significant factor in their high achievement. The assessment of students' work is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high level of consistency in the amount of very good teaching across the curriculum and across all years.
- There is a significant element of excellent teaching in the school.
- The excellent match of teachers to the curriculum ensures that teachers have a high degree of subject specialist knowledge.
- Learning is very good because of the very positive qualities students bring to their studies, seen in high levels of motivation and excellent behaviour.
- In some subjects, there is too much variation in the quality of teachers' marking and the use of National Curriculum levels to inform students about their progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 142 lessons in Years 7 to 11.

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 11 (8%) | 69 (49%) | 46 (32%) | 15 (10%) | 1 (1%) | 0 | 0 |

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

Commentary

13. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is very good in nearly all subjects. This consistency, along with some excellent teaching, enthuses students and makes best use of their already very positive approach to their studies. This ensures that very good learning takes place in most lessons. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is also very good. Students are, by now, very determined to achieve the best they can and teachers use this to challenge and stretch them. Teachers' expectations are high and they demand a great deal. These demands are in tune with the students' own expectations and those of their parents. The result is a quiet orderly working atmosphere in classrooms where achievement is valued and students want to learn. These qualities are appreciated highly by parents and students.
14. Teachers have very good relationships with their students and engender positive relationships between students. This enables teachers to maintain a firm, but friendly approach in their teaching. Typically, students work very hard and the atmosphere in lessons is one where humour can prevail and students can be trusted to work independently. This goes a long way to reducing pressure on students who are high achievers and could easily lose sight of the balance needed in adopting a healthy approach to their work.
15. Another feature that promotes the very good learning that takes place is the mutual respect that exists between teachers and their students. Teachers have a very good level of subject expertise. They supplement this with a secure knowledge of the examination demands in their subjects. They plan very conscientiously and bring these qualities to the lessons. Students respect this and play their part by taking responsibility for their learning, for example, in the positive way they do their homework and go further than the minimum in researching their work. Most teachers take good account of the needs of all students and adapt the work to meet their needs, especially those with special educational needs, the highest attainers and students from minority ethnic backgrounds.
16. Teachers use ICT very effectively, as befits a school with specialist technology status. They are helped here by the excellent web-site that the school organises that allows students to access homework tasks and carry out further research from their own homes, or when they are using the library for independent research.
17. Because students' behaviour is excellent, very little time is lost in the need to discipline students, and there is a common purpose to most lessons that allows teachers to teach without interruption. This allows them to be adventurous in their approach. In much of the excellent teaching, for example, they use pair and group work imaginatively to stretch students and demand the very best of them. Students also learn well from each other because they listen carefully. Teachers are assiduous in requiring students to use the technical language of their subject. Thus, in question and answer activities, students will take on the response of another, question further and add their own contribution and, in the best practice, improve the precision of the answer. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 9 students made a nice distinction in geometry between a section and a segment and rational versus irrational numbers as they sought to understand the concept of pi.

Example of outstanding practice

Using a variety of teaching strategies in the classroom, including ICT, to promote excellent learning. An account of part of a history lesson for Year 12 students.

Year 12 students, studying the rise to power of Stalin, were kept fully involved by a variety of stimulating teaching activities that led to excellent learning and achievement and very high standards. Having stimulated the students' interest with a vivid film of Stalin's early life, the enthusiastic teacher stretched their skills of critical analysis and communication through group work. Challenged to interpret sources on different historians' views on Stalin's rise to power, students became involved in lively discussion, culminating in a card sorting exercise, which categorised and prioritised their conclusions. Maintaining the brisk pace, the teacher quickly switched to a very effective PowerPoint summary of the key outcomes of the lesson, with the students first offering their ideas. As the students were fully engaged in their learning and the challenging concepts were strongly reinforced through lively teaching, they made excellent progress in understanding a key topic.

18. Where teaching did not reach the high standards that typified the quality seen during the inspection, this was usually because teachers were less imaginative in their approaches, and where the pace of the lesson was too leisurely and undemanding. On occasions, in these lessons, the learning was better than the teaching because students maintained their curiosity and desire to progress. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen was most uncharacteristic and atypical of the teaching in the school. One inconsistency that requires a more effective whole-school approach is in teachers' approach to marking. There is some excellent practice in the school, but there is also some routine and less informative marking. This contrast in approaches can, on occasion, be found even within individual subject departments as well as between departments.
19. Assessment in Years 7 to 11 is very good. A large amount of data is collected and collated about students' attainment when they enter the school. This is used very effectively to set targets for students and monitor students' progress as they move through the school. Subjects use this data very well to meet the needs of individual and different groups of students and to analyse performance of different groups in external examinations. Very good procedures are in place to support students' achievement; subjects are very thorough and constructive in the ways in which they assess students' attainment so that students know what they need to do to improve. At present, however, better use could be made of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 so that students know how well they are doing in relation to national standards.

Sixth form

Teaching in the sixth form is very good, as is assessment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of their subjects and very high expectations of their students.
- There is a high level of consistency in the very good teaching across the wide range of subjects seen.
- Learning is very good because of the mature attitudes and high level of commitment of students.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 86 lessons in the sixth form.

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 5 (6%) | 45 (53%) | 27 (31%) | 9 (10%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

20. Teaching is very good in most subjects across both Years 12 and 13; it is good in French. There is an excellent match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum on offer. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge and close understanding of the examination demands of their areas, lead to very effective teaching that prepares students very well and ensures high levels of examination success.
21. The very positive qualities described above, relating to teaching in the main school, are present in sixth form teaching because so many teachers spread their teaching to include the main school and the sixth form. Students appreciate teachers' expertise, their conscientiousness in marking work and the way in which they make themselves available to help outside lesson time. Marking is better in the sixth form, because teachers ensure that students are left with good knowledge of how to improve their work further.
22. Assessment in the sixth form is very good. The performance of students in GCSE examinations in Year 11 is used very well to set targets for GCE A-level examinations. Teachers use the information very well to plan for the needs of individual and groups of students. Targets are reviewed regularly so that students know the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve. Teachers assess students' work thoroughly; examination criteria are used very effectively to ensure that students know how well they are doing.

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** range of learning opportunities across Years 7 to 13. The match of teachers to the curriculum and enrichment opportunities for students are both excellent. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory.

The main school

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well matched to the needs of all students.
- Students' opportunities are significantly enhanced through the school's enrichment programme.
- The school's ICT provision gives students very good independent learning opportunities.
- Curriculum development and innovation are excellent.
- The time allocation to PSHE is low for the comprehensive programme provided.

Commentary

23. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship. The school goes a long way towards complying, certainly in the spirit of the law as assemblies are of a very good standard, but some assemblies do not have an act of corporate worship. The academic nature of the curriculum is very well matched to the needs and aspirations of students. The school's own extensive website gives students very good independent access to the curriculum in different subject areas as well as their own work. ICT is a very strong feature of the school's overall provision, reflecting a key aspect of its

technology college status. The breadth and success of the provision in both science and design and technology are further illustrations of the school's effectiveness in fulfilling its designated status. Curriculum planning is rigorous and innovative to maximise opportunities for all students. Additional breadth is provided by a comprehensive PSCE programme, although the time allocated is low.

24. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad and balanced, containing all National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education. Breadth and balance are enhanced by the provision of library skills and drama in Year 7, by the provision of ICT as a separate subject in Years 7 to 9 and by opportunities to study both French and German. The organisation of the science curriculum provides a very good foundation for courses available in Years 10 and 11. There are very good additional opportunities for some students through distance learning courses, with 20 students in the current Year 9 studying Latin by this route. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has an appropriate academic emphasis with all students taking ten GCSEs and some taking eleven. Students' choice is enhanced through an options system that offers a wide choice of combinations of subjects. Students' needs are taken fully into account when the timetable is constructed to meet the choices agreed between students and the school. The courses provided link very well with post-16 AS courses.
25. Enrichment of the curriculum is excellent and there is a very wide range of activities. The arts and sport are prominent within the overall programme. The provision for music is outstanding. Support for learning is enhanced through study skills programmes, homework clubs and by the school's website. The house system makes an outstanding contribution to students' experiences by adding a very significant extra layer of activities and competitions. Participation rates are high. There are many opportunities within the house activities programmes for students to take on responsibilities.
26. There is a good and comprehensive programme for PSCE, which is well taught by appropriately trained form tutors. It includes sex and relationships education, drugs awareness education, citizenship and careers, and contributes positively to students' personal development. The careers programme is helpful and all Year 10 students undertake two weeks of useful and well-organised work experience, enhanced by excellent links with the community and support from parents. PSCE prepares students well for life after school.
27. The school is currently undertaking a thorough review of the work-related curriculum as part of its rigorous approach to curriculum evaluation and development. A number of courses, for example, in ICT, business studies and design and technology, already have a distinct work-related emphasis.
28. Provision for students with special educational needs is very good. Students identified are offered a "successmaker" ICT-based literacy programme. The provision is carefully organised to minimise its impact on lesson time. Test results show that students following the programme make very good gains in literacy. The school works closely with students and parents so that students with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum provided, including taking a full range of courses at GCSE. There is similar very good provision for the highest attaining students. This enables the school to challenge them appropriately. All students at the school are treated with equal courtesy and respect and enjoy equality of opportunity to the school's provision. The school monitors the achievements of all students with great care. Analysis of the results shows that there is no significant difference between the success of males and females. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds attain results as good as the majority of the school's population, and the few students for whom English is an additional language achieve very well indeed. Observations of the teaching also indicate that all students are fully included in the learning process and equally involved.
29. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The level of subject qualification is also very good. The governors and headteacher have no difficulties appointing high quality staff when vacancies occur, due largely to the very good

reputation of the school. Members of the technical staff contribute positively in assisting and supporting teaching of the curriculum. Members of the secretarial and clerical staff make a significant contribution to the daily running of the school, being pleasant and helpful to visitors and parents. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources are good. The library is used well by students of all year groups. The ICT provision in music is excellent and very good in history, modern foreign languages, ICT and design and technology. An outstanding resource is the opportunity for students to access the school website from home. This enables them to further their studies in a wide range of curriculum areas when the school is closed.

Sixth form

Sixth form provision is very good and there is a very extensive range of courses for students. The high staying-on rate into the sixth form, the large number of students entering from other schools, and the successful rate of entry into higher education, all confirm the appropriateness and effectiveness of the provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The large range and number of GCE AS and A2 courses are very well matched to students' needs.
- Students have very good opportunities to extend their learning experiences through the school's enrichment programme.
- Students are not well motivated by the general studies course.
- Many students consider that they do not receive enough careers advice.

Commentary

30. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good in the sixth form. Statutory requirements are not fully met with regard to the provision of a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum provided is constructed on the basis of students' agreed choices with the school and is, therefore, very well matched to their needs. There are very good opportunities for progression from the very wide range of AS courses to A2. Opportunities for progression into higher education from the very wide range of courses provided are also very good. Many of the courses provided link very well with particular careers. The great majority of Year 11 students choose to stay on into the sixth form and are joined by a large contingent from other schools. Around 90 per cent of sixth formers enter higher education.
31. The very wide range of AS and A2 courses is striking in its variety. In addition to a comprehensive range of traditional subjects, there are, for example, courses in politics, psychology, sociology, and music technology. Students with special educational needs have equal opportunities and successfully complete a full range of AS and A2 courses. There is excellent additional provision for the highest attaining students, including opportunities to take Open University modular courses or distance learning courses. These innovative developments give these students excellent opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Students consider that their courses suit their abilities and career plans. Many students, however, do not consider that they receive enough careers advice.
32. Curriculum experiences are broadened through students taking key skills and general studies courses. Students undervalue the general studies course. There is very good provision for the development of key skills. A high level of oral and written communication is strongly promoted by all subjects and the application of number is reinforced through units of the compulsory general studies in Year 12. The generous allocation of teachers and time ensures excellent development of ICT skills to both level 2 and 3 for students in Year 12 who have lacked computer experience. The enrichment programme provides students with very good opportunities to extend their learning experiences. In addition to a weekly half-day of activities,

inter-house competitions give students very good opportunities both to participate in activities and to take leading roles in their organisation.

33. Students have very good opportunities for “work shadowing”, where all Year 12 students are offered the opportunity to “shadow” a professional in a career of potential interest. Provision made is highly relevant. In 2003, 50 school leavers entered the same field as their work shadowing placement, representing 75 per cent of those who took up placements. Many courses on the curriculum link very well with particular careers. Some have a very direct link, including music technology, psychology and law. Year 12 students were seen in a very effective distance learning law lesson, with a video link to their tutor at the University of Cardiff.
34. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is excellent because the school is able to recruit subject specialists. Resources are good, overall, with very good provision in modern foreign languages, ICT and history. GCE A-level courses in economics, food technology and physical education are taught in accommodation that is barely adequate, but the excellent attitudes of the students minimise the difficulties and students state that accommodation is not a problem.

Care, guidance and support

The main school

The school takes excellent care of students’ welfare, health and safety. Staff provide very good support, advice and guidance based on effective monitoring, which has a positive impact on achievement. The school ensures the involvement of students in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes excellent care of students’ welfare, health and safety.
- The excellent relationships that exist between staff and students are very supportive.
- There is a comprehensive and effective induction programme for all new students.
- Students’ academic progress and personal development are very well monitored by tutors and through individual interviews with members of the senior management team.
- Students are provided with very good advice and guidance that prepares them very well for life both in the sixth form and after school.
- Students have a good involvement in the school’s work. They express their views confidently and influence aspects of school that affect them directly.

Commentary

35. Procedures for dealing with child protection issues, students’ welfare, health and safety are excellent. Risk assessments are thorough and good heed is paid to students’ safety in lessons and on visits out of school. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and specific to the school with clearly outlined responsibilities. Internet service provision is safe and secure.
36. Pastoral procedures are very good and support individuals’ needs very well. Students find staff approachable for help and guidance. Induction arrangements are well organised and students settle very well into school in spite of the large number of different primary schools from which they come. Year 7 students have excellent support from the sixth form students allocated to each form group. Form tutors establish very good relationships with their students to promote personal, social and academic development. Senior management staff undertake monitoring interviews with individual students that track their progress very well and enables the school to target future support. Support for targeted students from the learning mentor, funded by Excellence in Cities, has a good impact on the academic performance of the few students who are judged to need the additional help.

37. PSICHE provides a comprehensive programme to guide students through school choices and prepares them very well for life either in the sixth form or after school. Advice on option choice in Year 9 is sound. Work experience in Year 10 is well organised and successful, and gives students a very good understanding of the world of work. The sixth form course guide is comprehensive and useful, although it lacks consistency between subjects, and courses are often not related to career choices. All students are interviewed before entry to the sixth form to ensure the correct choice of courses. Good and impartial careers advice is given with the support of the Connexions service. Students can offer their views on school issues effectively through a variety of channels, including the students' council. Students feel that teachers listen to them and welcome their ideas and comments.

Sixth form

The school takes excellent care of students' welfare, health and safety. The personal and educational guidance and support to students is very good. Relationships with subject teachers and tutors are supportive and helpful. Students know that their opinions are sought and valued and they have a good involvement in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receive very good advice and guidance that prepares them very well for life in the sixth form.
- There is a very good induction programme for new sixth formers.
- Students find teachers very friendly, approachable and supportive.
- Students' views are respected. Processes for seeking the views of students in the sixth form are effective.
- Students are critical of careers advice.
- Students complain that the sixth form common room is overcrowded.

Commentary

38. The school takes excellent care of the welfare, health and safety of students and procedures are common with the main school. The school has rigorous procedures to monitor sixth form attendance.
39. Year 11 students receive very good advice regarding entry to the sixth form. In the inspection survey responses, a high percentage of students indicated that they did not feel there is an adult in the school who knows them well. However, this was not substantiated in subsequent interviews between inspectors and students. Rather, students stated that they are confident that they have easy access to a teachers should they need advice. However, tutors have a large number of tutees and it takes too long to develop some of the good relationships necessary to provide apposite advice. Excellent relationships exist between subject teachers and students. During the inspection, interviews with sixth formers indicated that students are confident that they have easy access to a teacher should they need particular help or advice. In the survey, a high proportion of students felt they receive insufficient careers guidance. However, in the inspection this was not confirmed in interviews with sixth formers and the school encourages them to be more independent. Comprehensive and useful advice on further and higher education, training and employment is readily available. At the time of the inspection, Year 12 students had not fully accepted the responsibility given to them to take up the careers advice that is on offer on request. Students in Year 12 are encouraged to undertake work experience and about a quarter of them organise their own. The majority of students choose not to undertake formal work experience to help them with career choices.
40. All students follow a course of general studies where they are encouraged to debate moral and ethical issues. Although many undervalue this subject, it contributes very positively to personal

development. Processes for seeking the views of students in the sixth form both informally and formally through the student council, are very effective. Students are confident and self-assured by the time they leave school and are well prepared for adult life. They are positive about what the school provides and say that they like the friendly working atmosphere, the challenging and demanding teaching, helpful assessment of work, teachers' expert specialist knowledge in their subjects, the choice of courses which suit their abilities and career plans, teachers' accessibility and helpfulness, and the way in which the school is well run. Students complained about the sixth form common room, which is too small for the numbers and overcrowded at break times. Students enjoy the sixth form.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Main School

The school has **very good** links with parents, other schools and universities and excellent links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive and the school is vastly oversubscribed.
- Parents are well informed about their children's progress, but students' annual reports are inconsistent and contain insufficient detail on how students can improve their work.
- The parents association makes a very strong contribution to the work of the school.
- Links with the community are excellent and enhance learning and personal development.
- The very good links with other local schools and universities make a strong contribution to wider partnerships.

Commentary

41. The school has very good links with parents to enable them to support students' education. Parents are very positive about the school, which is popular and oversubscribed. They like the high expectations that staff have and the very good results students achieve. They feel the school is well led and managed. Several parents expressed their pleasure at the way in which their child had settled in school. Very good information is provided to parents in the governing body annual report to parents and prospectus. Occasional letters and newsletters are informative and there is an excellent website with a specific section for parents. Parents appreciate the way planners are used for communication. Interim reports allow them to monitor progress through the year. Annual reports are of good quality overall, but there is inconsistency within and between subjects and they contain insufficient detail on how students can improve their work.
42. Parents find the school very approachable and any concerns or complaints are resolved effectively and sensitively. A small proportion of parents feel the school does not seek their views, but this is done regularly in a variety of ways, both formally and informally. Parents support their children's learning very well at home and in school. The parents' association makes a valuable contribution to the financial and social life of the school as well as to the personal development of students through their involvement in the association's events.
43. The school's excellent links with the local and wider community greatly enhance students' learning and personal development. The school enjoys a high standing in the local community and capitalises extremely well on resources within the community to improve students' learning. Strong links with business and industry support the school's technology status and greatly enhance the work experience programme.

44. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges that significantly enhance support and guidance for the personal development of students. There are, as yet, no work-related courses, but good links with colleges ensure students are offered a wide range of post-16 options. There are very good links with foreign schools to support language skills and links with schools in other continents raise students' awareness of others less fortunate than themselves. Through its technology status, the school provides very good support to a number of other primary, secondary and special schools to share resources and improve teaching skills. There is very good involvement with other schools through the Excellence in Cities programme. The school makes a very good contribution to the initial training of teachers.

Sixth Form

The school has excellent links with the community and universities. Students' views are canvassed and respected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good involvement of and support from parents.
- Annual reports are of consistently high quality and give clear guidance on how students can improve.
- Excellent links with the local community make a good contribution to students' learning and personal development.
- Students feel their views and concerns are listened to and acted upon.

Commentary

45. Parents are well informed of academic progress and personal development in the sixth form. An appropriate cycle of reports and consultations keeps parents suitably informed of students' progress. The quality of reports is very good and good information is given on how students can improve their work in most subjects.
46. The school has excellent links with the local and wider community that enhance learning and extra-curricular provision offered to sixth form students. The strong links with business and the community support the community service and work experience that all students are encouraged to do in Year 12. Students are actively involved in community service, for example, by helping in primary schools, raising funds for charities and participating in performances. A good range of outside speakers enhances careers and personal and social education.
47. The views of sixth form students are canvassed effectively by subject teachers, senior management staff and through the sixth form council. Students feel their views and concerns are listened to and respected.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The main school

The headteacher's **excellent leadership**, along with **very good support** from governors and key staff, has ensured the continued direction and improvement of this very successful school. The school is **managed very well**. Governors play a very effective part in the school's development. However, their governance is satisfactory rather than very good overall because the school does not fully comply with the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. His very clear vision for the school, shared with and by others, has helped bring about a very well balanced school community that is both happy and high-achieving.
- Senior staff and those in other key positions make a very good contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
- The school's very good planning, to which both staff and governors contribute very positively, has driven the school's significant improvements.
- The school collects and uses data very effectively to analyse what it has to do to improve further.
- Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that financial planning is secure and principles of best value are rigorously applied to the school's spending decisions.
- There are inconsistencies in the way some heads of departments monitor their subjects outside the process of performance management.

Commentary

48. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. It is a measure of the quality of this leadership that the school, judged in the previous inspection to be highly successful, has moved forward significantly in the past five years. The rise in standards, the enrichment of students' experiences in many areas, the expansion of the sixth form and the great improvement in its provision – these are all products of the headteacher's very clear vision and his energy in bringing this improvement about, and demonstrate the impact of his contribution. These improvements have not been bought at the expense of a calm and well-balanced education. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the school's leadership is that, in spite of the pressures year-on-year to improve performance, changes are happening in a spirit of good humour and mutual respect. Students declare overwhelmingly that they like being at the school, and parents feel the same.
49. Senior staff provide very good leadership and are very supportive of the headteacher. They are very good role models for both staff and students. The leadership team has worked together for several years and the school benefits greatly from its experience and continuity. An important factor in the effectiveness of the leadership team members is that they share the major roles, such as oversight of students' pastoral welfare and managing the curriculum, so that these are not the sole preserve of one individual. This leads to corporate decisions for which they each bear responsibility. The leadership of middle managers – heads of subject departments and pastoral leaders – is also very good, reflecting and sharing the vision from the top. Through training and support, these managers have become increasingly accountable for the performance of their areas of responsibility and the welfare of their staff. The school has embraced performance management of staff wholeheartedly and gained much from the experience in ensuring a consistency in the quality of classroom practice. One area that needs further development is the supplementing of this system with additional classroom observation and analysis of students' learning. The senior management team has identified this issue and over the past two terms has introduced a system of monitoring of classroom practice by heads of department. The impact of this has not yet been seen, but the practice is developing along effective lines. At present, there are some inconsistencies, for example, in marking and in reporting to parents, that detracts from the generally high standard of teaching.

50. One of the main engines of the school's consistent improvement has been very good planning. The school's development plan is a dynamic working document which has at its heart the raising of standards and the improvement of the quality of students' school life, for all students. This is a very effective and inclusive school where students state that they feel valued and where minority groups thrive and achieve as well as their peers. Staff at all levels have contributed to this through their own planning. Governors, too, play a key role in this process. They take a very active role in the leadership of the school and make a very positive contribution to the decisions taken that help to shape the vision and direction of the school. The regular reporting that takes place ensures that governors gather information to put them in a very good position to hold the school to account for the standards and quality produced. Governors can, and do, act as critical friends to the school, both challenging and supporting very effectively. Governors have not ensured that the school fully meets the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. The school is effective in meeting the spirit of the law in that assemblies are conducted regularly, and these assemblies are very good and fully meet statutory requirements. It is in the letter of the law that the school does not comply because there is not a daily act of collective worship.
51. The school is managed very well. There are very good systems and strategies in place to guide progress and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives taken in terms of their impact on raising standards. The school gathers and uses data very effectively to analyse its performance and to compare with other similar institutions to ensure that standards, costings and the quality of its provision are as high as they should be. The headteacher and other managers are aware of the importance of curricular innovation. Leaders provide good role models for other staff and students, and parents and students are positive about the manner in which the school is led and managed. Until very recently, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching has taken place through the performance management process, supplemented by some monitoring by the senior management team. This has worked effectively, and the quality of teaching is very good. However, the senior managers have identified the need to improve teaching further by identifying and spreading the very good and sometimes excellent practice that exists. Over the past two terms, the school has shifted the responsibility to monitor teaching and share such practice to the heads of subject departments. This system is in its infancy and its impact not yet fully effective. As a result, a number of departments do not yet benefit sufficiently from the dissemination and sharing of the best practice in teaching.
52. The school leadership successfully promotes equal opportunities and full inclusivity. The provision for students with special educational needs is very well organised, highly resourced and appropriately targeted. There is a very good emphasis on sensitivity to each individual's opinions and needs in a school with such a small proportion of students with special educational needs. The staged approach to making provision follows guidance in the Code of Practice. The co-ordinator keeps staff fully informed about students' special educational needs. There are strong links with the appropriate outside agencies.
53. The curriculum is responsive to the needs of all students. The school attracts a significant minority of students whose mother tongue is not English. They are mainly of an Asian background, but none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. Provision for all students from minority ethnic groups is very good. Close analysis of academic information allows the school to make additional provision for the small number who need it. The progress of students is closely monitored to ensure that they achieve according to their ability and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as their peers.
54. The main aim of the professional development programme for the school is the support of all staff in improving the quality of education for the school's students, raising standards and ensuring best value from the limited funds available. The programme is very effective. The co-ordinator for performance management very successfully oversees all aspects, including identifying and providing for training needs. Very good arrangements are in place for the

induction of newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school. The budget for the professional development programme is very carefully allocated, with appropriate priorities being carefully considered.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 3,915,712 | Balance from previous year | 5,666 |
| Total expenditure | 3,879,191 | Balance carried forward to the next | 37,970 |
| Expenditure per student | 3,569 | | |

55. Financial planning and management are very good. The procedures ensure that educational priorities are costed carefully and there are effective procedures in place to so that the school consults and compares to gain best value in its spending. The principles of best value are applied meticulously. Specific funds are used appropriately and strategic planning provides a clear rationale and focus for improvement.

Sixth form

Both the leadership and the management of the sixth form are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The close involvement of the senior management team ensures very good support for the head of sixth form.
- The well-planned expansion of sixth form provision has enabled a very good curriculum to be put into place.

Commentary

56. Leadership of the sixth form is very good. Through the vision and drive of the headteacher and governing body, the sixth form has been transformed over the past few years. Construction of a new centre and recruitment of new teaching staff have allowed the sixth form to grow to its current size. This, in turn, has enabled the school to offer more subjects on the curriculum to GCE AS and A-level and a richer menu of activities and events beyond the curriculum. The sixth form is very well managed and led on a day-to-day basis by a head of sixth form and an effective team of tutors who oversee students' academic and social welfare. The same issue relating to monitoring and evaluating teaching in subject departments in the main school applies to the sixth form.
57. Planning post-16 is as effective as it is for the earlier years and is owned and shared by staff who work in the sixth form. Students are proud to belong to the sixth form and agree that it is well run. The fact that an overwhelming proportion of students stay on at the school after Year 11, and the large number from elsewhere who apply to join the sixth form, testifies to the very high regard in which the sixth form is held, both within the school itself and in the local community.

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**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very Good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very Good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Years 7 to 9 and 10 to 11 are very high.
- Teaching and learning in all years are very good.
- The department's planning is very good.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very good.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching through more regular classroom observation are not well enough developed and the very good practice that exists is not shared enough.
- The quality of marking and reporting is inconsistent

Commentary.

Examination results

58. In 2003, results in the Year 9 national tests were very high for both boys and girls. Results were above those of similar selective grammar schools. In the 2002 English language and English literature GCSE examinations, results were also significantly above national averages for both boys and girls. A large proportion of the students achieved the highest grades. In 2003, these very high standards were maintained as a similar proportion of students gained the highest grades.

Standards and achievement

59. By the end of Year 9, standards are very high compared to the national average. This represents very good achievement. Current standards show that the students are on course to replicate previous years' very good results. They show perception when responding to a wide range of literature, for example, when conducting character studies of Sherlock Holmes. They express themselves clearly, whether to others in class or in writing, and are keen to do their best. In Year 11, standards are also very high. Analysis of course work reveals that the students have built on their previous skills. They are all able to write accurately, confidently exploring themes and language in "Romeo and Juliet", while the highest attainers produced sensitive comparisons of Blake's "Lamb" and "Tyger". These students are on course to match the very high results of previous years.

Teaching and learning.

60. Teaching is a strength of the department and leads to very effective learning. The teachers' very good subject knowledge helps the students to build on their prior knowledge, giving them the confidence to explore new learning. The department plans very well to ensure that schemes of work are appropriate and that lessons have challenge and pace. Objectives are clearly identified and teachers check that they have been met by all of the students. Particularly impressive is the way in which the department matches teaching to the different needs of the students, encouraging all to achieve well. Although satisfactory, marking is not consistent; so all students are not receiving the same quality of feedback. At present, there is not enough sharing of the very good classroom practice that exists.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are good. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been tackled and there has been very good improvement since then. Academic information is analysed according to school practice and the progress of students is monitored. The department has high expectations and its principles are clear so students know exactly what is expected of them. There is good team collaboration on curriculum development and this now needs extending to include peer monitoring and a further sharing of ideas.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. As a result of involvement in the Key Stage 3 Strategy, the school has increased awareness of whole-school literacy with an effective training session for all staff. A whole-school policy on literacy identifies clear aims and acknowledges the important role that all staff play in improving literacy skills. The establishment of a cross-curricular working group for literacy has resulted in the identification of literacy priorities for Year 7 students and the intention to extend the identification into Years 8 and 9 will form a sound foundation for the effective spreading of good practice. The working group has made a good start and when all departments are represented, it will become an excellent forum for discussing literacy issues.
63. The literacy co-ordinator's intention to audit current practice will enable the school to further develop and spread the good practice that already exists in many departments. For example, in religious education, students read aloud fluently and expressively. In English, students are able to communicate clearly and contribute fully to discussions. Their listening skills are well developed. In music, students use technical vocabulary extensively when writing and equally in design and technology, there is a very strong emphasis on technical vocabulary to support students in their learning. Research skills are well developed across many departments with very effective use of the Internet in ICT, guidance in research styles in science and good use of dictionaries in modern foreign languages.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages (French and German) is **very good**

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Standards | Well above average | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at GCSE in French and German are very high and exceed the average for similar schools.
- Very good teaching and students' excellent attitudes to the subject ensure that they achieve very well.
- The modern foreign languages department is very well led and managed.
- Students benefit greatly from the department's very good use of ICT and the abundance of activities on offer to enrich their experience of languages.
- There is no additional systematic monitoring of lessons outside the performance-management process to improve further the quality of teaching by sharing best practice.

Commentary

Examination results

64. In 2002, GCSE results in French and German were very high and above the average for grammar schools. Almost all students gained a grade A* to C and well over half of them were awarded A* or A. Girls did better than boys, but only in the proportion of A* and A. Results in 2003 were similarly high, although in German they were slightly less strong than in French. In both languages, students achieved very well.

Standards and achievement

65. Standards in Year 9 are very high in French and well above average in German. Achievement overall is very good. High attaining students in French have an excellent memory for language they have previously learnt. They understand their teachers' very good, rapidly spoken French and speak French themselves with unusually good pronunciation. In German in Year 9, a few higher-attaining students are held back somewhat by less demanding teaching where German is not used confidently. Otherwise students achieve very well in German. A small number of students with learning difficulties are achieving very well because they are taught appropriately in small groups. Students who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well, similar to their classmates.
66. By Year 11, standards in both languages are very high. Students of all levels of attainment, boys and girls, achieve very well because they are pushed hard by teaching that challenges and engages them. They also bring excellent attitudes to their learning. All students have unusually well developed listening skills in French or German and are very well practised at speaking in the foreign language. They use different verb tenses skilfully to describe events that happened in the past or their plans for the future. In French, students write better than they do in German because they have had more opportunity of writing freely and at length. The considerable benefits of the department's imaginative use of ICT are apparent in the high quality of presentation of much of students' work. At this stage, students would benefit from more planned opportunities to read freely in the foreign language.

Teaching and learning

67. Teaching overall is very good and occasionally excellent. This leads to very good learning in the large majority of lessons. Teachers use the foreign language nearly all the time in the classroom so that students have to listen carefully and respond swiftly. Much of the teaching, too, is very demanding, expecting students to cope with difficult grammar and to memorise language quickly. Pair work is used to excellent effect to give students plenty of chance to practise speaking. Students rise eagerly to these challenges and work with admirable co-operation and independence. Teachers make very good use of the two foreign language assistants for speaking and listening practice. Homework is appropriate and demanding. Written work is helpfully marked. A small amount of German teaching lacks challenge and

students learn less well because the language is not used confidently. A number of students for whom foreign languages do not come naturally would benefit from more systematic help with their pronunciation.

Leadership and management

68. The modern foreign languages department is very well led and very efficiently managed. Languages staff are a strong team of experienced professionals who work very well together. A particular strength of the department is the rich menu of language events, visits and activities, which it offers beyond the curriculum. For example, a group of students, who had successfully taken French GCSE a year early, took Spanish in the following year and gained very good results at GCSE in 2003. Gifted linguists can study Latin to GCSE in one year or take Japanese conversation classes. Students have ambitious targets to encourage them to aim high and their progress is carefully tracked. There is not enough systematic observation of teaching to ensure that the best practice is shared throughout the department. From an already very strong base in 1998, the department has made very good improvements. Standards have risen and the minor reservations in the previous report have been successfully dealt with.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and they continue to improve.
- Students from Years 7 to 11 learn very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Students' exemplary attitudes to work ensure that they achieve very well.
- Computers are used well to support teaching and learning.
- Very good leadership and management provide the subject with a clear vision and direction towards improving already very high standards,
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not well enough developed to share best practice.
- Day-to-day marking does not include sufficient comments for improvement or inform students in Years 7 to 9 of the levels at which they are working.

Commentary.

Examination results

69. Results in the 2003 Year 9 national tests were very high. Results continue to rise and were well above average when compared with other selective grammar schools. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results were very high in comparison with all schools and well above average in comparison with other selective schools. The proportion gaining grades A*/A was well above average. This continued a rising trend, which was maintained in 2003. In GCSE statistics, a very high proportion of students gained grades A*/A.

Standards and achievement

70. By the end of Year 9, students' mathematical skills are very high. This represents very good achievement as they enter the school with skills in mathematics that are above average. Students recall their tables confidently when doing mental calculations and understand well the concepts of direct and inverse proportion. The highest attaining students understand the difference between rational and irrational numbers. Students' data handling skills are very good; students understand the concept of correlation and draw scatter graphs confidently to explore the relationship between sets of data. By the end of Year 11, students' mathematical skills are very high. They have developed very good problem solving skills; they explain their ideas very well using appropriate technical language and can identify patterns, find rules and formulae, predict and test results. Algebraic skills are good; students solve equations confidently. Students' achievement and progress is very good in all aspects of mathematics.

Teaching and learning.

71. The quality of teaching is very good which results in very good learning and achievement for students. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of challenging activities, which strongly engage the attention of all students. This is ensured by very good planning for the needs of all students. The highest attaining students achieve very well because they are challenged by appropriate material. Teachers are enthusiastic and have high expectations of students' work and behaviour. Very good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning; teachers often use computers to teach concepts and skills and students are required to use them in lessons to help with learning. Students have very good attitudes to the subject and their behaviour is excellent. They show strong interest in the activities, cooperate well and work very effectively on their tasks. Day-to-day assessment in lessons is good but marking does not provide National Curriculum levels for students in Years 7 to 9 or sufficient comments about what they should do to improve. Students consequently are not informed as well they might be of how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership and management are very good. A clear vision and direction are provided. The strong commitment to improving already high standards is indicated by the very good use of assessment data and examination results to evaluate the performance of the subject. The sharing of very good practice is inhibited because the monitoring and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom observation is undeveloped outside the process of performance management. Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Results have improved, especially with the proportion of students gaining A* and A grades in GCSE examinations. Schemes of work are now matched well to the needs of the students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Numeracy skills are developed very well in mathematics lessons and through other subjects. All subjects have opportunities planned into schemes of work for the use of mathematical skills. In science, provision is very good and mathematical skills used very effectively, for example in solving chemical equations and representing information from experiments. Students' graphical skills are developed well in geography when drawing climatic graphs and in ICT, when using spreadsheets. In design and technology and art and design, students' measuring skills are developed and used effectively when dealing with ideas of shape and space.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Good | Good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very well qualified and teach well to produce very good achievement by students.
- The assessment and monitoring of students' progress are very good.
- Working relationships are very good and students have a very positive attitude to their studies.
- Work schemes are excellent.
- The procedures for the sharing of good practice need to be further developed.
- Students are not given short-term targets to help further guide their learning

Examination Results

74. Students' attainment on entry to the school is very high compared to national averages and average when compared to grammar schools. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 2002, the results obtained were very high compared to all schools and well above average when compared to other grammar schools: the results were also well above average when compared to the students' prior attainment. This represents very good achievement. The results for 2003 show a further increase in attainment, indicating that this achievement is continuing at this high level. The examination results are completely in line with the teacher assessments. Results have shown an increasing trend over the last 3 years. At the end of Year 9, boys and girls are attaining equally.
75. At GCSE, the results in are very high when compared to national standards. The standards of attainment in the department have risen steadily over the last three years. The results for 2003 have continued this overall trend, especially so in the separate sciences, with a small drop in attainment in combined science. This represents continued very good achievement. There is no significant difference in the results obtained by boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

76. By the end of Year 9, students' attainment is very high. Students have a very good grasp of scientific principles and have a high level of practical skill and understanding of the underlying theory of their practical work. Higher attaining students are able to tackle the writing of balanced chemical equations and have done some high quality work on electromagnetism and biological structures. This very good achievement continues through Years 10 and 11 and, by Year 11, standards are very high in comparison with national standards. By Year 11, students have developed their analytical and research skills and, for example, have done some excellent work on solar and stellar systems.

Teaching and learning.

77. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and excellent work schemes and very good lesson planning underpin the teaching. Teachers have high expectations of students and there is a real commitment to achieve the highest standards. Students' exercise books show evidence of the care and determination which the students give to their work. Practical work is appropriate and well organised: students show confidence in the handling of scientific apparatus and achieve a high standard in this aspect of the subject. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to maintain the interest of the students and their teaching in class is supported by use of the information resources available from the high quality handouts issued to the students, textbooks and the internet: use of the latter is guided by the teachers suggesting appropriate websites from which the students can gather information. There are occasions, however, when the teaching is too didactic and the learning environment lacks the stimulation of a greater active involvement of students. For example, in several lessons students could have helped with demonstrations to increase their sense of involvement and raise the level of interest and enjoyment. The attitudes and behaviour of the students are very good indeed and this approach by the students ensures a very positive learning environment and very good learning across the science department.
78. Students' homework is marked regularly and teachers do make some helpful comments in exercise books. Assessments are carried out on a twice-yearly basis, but the guidance for students does not provide enough advice relating to the provision of clear short-term targets to inform the students precisely what work needs to be done to achieve a higher level. The department makes a very good contribution to the literacy skills of the students and the building up of a 'science dictionary' by Year 7 students is a good example of this. ICT is well integrated into the work schemes of the department and is used very well to support the teaching and learning in science. Work schemes include a range of activities to stimulate and challenge the highest attaining students.

Leadership and management

79. The department is led very well. Since the last inspection, the department has continued to raise the standards and achievements of the students and has, therefore, made very good progress. There is a clear sense of purpose and direction for the future and there is a constant review of standards and achievement. New approaches are being constantly considered and the recent effective use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is an illustration of this. Management of resources is very good but the sharing of good practice is inadequate at present. Resources of equipment and textbooks are very good and the practical resources are greatly helped by the efficient and hard-working team of laboratory technicians. The accommodation for the department is generally good, but the recent expansion in numbers following science courses has meant that the total accommodation is now inadequate, particularly since some of the older laboratories need to be re-furbished.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from Years 7 to 11 achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Students want to learn so they make very good progress.
- Very good leadership and management provide clear vision, direction and organisation with a focus on improving standards.
- Students have very high ICT skills and use these very well in many subjects to enhance their learning.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is very good, although the contribution that this makes to students' ICT capabilities in Years 10 and 11 has yet to be fully audited.

Commentary

Examination results

80. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were very high when compared to the national average and were amongst the best in the school. This was maintained in 2003. Boys and girls reached similar standards.

Standards and achievement

81. By the end of Year 9, students' attainment is very high compared to national expectations. This represents very good achievement, as they enter the school with varied experience of using ICT. Students understand, to a high degree, the importance of presentations being suitable for a particular audience when designing newsletters and posters. Teachers encourage students to seek their own solutions by using ICT. As a result, many, especially those of higher attainment, select appropriate information sources and ICT tools for particular tasks. By the end of Year 11, standards are also very high and all students achieve very well. Their high literary skills enable most students to successfully analyse problems faced by businesses such as stock control. They then use spreadsheets very well to produce systems to solve these problems. Higher attaining students in particular give sophisticated commentaries on the advantages and disadvantages of their solutions.

Teaching and learning.

82. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 and 10 and 11 is very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and this engages students' interest. Tasks are challenging so that all students are constantly made to think. Students are often engrossed in their work because of the pace and demands of the lessons. Teachers help individuals very well, but in doing so also use very good questioning skills to encourage the students themselves to find solutions to problems. Higher attaining students extend their learning very well because of the

supplementary tasks provided by their teachers. Lessons are well planned so that activities develop and consolidate students' knowledge and understanding. However, the limited time available in Year 9 restricts the range of activities that teachers can provide. Homework is used very effectively as an integral part of teaching; therefore lessons make very good use of the time available. The marking of students' work is very good and gives clear pointers for improvement. However the marks allocated are not clearly linked to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 so that students are unaware of how well they are doing against national expectations. Relationships are excellent and teachers' high expectation of good behaviour means that learning proceeds without interruption. Students use the resources extensively outside lesson time to further develop their ICT skills. Students also achieve very well because they have very positive attitudes towards ICT. They like the subject and, as their questioning of their teachers shows, they want to learn.

Leadership and management

83. The department is very well led and managed. There is a clear sense of direction with the main focus being on improving standards, a vision that is shared by all members of the ICT team. This has resulted in very good improvement since the previous inspection. Resources have improved, high standards have been maintained and almost all teachers are now specialists. Teaching is very well monitored and supported. The resources are very well managed and maintained by a skilled and effective technical team. Very effective links have been made with local schools as a result of technology college status. However, the department's plans for future development could have more clarity in terms of time scale, costs and responsibilities for implementation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. There is very good use of ICT across the curriculum. This, together with the very good ICT teaching, gives students well above average ICT skills to enhance their learning in other subjects. As they move through the school, students develop very well as independent and discriminating users of ICT. This illustrates the very positive impact of the school's technology college status on students' achievement. The use of ICT in music is excellent. Students use ICT exclusively for composition techniques, for example, in creating backing for James Bond films in Year 8. Very good use is found, for example, in science, design and technology, mathematics and modern foreign languages. Other subjects are in the process of developing their use of ICT and all have it built into their schemes of work. A very good audit of the contribution that subjects make to the development of students' ICT capabilities has been made for Years 7 to 9. However, this has still to be completed for Years 10 and 11. When available, interactive computer display boards are used very well by teachers to demonstrate and involve students in their learning. The school website is an excellent resource for parents, teachers and students. Many students use the facility to transfer homework and assignments from home to school.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and achievement very good throughout Years 7 to 11.
- Lessons are well planned and delivered and result in very good learning taking place.
- More able students are challenged by open-ended assignments and teachers make good use of homework.
- Good use is made of data to analyse students' performance and improve teaching.
- In Years 7 to 9, the system of marking is inconsistent and the links between grades and National Curriculum levels needs to be made clearer to students.
- The department development plan needs to be more precise.

Commentary

Examination results

85. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were very high compared to the national average and have been sustained over time. Boys and girls do equally well. Students also reach very high standards at the end of Year 9 when compared to the national average.

Standards and achievement

86. By the end of Year 9, students have gained real proficiency in the practical use of maps and they can locate, recognise and describe physical and man-made features. Their knowledge of how physical processes shape the landscape is very good, helped by the department's use of fieldwork throughout Years 7 to 9. Higher attaining students can explain the theory of plate tectonics and relate this to the distribution of volcanic features across the earth. By Year 11, most students have an impressive range of geographical skills and knowledge that they use appropriately to support their coursework assignments. These are of a consistently high standard with students able to question, hypothesise and come to firm conclusions about their area of study.

Teaching and learning

87. Students benefit from lessons that are well prepared and that use a variety of approaches. All teachers show very good subject knowledge, not only through what they say, but also in how they monitor students' learning and give effective individual support to them. Many lessons incorporate the use of ICT and this adds greatly to the learning experience of students as it brings in a range of high quality materials. The excellent behaviour of students in class and their willingness to learn greatly enhance the effectiveness of teaching. Higher ability students

are challenged by open-ended assignments and extension exercises that allow them to best show their ability and interest. Homework is used well to further develop work done in class and is regularly and thoroughly marked with constructive comments on how to improve. However, in Years 7 to 9, the system of marking is inconsistent and the links between grades and National Curriculum levels is not made clear enough to students.

Leadership and management

88. The department is very well led and managed. It works very well together as a team with everyone contributing to its success. Very good use is made of data to analyse students' performance and this has already resulted in a focus on improvements to coursework as a way of addressing the under-performance of some students. The department development plan identifies the main priorities for the department, but lacks detail on how these will be achieved, who is responsible and what the performance indicators are. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is now very good, GCSE attainment in terms A*-A grades is now high, standards at 'A' level are well above average and teaching is interesting and varied. The use of ICT by students is developing well.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from Years 7 to 11 attain very high standards and achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Students are stimulated and excited by the high quality teaching so that history has become a very popular subject.
- The effect of very good learning is enhanced by the students' excellent attitudes to work.
- Very good leadership provides the subject with a clear vision and direction.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching through more regular classroom observation is undeveloped.
- There is not enough systematic use of ICT to further promote research skills.

Commentary

Examination results

89. The 2002 GCSE examination results were high, with all students, from a high level of entry, attaining grades A*-C, some of the best results in the school. This continued a rising trend, which was maintained in 2003, with those attaining A*/A even higher than the previous year. Boys and girls performed equally well.

Standards and achievement

90. By the end of Year 9, students' standards are very high and match the teachers' assessments for 2003, in which students attained much higher than the national average at level 6 and above. This represents very good achievement as they enter the school with skills in history that are above average. Year 7 students recognise bias in interpreting accounts of the battle of Agincourt. Students of all abilities in Year 9 make very good progress in analytical research work, such as the enquiry into Archduke Ferdinand's assassination at Sarajevo in 1914. Students use their high level skills in ICT and literacy to write fluently and at length. By the end of Year 11, standards are also very high and all students achieve very well. The high standards of discussion, interpretation and analysis of sources are further developed. For example, Year 11 students confidently discuss and then link and prioritise reasons for the failure of Prohibition in America.

Teaching and learning.

91. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of stimulating activities, which strongly engage the attention of all students. The highest attaining students achieve very well because they are challenged by tasks requiring critical analysis and evaluation. Teachers are enthusiastic and have high expectations of students' work and behaviour. The well-planned enquiry work, a strength of the teaching, has clear learning objectives, challenging tasks and good resources. This strongly develops skills of research, empathy and literacy, especially extended writing. Students are encouraged to do their own computer research rather than it being taught systematically and regularly. Marking and assessment are very thorough so that students know their attainment level and how to improve. The excellent attitudes and behaviour of the students also promote very good learning. They show strong interest in the activities, cooperate very well in group-work and stay on task very effectively for long periods. This is encouraged by the very good relationships with the teachers and with each other. History is now one of the most popular subjects in the school.

Leadership and management

92. The department is very well led and managed. High expectations, a clear vision and direction are provided for the department's enthusiastic team of specialist teachers. The strong commitment to improvement is indicated by the good analysis of performance. The positive response has led to very good progress being made since the last inspection: standards are much higher, teaching has improved and schemes of work have been effectively revised to meet students' needs. The spacious accommodation and attractive displays of students' work create a rich and stimulating environment for learning. This is enhanced by the good range of outside visits and invited speakers. The sharing of very good practice is inhibited because the monitoring and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom observation is undeveloped outside the process of performance management.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 (Core course) | Year 11 (Examination course) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Satisfactory | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Satisfactory | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Leadership | Good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 and in the examination classes in Years 10 and 11 because of the very good teaching.
- GCSE results are significantly higher than the national average.
- Most students have very positive attitudes to their work.
- In the non-examination course in Years 10 and 11, the written work is not matched well enough to students' capabilities.

Commentary

Examination results

93. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were significantly above the national average, and above average for similar schools. Most of the candidates gained the higher grades of A*- B. This represents very good achievement. In 2003, with a new examination syllabus, the proportion of A*-B grades was slightly lower than in the previous year, although all candidates gained grades A*-C.

Standards and achievement

94. By the end of Year 9, students attain standards that are well above what is expected for students of this age. They are very well motivated and achieve very well in relation to their starting point in Year 7. Most students, both boys and girls, have a very good understanding of the spiritual dimension to life. They express their knowledge and understanding of the major world religions, and their own reflections, very clearly in discussion and in writing. The highest attaining students produce work that is extremely mature, such as the deeply moving poems on the Holocaust, which reveal an acute perception of the powers of good and evil.
95. In Year 11, standards in the GCSE examination class are well above average. Students have a very firm understanding of the spiritual issues encountered in their New Testament studies. They are adept at working out theories logically and intuitively, using evidence gathered from research. Students' responsible attitudes to their work have a direct impact on their very good achievement. Written work is of a very high standard. In the non-examination course, which is taken by most students in Years 10 and 11, standards are average. Students have an informed knowledge of current moral and ethical issues, but some are underachieving in their written work because it is not sufficiently challenging.

Teaching and learning.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A strong feature of the most effective teaching is the teachers' very good command of the subject in the Year 9 and the GCSE classes. This enables students to acquire new knowledge very effectively and to increase their understanding of religious beliefs. Assessment is used well in these classes to give students a clear idea of how well they are getting on, and what they need to do to improve. The relative weakness lies in the programme of study in the non-examination classes. It lacks sufficient intellectual rigour, and the religious education element of the subject matter is not always evident. The department has rightly identified this aspect of the provision as an area for development.

Leadership and management

97. The leadership of the subject is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Effective management has resulted in strong teamwork, revised programmes of study in most areas, and good provision for the highest achievers. Literacy and ICT strategies are very well integrated into lesson planning, and students benefit from visits to local places of worship. The department continues to make a very significant contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Standards | Very high | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have excellent attitudes to the subject, which contribute to their very high achievement.
- The very good teaching leads to students making very good progress in all years.
- The very good leadership and management are dedicated to, and effective in, improving students' achievement.
- The excellent use of data for evaluating performance and target setting is very effective in raising standards.
- There is a broad curriculum with challenging projects that use ICT very well to support learning.
- Accommodation is stretched and the specialist food technology facilities are inadequate to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Commentary

Examination results

98. At the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments show that students attain levels that are very high in comparison to the national average. In 2002, students gained results in their GCSE examinations that were very high when compared to the national average, in food technology, electronics, graphic products, resistant materials and textiles. More than half the students achieved grades A* and A. In 2003, the level of students' achievement was again very high and results improved further as two-thirds of the students gained A* and A grades across the five courses studied.

Standards and achievement

99. In the work seen in Year 9, a similar very high level of attainment is evident, as the students achieve very well from a below average starting point. Making and constructional skills are very well developed, as are the students' design and graphical communication skills. They also have a very secure grasp of subject knowledge and vocabulary. The teachers use challenging projects and tasks in a variety of materials that make increasing demands on the students' capabilities and rapidly extend their subject knowledge and skills. The achievements of boys and girls are at broadly similar levels. Numeracy and literacy skills are stressed and developed in designing and making activities, and very appropriate use is made of ICT to support the learning.
100. The Year 11 work seen during the inspection confirmed that the very high standards in examinations in recent years are being maintained. All students have very effective design skills and they research in depth and analyse and evaluate existing products and their own designs and models very rigorously. Graphical communication skills are well developed, especially on the graphic products course, and students on all GCSE courses use them appropriately and effectively to develop and communicate their design ideas. Making skills are very good and high quality models, prototypes and products are constructed. The achievements of the girls are marginally higher than those of the boys on most courses. Excellent behaviour, high levels of concentration and very positive attitudes to the subject by all students, added to the effect of very good teaching, ensure that achievement and progress are very good in all years.

Teaching and learning

101. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to plan a variety of stimulating projects that strongly engage the interest of their students. This leads to very good achievement as the students are challenged by the tasks presented to them. The teachers use a range of appropriate methods to engage students with their learning, and explanations, questioning and demonstrations are used particularly effectively in developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Where teachers set up group and paired activities, the students work very productively and co-operatively to extend their learning. In all lessons, teachers give high levels of individual support and well-informed feedback, which encourage students as well as setting high expectations. Teachers have clear aims for their lessons, but they do not always share these with the students or review the progress made at the end. Also, there was a loss of pace in the learning in some lessons as the teachers did not set time deadlines for the completion of intermediate tasks.

Leadership and management

102. The department is very well managed and the staff team is committed to setting the highest possible standards of achievement for all students. Excellent use is made of data to monitor achievement and set individual targets for the students, as well as evaluating departmental performance. The staff are very well qualified and they are deployed to their specialist

strengths. The departmental accommodation is well maintained and provides attractive working environments for the students but facilities for food technology are inadequate. With only one specialist food room available, practical making activities are restricted, although the staff seek to minimize the impact on the students' learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have risen overall, with a high proportion of students now achieving A* and A grades at GCSE. There is a greater consistency in the quality of teaching, now judged to be very good, and the curriculum has been strengthened by more challenging projects and the increased use ICT.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average for grades A* to C and are significantly above national averages.
- The quality of teaching is very good, bringing about very good learning.
- Students in all years have very good attitudes to art and design, which is instrumental in producing very good learning and standards that are well above average.
- The system of assessment is very strong and ensures students achieve their potential.
- The accommodation, fittings, storage and facilities for display in temporary classrooms are presently unsatisfactory, but new purpose built accommodation was under construction at the time of inspection.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to extend the curriculum, mainly owing to lack of resources.

Commentary

Examination results

103. Results in the teachers' assessments in 2002 showed that all students gained at least level 5 and an exceptionally high proportion of them gained level 7 and above. Work seen during the inspection matches the teachers' assessments. Over the past three years, GCSE results A* to C have been consistently well above the national average, although results in this subject are among the lowest in school. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well above the national average for grades A* to C and all students gained at least a D grade. Far fewer boys opt to take art and design GCSE and their results overall are slightly lower than those of the girls.

Standards and achievement

104. In work seen during the inspection, standards in art and design are well above average by the end of Year 9. This represents very good achievement as students enter school with only average skills in painting, drawing and model-making and in their knowledge of artists and art periods. Students observe closely when working from direct observation and use their imagination when responding to a theme. They have a good eye for detail and understand about shape, texture and design. Students build up their knowledge of the lives and works of famous artists such as Morris and Matisse, but many students, especially the highest attaining ones, effectively search books and the Internet for lesser-known artists for their inspiration.
105. In work seen during the inspection, standards in art and design are well above average by the end of Year 11 and reflect very good achievement over the two-year course, which is very demanding of students' time and personal response. Students are confident in experimenting with textiles, montage and collage and use materials imaginatively. Their paintings and drawings have good composition, colour and texture and students speak confidently, using the language of art, when criticising their own and others' works. They understand about placement and proximity and overall impact, especially when doing work on a large scale. The highest attaining students are more likely to show ingenuity when designing, and confidence in developing their personal styles. In general, sketchbook work is good and many of the higher attaining students, often the girls, take pains to create their own pages instead of accepting the ordinary papers, showing inventiveness and sophisticated presentation. Unfortunately, the sketchbooks are too small and inhibit both style and scope of work of most students.

Teaching and learning

106. The quality of teaching is very good and this, coupled with exemplary attitudes of students and the quality and amount of work done in and out of lessons, brings about very good learning. The main strengths in the department are: subject skills and knowledge, thorough knowledge of students' capabilities, and planning work that is interesting and motivating. Teachers constantly challenge the students to reassess what they are doing and determine how work can be improved. This is a valuable factor in raising standards and ensuring students achieve their potential. The art and design teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and, leading by example, inspire the students so that they come to lessons cheerfully, settle to work readily, try hard and produce quality items. Alongside the art and design skills, teachers ensure that students raise their standards of literacy and numeracy by, for example, encouraging writing, speaking and listening and paying attention to measurement, proportion and scale. Many projects contain elements to raise students' awareness of art from other countries and cultures and understanding of issues such as waste, human rights and animal suffering. The use of ICT is encouraged, and more work using ICT is planned, but, as yet, the department does not have enough equipment to extend the activities.

Leadership and management

107. Leadership and management are very good. Colleagues and students see the head of department as a strong leader who is well respected. The department of talented teachers has made good progress since the last inspection. Department targets are clearly stated and the actions to address the criticisms in the last report have ensured success. The quality of teaching is higher, moderation of work is more systematic, standards have risen, schemes of work focus on the development of personal and imaginative skills, boys have become more interested in art and design and the number of students opting to take GCSE has increased. The temporary accommodation is small and unsatisfactory and is having a detrimental effect on aesthetics and practical work. However, new purpose-built accommodation is currently under construction.

Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Excellent |
| Management | Excellent |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership and management are successfully promoting improved standards.
- Very good teaching, with some excellent features, capitalises on students' very positive approach to learning.
- Excellent use of music technology extends and enhances students' experience of music.
- Singing in the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Accommodation, though improved, is still limited.

Commentary

Examination results

108. Students enter the school with standards below average overall. They make very good progress through Years 7 to 9 and achieve standards well above average by the end of Year 9. This is largely due to very good teaching and the students' excellent attitudes. Results in GCSE examinations have been consistently very high, with significant numbers of students gaining A*-C in the past three years. In 2003, all twelve students gained grades A*-B, showing improvement.

Standards and achievement

109. In Years 7 to 9, students are currently working at standards that are well above average. The work of a good number of students is of a very high standard. In a Year 7 class observed, students, who had been members of the school for less than a term, were already working at levels in line with average expectations. They had gained a secure knowledge of notation, enabling them to start elementary composition successfully. Year 9 students have a masterful command of music technology, which they use with a great sense of creativity. During the inspection, they were working on a project through which they had to compose their own background music for sections of a James Bond film. Many produced excellent results. Year 11 students also use computer technology for composition work with great effect. In a lesson observed, they demonstrated a very good knowledge of what makes a successful sacred or secular Christmas carol, and they started to compose their own secular carols with flair and originality. The overall provision is excellent because of the impact of the combination of consistently very good quality class work and extra-curricular work that involves such a high proportion of students to give a very rich diet.

Teaching and learning

110. Teaching and learning are very good overall and the way in which computers are used for improvisation and composition purposes is excellent. Teachers in the department have complementary strengths, and they are highly proficient with music technology. They choose topics for students to work on which have instant appeal to the students. The use of advanced technology, the appropriate subject material, and the excellent attitudes of the students, are all reasons why there are very high standards in the classroom. Talented students, particularly, are very well catered for, as the open-ended use of technology enables them to fully develop their creative skills.

Leadership and management

111. Leadership and management are excellent. The head of department has a clear vision of the way he wants to move music forward in the school, and has strategies in place for enabling this. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Assessment procedures have been reviewed and improved. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has been developed through the imaginative use of music technology. The accommodation has improved, though there are still problems when instrumental teachers visit. Singing in the curriculum is underdeveloped, though the quality of singing by the extra-curricular choirs is very good. There are many instrumental performers of a very high standard. They are well catered for through the many high quality extra-curricular ensembles. These excellent ensembles, comprising large numbers of students, contribute strongly to the spiritual, social and cultural life of the school, and receive justified praise in the community. The music department brings great credit to the reputation of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 10 * (Core course) | Year 11 (Examination course) |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Standards | Above average | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Good | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good |

* Year 11 students were not observed during the inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall and leads to students achieving very well throughout the school.
- Students' attitudes are excellent and ensure a very good working atmosphere in lessons.
- Extra-curricular sport is very good and extends and enhances opportunities for students to participate in sport at different levels.
- Leadership and management are very good, but some documentation needs updating

Commentary

Examination results

112. In 2002, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that 100 per cent of the students had achieved level 5, or more, which is well above the national average. 2003 results at the end of Year 9 had the same score at level 5 and 75 per cent were attaining level 7. The 2002 GCSE results were well above the national average in both A* to C and A* to B. An increased entry in 2003 had higher A* to B grades and a higher average grade per student than the 2002 grades.

Standards and achievement

113. In the work seen during the inspection, the standard in Year 9 was judged not to be as high as previous teachers' assessment, but still above average. Most games are performed at an above average standard, but students' lack of previous experience in dance and gymnastics results in lower attainment levels. Both netball and soccer have the highest standards. Students achieve very well by the end of Year 9. The GCSE groups are well above the national average in practical activities and above the average in theory work. The mixed groups develop training and fitness programmes for different sports and show a knowledge and understanding of the practices. A work scrutiny showed that the students had well-presented files with clear notes on different topics. Year 11 non-examination groups were not observed during the inspection, but core groups in Year 10 achieved well in badminton and basketball because they show motivation and a positive attitude to the work.

Teaching and learning

114. Teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 9 and this includes the non-specialist input. Over-elaborate explanations was seen to confuse students in a netball lesson, but the teaching was flexible enough to change course and increase the pace so that progress was made. Quality was not demanded in a dance lesson, but enthusiasm and energy kept the class busy and interested. Very good knowledge of netball promoted a high level of skill and rapid progress in a Year 8 session. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching in the GCSE groups is very good and sometimes, when the accommodation allows the use of interactive white boards, it is excellent. There is plenty of activity in the GCSE practical sessions where the expert knowledge of training and fitness programmes is taught. The theory sessions are challenging and demonstrate very good planning and preparation. The relationships are very positive and the students are encouraged to work independently at times and they do so very successfully. The quality of the teaching, overall, is very good and, together with the students' excellent attitudes, is responsible for the students achieving very well.

Leadership and management

115. The department is very well led and the documentation is very well presented, but some updating is needed. There are no major weaknesses. Students are aware of their target grades and assessment procedures for the GCSE group are very good. Extra-curricular sport is very good and a wide range of activities is offered at lunchtimes and after school. Many pupils extend their skills by attending these extra sessions and many go on to county, regional and national levels in a variety of activities. Approximately 40 per cent of pupils take part in extra-curricular sport and around a dozen staff contribute to the after-school programme. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; teaching has improved to very good overall; achievement is very good overall and standards are well above average by Year 11.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship, personal social and health education and careers are well-integrated subjects. They have been developed to support one another. Other subjects also contribute well to citizenship

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Good | Good |
| Teaching and learning | Good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Not applicable |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Aspects of citizenship have been well-integrated into existing personal, social and health education programmes.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9, and are very good in Years 10 and 11, leading to effective learning.
- Very effective links with the community are being developed.
- The time allocated to separate lessons in citizenship is less than is usually found.

Commentary

Examination results

116. At present there are no examination results.

Standards and achievement

117. In the discrete PSHCE lessons observed, students show above average standards and achieve well across Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, students' standards are well above average and they, too, are achieving well. Year 7 students have a good understanding of the social consequences of smoking and the impact on others of passive smoking. Year 9 students demonstrate strong codes of responsibility and morality when debating theft. They put the topic into appropriate focus when comparing theft with other law-breaking activities. Year 11 students have firmly established and well-informed views about their consumer rights, and were observed to make perceptive comments when a visiting speaker from the Trading Standards Office addressed them during the inspection.

Teaching and learning

118. Teaching in discrete PSHCE lessons is, overall, good in Years 7 to 9, and is very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and have clearly made great efforts to inform themselves about the topics they teach and to provide themselves with appropriate resources. Effective use is made of interactive white boards, which speed the delivery of lessons. This is particularly relevant, as the allocation of time to PSHCE is less than

is usually found. Teachers, particularly in Years 10 and 11, fully involve students in discussion, are well focused in lessons, and most demonstrate considerable enthusiasm for the subject.

Leadership and management

119. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has been in post for just over a year. In that time, there has been a careful audit of existing provision, and the head of department is thoroughly familiar with the demands of the post, having attended appropriate in-service courses. Full documentation has been produced which details how the subject is being taught. The co-ordinator meets citizenship tutors twice a term, and this enables full evaluation and monitoring of how the subject is being developed. Assessment and reporting procedures are thorough. A comprehensive programme of visiting speakers enriches what is taught in the classroom. There is a lack of uniformity in the way in which citizenship is included into subject schemes of work, with some departments addressing aspects of citizenship more fully than others. Where it is included in lessons in other subjects across the curriculum, it is done so smoothly and effectively. Aspects of citizenship are very successfully reinforced in assemblies.

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 comparisons are available.

GCE AS level courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| MATHEMATICS | 12 | 100 | 74 | 16.7 | 34 | 35.09 | 31.3 |
| CHEMISTRY | 8 | 100 | 85 | 37.5 | 37 | 40.0 | 35.2 |
| BIOLOGY | 15 | 100 | 82 | 26.7 | 33 | 35.3 | 33.2 |
| PHYSICS | 7 | 100 | 82 | 42.9 | 36 | 40.0 | 34.3 |
| BUSINESS STUDIES | 18 | 100 | 89.1 | 27.8 | 31.7 | 36.7 | 35.4 |
| ECONOMICS | 13 | 100 | 86 | 30.8 | 42 | 34.6 | 37.0 |
| HISTORY | 14 | 100 | 92 | 50.0 | 37 | 40.0 | 37.8 |
| SOCIOLOGY | 6 | 100 | 83.7 | 0 | 33.6 | 31.7 | 33.8 |
| ENGLISH LANGUAGE | 10 | 100 | 92 | 40.0 | 30 | 45.0 | 35.6 |
| ENGLISH LITERATURE | 7 | 100 | 94 | 28.6 | 38 | 34.3 | 38.9 |
| FRENCH | 11 | 100 | 85 | 9.1 | 35 | 36.4 | 34.9 |
| OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES | 8 | 100 | 78.6 | 12.5 | 25.7 | 30 | 30.0 |
| GENERAL STUDIES | 15 | 90 | 79 | 29 | 26 | 31.3 | 30.0 |

GCE A level and AVCE courses

| Subject | Number entered | % gaining grades A-E | | % gaining grades A-B | | Average point score | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|
| | | School | England | School | England | School | England |
| MATHEMATICS | 37 | 100 | 93 | 59.5 | 52 | 93.0 | 84.7 |
| BIOLOGY | 22 | 100 | 92 | 45.5 | 36 | 90.0 | 74.1 |
| CHEMISTRY | 17 | 100 | 94 | 70.6 | 46 | 95.3 | 81.1 |
| PHYSICS | 29 | 100 | 93 | 51.7 | 43 | 91.0 | 78.6 |
| DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY | 17 | 100 | 95 | 82.4 | 35 | 102.4 | 76.5 |
| BUSINESS STUDIES | 38 | 100 | 96 | 73.7 | 33 | 98.9 | 76.3 |
| ECONOMICS | 24 | 100 | 96 | 33.3 | 46 | 81.6 | 83.0 |
| INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | 46 | 100 | 89.1 | 38.6 | 22.4 | 78.6 | 64.1 |
| SPORTS/PE STUDIES | 10 | 100 | 95.4 | 10 | 29.5 | 76.0 | 73.2 |
| ART AND DESIGN | 5 | 100 | 96 | 40.0 | 49 | 88.0 | 85.1 |
| MUSIC / MUSIC TECHNOLOGY | 7 | 100 | 98 | 14.3 | 42 | 60.0 | 82.1 |
| GEOGRAPHY | 15 | 100 | 97 | 60 | 40 | 93.3 | 80.9 |
| HISTORY | 50 | 100 | 97 | 48.0 | 41 | 85.6 | 81.2 |
| SOCIOLOGY | 15 | 100 | 95.4 | 73.3 | 39.6 | 93.3 | 79.1 |
| OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES - PSYCHOLOGY | 14 | 100 | 94.3 | 53.3 | 38.9 | 97.0 | 77.7 |
| ENGLISH LANGUAGE | 17 | 100 | 98 | 58.8 | 36 | 92.9 | 79.9 |
| ENGLISH LITERATURE | 16 | 100 | 98 | 62.5 | 44 | 95.0 | 84.3 |
| COMMUNICATION STUDIES | 16 | 100 | 98.3 | 50.0 | 36.8 | 95.0 | 81.1 |
| FRENCH | 10 | 100 | 96 | 30.0 | 46 | 78.0 | 83.0 |
| GERMAN | 9 | 100 | 96.3 | 55.6 | 44.3 | 88.9 | 82.1 |
| GENERAL STUDIES | 135 | 100 | 90 | 40.0 | 29 | 81.8 | 69.2 |

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus of the inspection was English literature and French.

English

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

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching with particularly effective planning that ensures very good learning.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the subject; they bring a maturity to their work and are keen to do well.
- Comments on students' work do not always indicate a target for further improvement.

Commentary

Examination results

120. Results in the AS and A2 examinations in 2002 were well above average for grades A-B. They improved still further in 2003, with clear value-added to students' learning.

Standards and achievement

121. Current standards of work in Year 13 are well above national expectations with all students on course to achieve at least a grade C in their examinations. The written work clearly demonstrates the reasons for their success. Those working at C grade level demonstrate effective analysis of "magic realism", explaining their views with reference to the text. The higher level attainers offer perceptive, thorough and strong personal responses to Edgar Allan Poe's writing, often analysing imagery very precisely. All students are well versed in the skills of debate and are confident in defending their arguments. They show a high degree of responsibility as many of them work hard on private studies out of lesson times. Students achieve very well throughout the course.

Teaching and learning

122. The quality of teaching is very good and secures very good learning. There are no weaknesses in teaching and one of the main strengths is the high level of challenge offered, which results in students producing some very mature work. Planning is very good and enables students to build on their learning at an appropriate pace. Relationships are strong, with mutual respect shown between teachers and their students. Teachers show good humour and treat the students as adults. Students trust their teachers and are very receptive to advice and

appraisal of their work, which, in turn, brings about improvement in standards. The sixth form enjoy their lessons, are determined to do well and show exemplary behaviour and attitudes.

Leadership and management

123. Leadership and management are good. The department works hard to ensure the students are given every possible opportunity to practise their skills and to build on prior learning. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection, mainly because planning is better and the quality of teaching has improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

124. The students' communication skills are well above average across subjects. Strengths were observed in most subjects, where the quality of note-taking and research skills was well above average. Speaking and listening are very well developed areas of communication and students are confident and articulate. Writing skills are well above average.

Modern Foreign Languages

The focus of the inspection was on French. Two lessons were seen in German. Students are achieving very well in German in response to the very good teaching they receive. Standards are well above average.

Provision in French is **good**

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Standards | Above average | Above average |
| Achievement | Good | Good |
| Teaching and learning | Good | Good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Leadership | Good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the present Years 12 and 13 are above average and students are achieving well.
- Students are highly motivated and have very mature attitudes to their work.
- Students greatly enrich their experience of French through frequent work with the foreign language assistant, work experience in France and very good use of the Internet.
- Most students underachieved at GCE A-level in 2002.
- Students would benefit from more opportunities to read French texts outside the classroom.

Commentary

Examination results

125. Results at GCE A-level were in line with the national average in 2002, as they had mostly been in previous years. In 2003, results were broadly similar to those of 2002. However, most students in 2002 did not do as well as predicted, given their strong GCSE results. Results at AS Level in 2002 were slightly above the national average and the majority of those students continued through to A2 level.

Standards and achievement

126. Standards among students in the current Years 12 and 13 are above average for the stage they have reached in the French course. Students in both years are achieving well and at a higher level than recent examination results. This is because students are positive about their study and bring this quality to the learning situation. In Year 12 students have especially good understanding of French spoken authentically and at native speed by their teachers and the French assistant. Their speaking, too, has made strong headway since the start of the course and around half of them have good accent and pronunciation. As in the main school, however, a few students still have very English-sounding pronunciation. In this respect there is scope for more systematic practice to help them improve. Students' writing is also above average. Their excellent folders and books show good signs of developing maturity and independence of thought, and increasing skill in using idiomatic French to express themselves. Students in both years would benefit from more regular reading of contemporary French texts in their spare time.
127. In Year 13, students' spoken French has developed well and reflects the productive contact they have with the French assistant. Most of them, too, have benefited greatly from a period of work experience in France, which has strengthened their confidence. Higher-attaining linguists write accurately and with a very good grasp of the rhythms and subtleties of the French language. Others, however, still show gaps in their understanding of more advanced grammar. In both years, very good use of the Internet and other media has enhanced the quality of students' work and increased their independent study skills.

Teaching and learning

128. Students learn well in the sixth form because teaching is good. Teachers use French very proficiently and students gain in understanding as a result of careful listening. A very pleasant working rapport exists between students and their teachers. This further contributes to good learning. Students themselves appreciate the quality of teaching they receive and are happy with the progress they are making. Teaching makes good use of texts for the potential they offer for exploiting language. Homework is rigorous and demanding, often expecting a high level of independent research. Assessment of students' work is thorough and helpful without being prescriptive. There is scope for using more argument and debate to encourage students to formulate and defend their views in French.

Leadership and management

129. The department is well led and managed at sixth form level. Good communication between staff ensures that students make the most of being taught by more than one teacher. Students have open access to the department's very good resources. Numbers studying French and German in the sixth form are healthy and on the increase, with a good proportion of boys among them. The main challenge facing the department is how to accelerate the transition between GCSE, with its relatively simple and prescribed demands, and the much greater linguistic expectations of the A-level course. Since the previous inspection, the department has made good progress in motivating all students and providing them with more to enrich and extend their experience of learning French.

MATHEMATICS

The focus of the inspection was mathematics.

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management ensure the expertise of teachers is used well.
- Students have very good attitudes to the subject which results in them achieving very well.
- Results in GCE A-level examinations are above average for the proportion attaining grades A-B.
- The quality of teaching is very good and, as a result, students make very good progress with learning.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
- Students are not always involved sufficiently in discussions.

Commentary

Examination results

130. In 2002, results were well above average in the AS examinations and above average in the A2 examinations for grades A-B. This represents very good achievement in relation to students' levels of attainment at the start of the course. Entry numbers are very high and continue to rise each year.

Standards and achievement

131. Overall, standards of work seen are well above average and students are achieving very well. In Year 13, students are making very good progress in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. All have successfully completed the AS modules with about two-thirds achieving the higher grades A-B. Students have a very good understanding of the concepts of calculus in pure mathematics and, in mechanics, of the forces associated with rigid bodies. In statistics, they have developed well their knowledge of statistical techniques for analysing data. Students doing further mathematics understand the use of matrices for representing transformations. Year 12 students are achieving well and attaining standards that are well above average at this stage in the course.

Teaching and learning

132. The quality of teaching is very good and secures very good learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong which ensures that new and difficult concepts are clearly explained. Relationships are very strong, with mutual respect shown between teachers and their students. The day-to-day marking is very good; it supports students' learning very well so that they know how well they are doing in relation to GCE examination criteria. Students show very positive attitudes to the subject; they make determined efforts to understand the work they are doing with the result that they achieve very well. Teachers' planning is very good; computers are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Discussions in lessons are generally good, but questioning does not always involve enough students in responding to answers.

Leadership and management

133. Leadership and management are very good. Teachers are well deployed to ensure that their very good expertise is used effectively and efficiently. The department works well as a team to ensure that students' work and progress is regularly checked. Assessment of students' work is very good; examination criteria are used accurately so that students know how well they are doing. The subject has made very good progress since the last inspection. The number of students attracted to the course continues to rise and the proportion of students gaining grades A-B is now well above average.

Mathematics across the curriculum

134. Due to the very high standards attained by students in Year 11 and their understanding of the work covered, they have no difficulties applying these skills in other subjects in Years 12 and 13. In biology and chemistry, students are competent at representing and analysing data. In ICT and economics, students handle numerical calculations confidently. In geography, students use logarithmic graph paper accurately to plot the profile of a river. Competency in mathematics across the curriculum in general is very high.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was biology. One physics lesson from each year was observed. Here, some very good teaching results in students making very good progress and achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment and to them repeating the well above average results of recent years.

Biology

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

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Leadership | Good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge, effective planning and use of resources are significant to students achieving very well.
- Excellent pre-written coursework notes support students very well in lessons and in their independent studies.
- Students are not challenged consistently by all teachers to design, make predictions and to form hypotheses.
- Formal monitoring of teaching and learning is not used systematically to share best practice.

Commentary

Examination results

135. The 2002 GCE AS and A2 results were well above average when compared with the results of all students in maintained schools. At A2 the results were not as good as in chemistry and physics, but results for male and female students were well above average and both did better than they did in their other subjects. Results have remained well above the national average over recent years. These results represent good achievement at AS and very good achievement at A2 and good value-added in the sixth form. In 2003, results were higher with a very significant increase in the number of students gaining A-B grades at A2. Realistic targets set for biology were met in 2002 and surpassed in 2003.

Standards and achievement

136. In Year 12, the majority of students are very successfully achieving the higher standards required of the post-16 examinations. In Year 13, all students are achieving standards at least in line with their prior attainment and are on course to repeat the results of recent years. Most students are achieving well above average standards in their coursework and display a very good level of practical skills. Levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT support their achievements very well. Students are confident answering questions and discuss their work very well. Higher attaining students bring excellent prior knowledge to lessons and are very able mathematicians, as in a Year 12 lesson when they were able to graph the effect of various limiting factors associated with enzyme kinetics. A number of students with English as an additional language are in the high achieving group and most are achieving very well in line with other students. Students' very good attitudes to learning are significant to their levels of achievement.

Teaching and learning

137. Planning and organisation are strengths of the department and are very significant to most students making very good progress. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their students and use assessment data to set targets, but do not involve the students sufficiently in self-evaluation. All teachers set homework regularly and mark it very well, but marking does not set short-term targets. In the best lessons, very clear learning objectives are shared with students, a variety of learning activities are used and excellent summary sessions secure the learning objectives and establish the starting point for the next lesson. In these lessons, all students are challenged throughout and progress at a very good pace. Whilst there are elements of this excellent practice present in all lessons there is a lack of consistency of practice across the department. This is because, outside the process of performance-management, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching does not take place with sufficient regularity to spread the very good practice that exists. Students are confident that they will achieve their ambitions in biology.

Leadership and management

138. The leadership of the subject provides clarity of vision and a sense of purpose. A well-motivated team is very effective and focused upon raising standards. Teachers are well deployed. Good use is made of assessment data to review and modify practice but not to monitor the success of inclusion strategies for some groups of students. There has been good improvement since the last report. Greater use of ICT is made in teaching and learning and some good links have been established with universities to enrich the curriculum. There has been an impressive increase in the number of students taking biology over recent years but this has led to too many lessons now being taught out of the laboratories.

Chemistry

Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and secures very good learning.
- The teachers are committed to the continuing raising of standards.
- Students are supported very well by a wide range of materials and resources.
- Teachers have excellent qualifications and a very secure knowledge of the subject.
- The students have a very positive attitude to their studies and there is a shared purpose to succeed with the teachers.
- There is not enough sharing of good practice.

Commentary

Examination results

139. Results in the 2002 GCE examination at AS and A2 levels were well above national averages. This continued the upward trend over the last three years. The results for 2003 were equally good, with just a slight drop in the proportion of students achieving grades A and B but a significant increase in those attaining grades A - C. Overall, taking into account the above average attainment of students starting the A-level course this represents good achievement at AS level and very good achievement at A2.

Standards and achievement

140. Students in both Years 12 and 13 show a very good ability to understand and apply some of the more difficult theoretical aspects of the subject. In Year 12, students make predictions about the structure of a wide range of molecules and apply their knowledge to new situations. They achieve well, building on their success at GCSE. In Year 13, students' achievement is very good because of the progressive understanding built up as the course progresses. They use this additional understanding very well to accelerate the rate of their progress. Students

have a good working knowledge of the mechanisms of organic chemistry and are able to explain the way organic substances react. They have also developed analytical skills and draw conclusions from data in a range of forms. The work files of the students are very well organised and there are many examples of research work going well beyond the basic demands of the A-level syllabus, showing both the interest of the students and the challenges to which they are prepared to rise. Although the students do have a very good understanding of the work there is, however, a reluctance to express themselves orally at any length in the classroom

Teaching and learning

141. Overall, the teaching is very good and results in very good learning. Lessons are well prepared and all the teachers are very well qualified with excellent knowledge of the subject. The quality of written work by the students is very good and their research skills achieve a high level of competence. Very helpful information sheets from the teachers reinforce work in class and practice exercises are marked scrupulously. Teachers support the research work of the students by giving helpful guidance on appropriate websites, and the students' files show evidence of extension work carried out by them as a result of their own interest in the subject. There is an extensive array of resource material developed by the teachers to help the students with their studies.
142. The relationships in the classroom are very good indeed and these contribute to an effective learning environment. Practical skills are developed to a high standard and students handle apparatus with a confidence born of familiarity. They relate practical work to theory and this was well illustrated in a lesson on quantitative analysis, where the students were not only carried out the investigation successfully and accurately but evaluated their results efficiently. The students showed a very good ability to analyse data in a lesson on spectroscopic analysis in Year 12.

Leadership and management

143. Leadership in the department is very good and there is a shared commitment to the continued raising of standards. Since the time of the last inspection, standards and achievement have continued to rise and the department has made very good progress. Management, too, is very good, but a system of mutual observation, beyond the requirements of performance-management, would help to share the good practice of the individual teachers across the department. Classes are shared between teachers who co-operate well to ensure that the work schemes are handled efficiently. Management of the curriculum is good. The department has very good resources of books, equipment and ICT, and the practical work for both students and staff is prepared immaculately through the committed work of the laboratory technician. The laboratories provide a spacious working environment, although some are in need of refurbishment, but the increase in numbers in the last few years has meant that some lessons have to take place outside a laboratory environment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus of the inspection was information and communication technology (ICT).

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good progress with their learning because of very good teaching and students' excellent attitudes.
- Very good leadership and management provide well-structured and supportive courses that enable students to achieve very well.
- The provision, through key skills for those students not taking specialist courses in ICT, is very good.
- The limited number of projectors inhibits demonstrations by teachers and students when clarifying and developing major learning points.

Commentary

Examination results

144. Results at GCE A-level and AS level for the department as a whole in 2002 were well above average and similar results were obtained in 2003. Computer studies results were very high.

Standards and achievement

145. By the end of Year 13, students following the computer studies course have a very good knowledge of how to program in Visual Basic. They apply these skills very well in different situations as teachers build up students' knowledge in a sequential and very well structured manner. Students following the ICT course, analyse problems faced by businesses very well and design an appropriate ICT solution to them. They have a very good understanding of the variables that need to be considered when using spreadsheets, for example, to sort and structure different scenarios such as fitness centre membership lists. Their essay writing improves as they move through the sixth form. By the end of Year 13, these essays are detailed, lucid, and relevant because of the emphasis that their teachers place on developing students' skills in answering examination questions. All students achieve very well, but a particular strength is the very good progress made by those new to the sixth form.

Teaching and learning

146. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is both supportive and challenging. Teachers show excellent command of the subject in the tasks that are set and in the advice they give to improve students' work. Marking is excellent. Specific points are given to help students improve. This is backed up by very good support for all the students, especially in preparing for their course work. Students are very well prepared for each task. Clear, specific information

and instruction sheets give very good guidance to students. However, the impact of demonstrations given by both students and teachers is lessened by the lack of projectors that are available. Teachers use practical activities very well to establish concepts that are then extended with more theoretical input. For example, a numbered line of students was used very well to illustrate the principles of 'bubble sorting'. Students' attitudes are excellent. They are keen to succeed and work hard in lessons and in their private study time. Relationships are very good. Teachers treat students as adults and cultivate an atmosphere of hard work leavened with humour. Most students complete their ICT and computer studies courses and many continue with these in higher education.

Leadership and management

147. Leadership and management are very good. Teachers work well together and learn from each other. They modify their methods accordingly to help students learn more effectively. Examination results and students' ICT skills are very well analysed and messages from this are used very effectively to modify teaching and introduce curriculum innovations. For example, the new key skills course provides very good experience and qualifications for those students who do not take ICT. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

148. Provision for students to use and extend their ICT skills in other subjects is very good. Access to the computer equipment is readily available to sixth formers and they make very good, independent use of these facilities. As a result, their ICT skills are well above average. In many subjects teachers also use ICT very well to develop students' learning. In mathematics, graphing software extends students' understanding of equations. Students are particularly adept in using websites for research in subjects such as economics, business studies and politics. Display software is used most effectively in history, for example, to illustrate the collectivisation process in Russia.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on geography, history and sociology. Two psychology lessons were seen, where teaching is good overall and students are achieving very well. Two lessons in religious education were observed where students were taught very well and their achievement is very good.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

| | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very Good | Very Good |
| Teaching and learning | Very Good | Very Good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very Good |
| Management | Very Good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students' achievement is very good.
- Fieldwork and coursework are of a consistently high standard.

- Lessons are prepared well and resources used very effectively to enhance students' learning.
- Marking not only gives students clear and accurate judgements, but also advice on how to improve.

Commentary

Examination results

149. When students start their GCE A-level studies in Year 12, their levels of attainment allow them to meet the requirements of the course. In 2002, results at GCE A-level were well above average. This represents very good achievement as all students gained a pass grade and 60 per cent gained the highest grades, A and B.

Standards and achievement

150. In the work seen during the inspection, students' standards overall on AS and A2 courses are well above average. By Year 13, students' skills and knowledge largely match those needed to gain a high pass grade. They use logarithmic and arithmetic graph paper to plot the long profile of a river, to recognize and explain the distinctive features in the three sections of a river's course and to understand tectonic processes. The effective use of work at a field study centre enables students to gain a very practical week long experience of river processes and the conflicts at work in a National Park. They use the skills gained in this way to support their coursework and fieldwork assignments, which are of a consistently high standard.

Teaching and learning

151. Overall, teaching is very good because lessons are well prepared and have a clear structure. Resources, including ICT, are used very effectively and their variety adds much to the learning experiences of students, which are also very good. Relationships are excellent and there is an obvious mutual respect between the teachers and their students. Short and extended pieces of writing are marked regularly and students are given clear and accurate judgements on the quality of their work. For example, students' essays on climate change were marked in a very detailed manner by the teacher to include a detailed analysis on how to improve their grades. Students are attentive and work effectively, responding to the very good teaching. They are not afraid to challenge findings or to argue their case when studying a new topic and most students can talk authoritatively on the aspects of the course they have studied.

Leadership and management

152. The subject is very well led and managed and the teachers work well together as a team with each responsible for one aspect of the course. Staff training is taken seriously and teachers keep up to date with their subject and syllabus changes. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection and a much greater proportion of students now achieve the highest grades A and B.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved to well above average since the last inspection.
- The very good teaching is giving students the skills to work by themselves and advice on how to improve.
- The subject is well led and managed; this promotes very good standards and the subject's strong popularity.
- The excellent attitudes of the students to the subject help them to make very good progress.
- Lower attaining students need to develop more confidence in their ability to analyse and to write at length with well-supported arguments.
- There is not enough systematic use of classroom observation of teachers to ensure consistency in quality and a sharing of the very good practice that exists.

Commentary

Examination results

153. In the GCE A-level examinations in 2002, standards were above the national average in A-B grades and for points scored. Students achieved as expected, although just below what they achieved in their other subjects. There had been a significant improvement in the previous three years, especially at grades A-B. This has been maintained in 2003, with results exceeding targets and students doing better than in their other subjects. There has been no significant difference in the attainment of males and females. AS results for 2002 were well above average. Although in 2003 fewer students attained the higher grades, most achieved as expected. Retention rates are very good, a mark of the subject's popularity.

Standards and achievement

154. Standards of work seen are well above the national average. In Year 13, students are achieving very well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. They have a very good understanding of the main concepts of the periods under study. Their high level of literacy enables them to select and record relevant evidence very effectively from a number of sources. This has been promoted by teachers' increasing emphasis on enquiry work, and their encouragement of students to work independently of the teacher, often in groups. This was seen in a Year 13 lesson, when groups of students used PowerPoint computer technology to present well-researched findings on collectivisation in Stalin's Russia. Students show confidence and fluency in expressing their views. Higher ability students discuss complex ideas with considerable insight. Their essays are also well structured, with well-chosen evidence from various sources to support their arguments. These skills are less developed in students of lower ability, who do not always build up confidence in their own ability when too

much guidance is given by teachers. Skilful use and evaluation of the interpretations of different historians is less developed in extended writing.

Teaching and learning

155. Teaching, overall, is very good. Consequently, students learn very well. This has been promoted by the teachers' enthusiasm and high expectations they set. Their very thorough marking also provides detailed guidance on how to improve. Students are made fully aware of the range of interpretations on a subject and effectively question the reliability of sources. Teachers use their very good knowledge of the subject to plan lessons which offer stimulating activities based on the students' own enquiry. There is a brisk pace to lessons and time is generally used well in setting deadlines and providing quick-fire questioning to check understanding. Teaching is less effective when, occasionally, the teacher becomes too controlling so that students are not sufficiently encouraged to challenge each other's thinking or to initiate their own ideas for essay work. The very good learning is also promoted by the very good relationships with the students and their excellent motivation. They are encouraged to work by themselves and readily respond. They also collaborate very well with others in producing presentations and discussions.

Leadership and management

156. The very effective leadership and management of the subject also promote the good teaching and learning. In displaying good organisation and strong commitment to the subject, the head of department sets high expectations of standards and effort. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with new schemes of work and the raising of standards and numbers taking the subject. However, monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching is undeveloped.

Sociology

Overall, the quality of provision in sociology is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | No previous report |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, with excellent features typical in most lessons.
- Students' attitudes are excellent because they have confidence in the teaching.
- Leadership and management are very good, especially with regard to planning.
- Planned ICT opportunities for research are limited.

Commentary

Examination results

157. GCE A2 results were well above average in 2002 showing very good achievement. This represents a significant improvement compared with the three previous years, when results were no higher than average. AS results in 2002 were above average showing good achievement. The proportion of A and B grades was lower in 2003 and AS results were better.

Standards and achievement

158. Students' achievement is very good and work seen is well above average. Communication skills develop very well throughout Years 12 and 13. After just two months of the course, Year 12 students demonstrate the ability to "think sociologically". By Year 13, they are confidently applying different sociological perspectives to ideas and issues. Investigation and thinking skills develop very well. Students are increasingly able to deal with abstract ideas and use appropriate terminology. They do not underestimate the complexity of "simple" questions such as "what is society?" The majority of students, and especially higher attainers, develop a very good academic style in the organisation and content of essays although with some lapses into personal opinion. This strong academic approach is also typical in lesson and homework activities with, for example, students conducting investigations into the findings of different sociologists. Lower attainers sometimes lose focus on questions set, showing some weaknesses in examination technique.

Teaching and learning

159. The most striking feature of the very good teaching is the very distinctive methods used. Students are, themselves, learning resources for each other. For example, they investigate different sociological perspectives and then share ideas and information with each other. They have complete confidence in this approach and they respond with excellent attitudes. The approach allows a very wide-ranging treatment of areas of study with a resulting excellent level of challenge. The teacher acts as a facilitator and the management of discussion is excellent. The teaching of literacy skills is excellent, with students using new vocabulary in context, arguing positions, challenging each other's ideas, and developing high-level skills in critical thinking. Planning is excellent with blocks of lessons organised in advance. Students are given very challenging choices regarding starting points for tasks, but learning always has clear structure and direction. Through very well managed discussion and through discrete tasks, students are constantly refining and synthesising their ideas. Resources give them very good access to complex ideas. Assessment is very well linked to examination requirements so that students know how to improve to gain higher grades.

Leadership and management

160. Leadership and management are very good. The very effective ethos for learning has been sustained during a period of staff change. Curriculum planning is very strong and the consistency of approach achieved is a key element in the effectiveness of provision. Students are "empowered" in their learning through the methods used. Action has been taken to address under-performance from last year in certain aspects of the course. ICT is a notable gap in the very good provision made.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

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

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Standards | Well above average | Very high |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in AS and A-level examinations are very high, with a very large majority of students gaining grades A and B.
- Excellent students' attitudes and very good teaching lead to very good achievement in both the product design and food technology courses.
- Leadership and management are very good and the use of data to set targets for the students and monitor performance is excellent.

Commentary

Examination results

161. In 2002, GCE A-level results were very high. In the A-level product design examination, all seventeen students were awarded pass grades, with fourteen achieving the higher grades A and B. The four students who studied the food technology A-level course also achieved pass grades, with three at the higher grades A and B. Results in 2003 maintained these very high levels at both AS and A-level, with similar proportions of students achieving grades A and B.

Standards and achievement

162. In the work seen during the inspection, the students are maintaining the standards set in previous years and their achievement is very good on the product design course at AS and A-level and the AS food technology course. At this time, there are no A-level food technology students. A significant majority of students in Years 12 and 13 demonstrate very good knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of these courses. Students make very effective use of ICT to support their learning and in presenting their design folders. Design and making skills are very well developed and they have a very secure grasp of subject vocabulary. On both courses, the students have very well developed analytical and evaluation skills, which they use to very good effect, for example, when analysing food products or artefacts made from other materials. These skills are also rigorously applied to the products that they design and make. Overall, the levels of achievement are slightly higher in product design than in food technology after one term of the AS courses.

Teaching and learning

163. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and know the standards and requirements of the syllabus to be studied. This, along with the excellent attitudes that the students have towards their work, ensures very good

achievement and progress. Lessons are very well planned and teaching methods are well matched to the content to be delivered. The resources for learning are very good and the students are very well supported and encouraged by the staff who maintain very high expectations of them.

Leadership and management

164. Leadership and management are very good. The department has maintained a very good level of improvement since the last inspection. The courses that are offered are very well organised and led within the design and technology department. All staff are involved in the teaching of AS and A-level courses and are deployed to make the most effective use of their specialist expertise, including in some team-teaching. There is excellent use of data for setting individual targets for the students, identifying areas for further improvement and refining the delivery of courses.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was art and design. Three lessons were seen in music where students are achieving very well in response to the very good teaching they receive.

Art and design

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

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Standards | Above average | Above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and the quality of teaching are very good and secure very good learning.
- Assessment and appraisal of work to track students' progress are very thorough, which ensures students achieve appropriately.
- Students are hardworking and inventive and the quality of their practical work is very high.
- Sketchbooks are too small and restrict the scope of work.
- There are limited photographic facilities.

Commentary

Examination results

165. Results in the AS and A2 examinations in 2002 were average for grades A-B, but above average for grades A-E. The cohort achieved in line with predictions. Results in 2003 were similar, but with a group where entry numbers trebled. This group, too, achieved in line with predictions.

Standards and achievement

166. Standards in the work seen are above average and represent very good achievement by students. Those taking GCE A-level art are generally talented in the subject and benefit from the intellectual stimulus offered to them on their chosen courses in either art or textile art. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Portfolios show that students carry out extensive research and experiments before embarking upon their final pieces. Much of the work is powerful and thought provoking. Individual projects show students' competence on drawing, painting and on applied art in three-dimensions. They often work on large-scale pieces, fully understand about depicting tone and texture and are skilled in translating themes. Sketchbook work is good, but the size of the sketchbooks often restricts creativity and presentation. Critical studies are usually well researched and presented, often enhanced by using ICT.
167. By the end of Year 13, students concentrate more on perfecting techniques, improving their literacy ability by speaking about their work and appraising that of others, questioning assumptions about art and developing their personal styles. They have made the transition between doing work at the suggestion of the teacher to planning their own and setting targets and timescales.

Teaching and learning

168. The quality of teaching is very good and secures very good learning. The teachers are highly skilled in their particular media, enthusiastic about art and design and inspire the students. Expectations are very high and the work planned offers high challenge and scope for students to develop and demonstrate individuality and expertise. Students are hardworking and have positive opinions about the courses; they consider that art and design is equally as demanding as their other subjects, but accept that art and design makes greater demands on their time. The quality of assessment and appraisal is very high. Teachers know the students well and track their progress to ensure that they achieve as well as they should. One-to-one discussions are invaluable, and are used very effectively to encourage students to self-appraise and make improvements on their work, thus raising standards and grades. Students are grateful for the support given to them and know that sub-standard work is not accepted.

Leadership and management

169. Leadership and management are both very good. The head of department is seen as a strong leader and teachers are very good role models. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. The criticisms in the last report have been addressed. The quality of teaching is higher, more students opt to take A-level courses; standards, overall, are above average; the scheme of work focuses on exploration and self-expression and students now benefit from visiting museums and galleries and working alongside real artists. In order to improve the quality of work and presentation, the department should consider extending the study sheet portfolios to replace the small sketchbooks that do not do justice to the students' capabilities..

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | Very good |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent, leading to very good learning and an enthusiastic approach by students.
- Standards in Year 13 are well above the national average, reflecting very good progress in the subject.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students' attitudes are excellent.
- Accommodation for theory work is too small for the relatively large AS group and restricts the opportunities to use a wide range of teaching and learning styles.
- ICT is not available for most theory sessions.

Examination results

170. In 2002, results in the GCE A-level were broadly average. In 2003, the average grade rose and the proportion of A and B grades increased.

Standards and achievement

171. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are well above average in Year 13. These students have realised that they need to be more adept at theory than in previous years, hence standards are higher. The quality of some of the work is very good and reflects very good independent research having been undertaken and completed. All of the students are very competent in their practical work and they are beginning to realise the importance of understanding the techniques and skills of being a coach. They are also aware of the aids to sporting prowess and the dangers associated with the use of banned substances. Their discussions highlighted some strongly held views backed up by researched supporting evidence. They are familiar with video techniques and analyse their movements in sporting events. Students now analyse most practical work they undertake, and research and evaluate accurately against the criteria most appropriate for the activity. Confidence in their own ability has helped them to overcome the anxiety of talking in front of the class. Year 13 students are working well above average and are achieving very well. Year 12 students are not at the same level, but are achieving well and attaining standards at this point in the course that are above average.

Teaching and learning

172. Teaching is very good, and at times excellent. When the accommodation permits, a variety of teaching aids and resources are used which makes learning much more interesting. When the

students are in cramped conditions, progress is still being made because of the positive relationships and excellent attitudes of the students. However, teaching and learning styles are limited in range in these conditions. The AS group of 22 students find the cramped conditions difficult and direct teaching has to be interspersed with short practical interludes in the hall. This slows progress and accounts for students' achievement being good rather than very good. The use of ICT is not possible in the smaller rooms. Very good achievement in theory lessons was observed when all teaching aids were readily available and the teacher was prepared for all contingencies. Expert knowledge is evident in the teaching, and in one lesson the topic was related to each of the number of different activities studied. Teaching is generally calm and relaxed, yet organised efficiently and planned effectively. Relationships are very good between staff and students. The impact on achievement is very good, particularly in Year 13. Practical sessions are used to refine practices and help students to analyse skilled movement in sport. Video examples are researched and discussed, making the analysis more relevant to each student. Work is assessed and targets set so that all students are aware of their progress through the course.

Leadership and management

173. The department is very well led and managed. Better accommodation and more use of ICT are being sought and senior management has acknowledged the accommodation issue and is tackling room allocation to ensure better facilities for theory work. The department is endeavouring to train more staff to teach GCE A-level in order to spread the load between the team. The large group in the AS examination course is difficult to manage, but the staff are continually devising methods to alleviate the workload. External courses are attended on examination procedures and the staff are prepared well for their roles as A-level teachers. A weekly afternoon of sport is organised for all Year 12 students, and those students who are not involved in examination courses in physical education, appreciate the opportunity for practical involvement.

BUSINESS STUDIES

The focus of the inspection was economics. One lesson was seen in law. This was part of the distance learning package available to students. The standards are very high and students' level of achievement is excellent.

Economics

Provision in economics is **very good**.

| Aspect | Year 12 | Year 13 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards | Well above average | Well above average |
| Achievement | Very good | Very good |
| Teaching and learning | Very good | Very good |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Leadership | Very good |
| Management | Very good |
| Progress since previous inspection | No previous report |

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned use of ICT as an integral part of learning is excellent.
- Specialist teaching provides a high degree of challenge.
- Resources are very well used, both to aid the learning of theory and to provide students with up-to-date information on contemporary issues.

- Accommodation is cramped in some rooms and some furniture is unsuitable for its purpose.
- There is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching methodology.

Commentary

Examination results

174. GCE A2 results were average in 2002 showing satisfactory achievement. They were above average for girls and below average for boys. These results were not typical compared with results in the previous four years, when they were at least well above average. AS results in 2002 were above average showing good achievement. In 2003 there were significant increases in A and B grades at both A2 and AS.

Standards and achievement

175. Standards in the work seen of students in both Years 12 and 13 are well above average. Research and investigation skills develop very well in Years 12 and 13, particularly through the use of ICT. Students demonstrate a very good grasp of theory, such as supply and demand analysis, and its application to case studies. In both instances, students use ICT with speed and accuracy to develop their understanding. Students gain a very good grasp of contemporary issues through their use of websites and other resources, for example, in investigating the advantages and disadvantages of congestion charging. In the same work, they use key terms, such as sustainability and integration, very well in context. Students develop higher level skills, such as critical assessment, well in Year 13, although this is a weaker area in Year 12. Higher attainers develop these skills particularly well, for example in assessing the state of the rail industry. For some lower attainers in Year 12, cost calculations and examination techniques in addressing the question set are relatively weaker areas.

Teaching and learning

176. There is a consistently high level of challenge in the very good teaching so that students learn to use and apply theory very well. Excellent planning results in ICT being fully integrated into learning. The use of ICT enables students to consolidate their learning of theory and its application. Students respond with very positive attitudes, partly because they have ownership of their own learning, particularly via the ICT provision. In the best teaching, students' responses are used very well to progressively build upon their understanding. In some teaching, students are left too long on individual tasks. Time is used very well with, for example, ICT giving students rapid access to relevant websites. Assessment is very thorough, although sometimes it lacks an overall summary of performance and how to improve. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are very well taught because they are fully integrated into the learning process. Examination requirements are clearly communicated to students because they are an integral part of the teaching.

Leadership and management

177. Leadership and management are very good, with a challenging ethos for learning created. The excellent planning of ICT opportunities significantly enhances the learning environment created. Resources have been well developed to give students very good access to both theoretical concepts and to contemporary issues. Enrichment activities add further interest and challenge to the curriculum provided. Staff collaborate very well in planning and development, but the sharing of the best practice regarding teaching methodology is not well developed. Some accommodation is too cramped for teachers to circulate and some of the furniture is not appropriate for writing activities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Sixth form grade</i> | <i>School grade</i> |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school | 2 | 2 |
| How inclusive the school is | | 1 |
| 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 |
| Overall standards achieved | | 1 |
| Students' achievement | 2 | 2 |
| Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | | 1 |
| Attendance | 1 | 1 |
| Attitudes | 2 | 1 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 1 | 1 |
| Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | | 2 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | | 2 |
| The quality of teaching | 2 | 2 |
| How well students learn | 2 | 2 |
| The quality of assessment | 2 | 2 |
| How well the curriculum meets students needs | 2 | 2 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | | 1 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 | 4 |
| Students' care, welfare, health and safety | | 1 |
| Support, advice and guidance for students | 2 | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on students' views | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 1 | 1 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 4 | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | | 1 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 2 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of management | 2 | 2 |

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

