

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE COLLEGE

Nunhead, London

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 100857

Headteacher: Dr F E Tope

Lead inspector: Felicity Golding

Dates of inspection: 19th - 22nd January 2004

Inspection number: 260078

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Male
Number on roll:	720
School address:	Hollydale Road Nunhead London
Postcode:	SE15 2EB
Telephone number:	(020) 7639 0106
Fax number:	(020) 7277 5471
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Doran
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd November 1988

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COLLEGE

St Thomas the Apostle College is an inner-city boys' comprehensive school which educates 720 students. It is a voluntary aided school with a Roman Catholic foundation. Boys come from a wide area across south London to attend the college and it is oversubscribed.

The population of the college comprises a very high proportion (85 per cent) of students from minority heritages, with African and Caribbean groups predominating. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with a mother tongue that is not to be English (32 per cent) is very high, although the number at an early stage of learning English is very small.

Students' standards when they enter the school in Year 7 are below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is average; they have mainly dyslexia, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and difficulties in speech and communication. The percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. However, the student population represents the full range of abilities including gifted and talented boys.

The college's training centre is used to provide courses for teachers in neighbouring schools and initial teacher training courses for new entrants to the profession.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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12191	Chris Moxley	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language
20747	Maureen Hanke	Team inspector	Music
11526	Mike Hodkinson	Team inspector	Physical education
11751	David Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31385	Neil Gillespie	Team inspector	Science
15929	David Sheppard	Team inspector	Art and design
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Thomas the Apostle College is an effective school. It provides sound value for money. Students from all backgrounds achieve well in a caring environment where all are committed to learning.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- A very good ethos successfully underpinning the school's statement of intent "Achieving Excellence with Care".
- Very good vision and leadership from the Principal of the College.
- Good teaching by hardworking staff who have high expectations of their students.
- High level of personalised care for individuals.
- Good achievement with results at GCSE well above the average for boys.
- Standards in mathematics are above average.
- Very good attendance, well supported by parents.
- Unsatisfactory provision for information and communication technology (ICT).
- The use of financial resources has not been sufficiently related to the college's priorities for development.

The college has **continued to improve** since the previous inspection. Standards have risen in science and provision has improved in French. It has developed a system to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The weaknesses in accommodation for science have been removed with the completion of the new science block. This has also allowed health and safety issues to be addressed. Care is taken to minimise disruption for students with special educational needs who are withdrawn from mainstream classes for additional support. There has been insufficient improvement in ICT largely due to staffing difficulties which have impeded the provision of sufficient curriculum time in Years 10 and 11. Standards at GCSE have not improved in design and technology. Overall high standards have been maintained at GCSE. The quality of provision in English has improved and the ethos of the school remains very good. The school has successfully bid to become a specialist mathematics and computing college.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The achievement of students from all backgrounds is good when the level of their performance on entering the school is taken into account. Standards at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory. GCSE examination results are in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations with students achieving very well. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are good; in writing they are average. Standards in science are satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance rates are very good. Punctuality is satisfactory.

Students' spiritual and moral development is very good; their social and cultural development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good in most subjects and there is some very good teaching in Years 10 and 11, especially in geography, mathematics and science. Teaching is effective in English, French, history, physical education (PE), drama and art and design and students learn well leading to high levels of achievement. Students with special educational needs learn very well as a result of appropriate teaching methods. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology and information and ICT. Teachers set helpful targets to help boys learn in Years 10 and 11 but are inconsistent in the effectiveness of marking in Years 7, 8 and 9.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is mainly broad and balanced, including drama for all in Years 7 - 9 and vocational GCSE courses in art and design and business studies in Years 10 and 11. It fails to adequately meet the requirements for ICT and citizenship. Enrichment opportunities are good and participation in sport is very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory with poor acoustics and a poor state of decoration in some classrooms. Accommodation for PE is very poor.

Care, guidance and support for students are good. Boys receive good personal and academic guidance and are well supervised each day. Systems for seeking and acting on their views are unsatisfactory. Partnership with parents is good. Links with the religious community are strong and those with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership by the headteacher is very good. He gives a clear sense of purpose and direction with a relentless focus on high standards. Management by the senior leadership team is good. Very good use is made of the training school to overcome the difficulties of recruiting qualified teachers. Some classes are large despite a high overall level of staffing, which has contributed towards a budget deficit. The principles of securing the best value have not been securely embedded in financial management. Some departments are well managed but there are inconsistencies in the quality of leadership of subjects. Governance is **satisfactory** overall. The governing body has a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses, shares the vision of the staff and supports and challenges the senior managers. However, it has failed to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements for the teaching of citizenship throughout the school, ICT in Years 10 and 11 and to provide the legally required information for parents in the prospectus and annual report to parents.

PARENTS' AND BOYS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents strongly support the school, but would like the college to seek their views regularly. Students like being at the school and feel they are expected to work hard. Boys would appreciate the chance to be consulted.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Embed assessment for learning into classroom practice, improve teachers' understanding of National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 and make better use of students' performance information.
- Continue to address inconsistencies in the quality of departmental leadership.
- Ensure the principles of best value are used to gain the best value for money.
- Involve and respond to the views of students about the school.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure sufficient curriculum time is given for all students to study ICT throughout the school.
- Provide lessons in citizenship and improve personal, social and health education and knowledge of employment.
- Governors should remedy the gaps in the school's prospectus and publish an annual report for parents as required by law.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards at GCSE are **in line** with the national average and **well above** those in similar schools. Achievement is good. The achievement of gifted and talented students is very good and those with special educational needs achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory and performance in the national tests in 2003 was broadly in line with the national average.
- Overall, throughout the school, the achievement of students is good when their performance in national tests at the age of 11 is taken into account.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Good standards are achieved at GCSE in English, mathematics, science, history, music, PE and drama.
- Very good standards are achieved in geography.
- Standards in design and technology, French and citizenship are below what is expected and students' achievements in these subjects are unsatisfactory.
- Competence in the use of ICT across the curriculum is not as good as it should be.

Commentary

1. The National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were in line with the national average. There were variations between subjects, with mathematics results being above average, those in science average and those in English below average. English results are relatively weak because boys' standards in literacy are low on entry to the school, particularly in writing. Although progress is good subsequently, there are still shortcomings that continue to affect their performance in this and other subjects.
2. Over the last five years, the improvement in the school's results has been above the national trend and results in mathematics and science are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Overall, results in 2003 were better than those in 2002 when results in all three subjects were below the national average.
3. In 2003 results were in line with the national average for students with five or more passes at grades A*-C and well above average for those with five or more grades A*-G. In comparison with the results achieved by boys nationally those achieved at the college were well above average. Students' results were also well above average when their earlier standards at the end of Year 9 are taken into account. Results in mathematics, geography, drama, PE and religious education were good whereas those in design and technology, ICT and French were significantly below average.
4. The standards of work of students currently in Year 9 are average for the most part. Achievement is good, however, because although standards when they enter the school in Year 7 reflect a wide range of prior attainment, they are below average overall. Students make good progress during Years 7, 8 and 9 because of effective teaching and very positive attitudes to learning. Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and students are on course to do well in this year's national tests. Standards in music are also above average. In other subjects standards are in line with what is expected. Standards in citizenship are below average because there is insufficient provision for this subject. Students achieve well in all subjects except design and technology, ICT, art and design, PE and citizenship where achievement is satisfactory.

5. In Years 10 and 11 standards overall are above average and students achieve well. Good standards are achieved in English, mathematics, science, history and music. Standards in geography are very good. In PE standards are good; in ICT standards are average; they are below average in design and technology and French.
6. Achievement is good in all year groups. This is mainly due to the very positive attitudes of the students and the good teaching that they receive especially in geography, mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory in French and technology. The achievement of those who are gifted and talented is very good. Students with special educational needs achieve very well in both key stages as a result of well-planned provision and thoughtful teaching. A very high proportion of these students achieve passes at GCSE. Students with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily in all years.
7. Standards of literacy are satisfactory overall. Standards of reading are good and the boys show confidence in their speaking and listening. Standards in writing are average. Students show good competence in mathematics when used in other subjects. Their skills in using ICT across the curriculum are below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.6 (31.0)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.6 (32.5)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.7 (32.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 147 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	54 (53)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (93)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	35.8 (34.7)	37.1 (34.7)

There were 129 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' attitudes are very good; they take a pride in being at the college and their level of satisfaction with the school is high.
- Behaviour is very good and the rate of exclusions is low.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.
- Attendance is very good and contributes to the good standards achieved by the students.
- Punctuality is sound.

Attendance

8. Attendance is very good. Over the last three years it has been consistently higher than the national average and there are very few instances of unauthorised absence. The improvement

mentioned in the last inspection report has been sustained and built upon successfully. Above all, the high level of attendance reflects the positive ethos of the college and its good partnership with parents. Additionally, there are very effective procedures in place to monitor boys' attendance and parents are contacted quickly in the case of unexplained absences. Punctuality to lessons is sound but some boys arrive late to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Commentary

9. Boys are proud to belong to the college. They are well aware of its record of success in public examinations and confident that they will be helped to do well. Their progress is monitored carefully and they have a good idea of what they have to do to succeed. Students are highly motivated and fully committed to the culture of achievement and the *can do* philosophy which is one of the most striking features of the college. They are very conscious of the benefits of the Catholic ethos that pervades their daily experience and are able to articulate this readily to visitors. Their relationships with staff are very good and they feel valued as individuals. The way the college promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, is excellent and is a particular strength. Students are satisfied that the college provides a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, with very good opportunities for sport and the arts and are eager to take part.
10. Behaviour is very good and the moral development of the students is a very strong feature of the work of the college. There are well-defined rules with regard to conduct and personal appearance and boys know exactly what is expected of them. They work hard, are smartly turned out and courteous. Teachers insist on very good standards of behaviour in lessons and there is a very visible staff presence at breaks and lunchtimes. Staff are supported by a team of prefects who fulfil their roles well. For the most part, however, boys are self-disciplined and take responsibility for their own behaviour. There is, moreover, a good sense of community and boys hold the view that dealing with the misbehaviour of a small minority is a shared responsibility not one just left to their teachers.
11. The college's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are very effective. Unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with quickly and without undue fuss. There is very little evidence of bullying, racism and other forms of harassment. When a student's misbehaviour causes concern a plan is put in place to support the individual concerned. This usually results in a positive outcome. The number of pupils excluded from the college is low compared with the national average.
12. Given the very positive attitudes of students and their high standards of behaviour, the college would do well to consider further ways of providing opportunities to encourage their social development. At present, although prefects meet with staff, the college has no systematic approach to consulting the boys regularly about issues that concern them and taking their views into account when determining key priorities for improvement. Boys would appreciate the chance to make their voice heard.
13. There are a number of issues with regard to promoting the students' social development that need to be addressed. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is currently unsatisfactory. Careers education and guidance are only partly in place and not very effective in supporting the boys' future roles and life in a diverse society. Currently,

little use is made of business, industry and the wider community in the area. Work experience and placements are arranged in an 'ad hoc' fashion and no link courses with local colleges, employers or training providers are currently available.

14. The boys' spiritual awareness is very good. The college is very effective in developing an ethos which allows students to value themselves and others. They are well able to discuss their beliefs and values without hesitation or embarrassment. The strong Catholic ethos is reflected throughout its daily life and its partnership with the church and the parish has a very profound impact on the boys' personal development. They show concern for those around them and have compassion for others beyond the school. This is reflected in the generous contributions to charitable causes.

15. Cultural development is good. Students are aware of their own cultural heritage and are encouraged to value it. This is not emphasised unduly, however, since the college is clearly determined to establish its own cultural identity and values. This is done very effectively. There is also a good recognition that it is important to widen the boys' cultural horizons so that they will be well equipped to fulfil their potential as adult members of society. Boys are also keen to participate in a wide range of music, drama and art activities and the college makes good provision for this.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	106	1	1
White – Irish	52	4	0
White – any other White background	36	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	29	0	1
Mixed – White and Black African	10	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	20	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	131	13	0
Black or Black British – African	294	15	1
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	35	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** and effective in promoting students' learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** throughout the school and students **learn well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers have good command of their subjects.
- They plan their lessons well.
- Students are encouraged to do well and teachers set high expectations.
- Students work hard in lessons and produce good work.
- Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science.
- Students do not learn enough in ICT.
- Homework is set but could be used more effectively to extend students' learning.
- Teachers' assessment in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not always ensure that students know what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

16. The proportion of good lessons has increased since the last inspection. In Years 7, 8 and 9 teaching is good with over half of lessons being good. In Years 10 and 11 the proportion increases to three-quarters of all lessons being good or better with nearly a quarter being very good or excellent. This shows good improvement since the last inspection despite some difficulties the school has faced in recruiting well-qualified teachers in some subjects over the last two years.
17. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, French, history, music, art and design and PE and very good in geography especially in Years 10 and 11. It is satisfactory in design technology and ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 and for those who study ICT to GCSE level. Learning in ICT is unsatisfactory, for the majority of students in the upper school, due to the lack of a co-ordinated teaching programme. A few lessons were seen in drama and business studies and here the teaching is effective. Boys enjoy lessons in these subjects and achieve well.
18. Teachers have a good command of their subjects and know how to present them in an engaging way. Students acquire a good understanding of the topics they are learning. Teachers plan their lessons well and students know what they are going to learn. In the good or better lessons, teachers choose approaches that are varied and interesting. Teachers keep the pace of lessons moving and students learn well as a consequence. For example, in art and design, teachers help students to complete work by reminding them of how much time they have left. In history, there is a good focus on developing students' learning skills through prompts which help them think and deepen their understanding.
19. A major strength of the teaching is the consistent way teachers insist on high standards of behaviour in lessons. This leads to a good learning environment where boys work hard, listen to the contributions of others and when required, concentrate well for substantial periods of time. Most lessons are characterised by a very good quality of relationships between students and staff. The teachers show they like the boys and there is good humour in many classrooms. Occasionally, however, teachers' voices are very loud when teaching the whole class and this can lead to an uncomfortable environment.
20. Less effective lessons often have an overemphasis on a didactic approach with an insufficient variety of teaching methods. Such lessons take into account neither the different ways students may prefer to learn, nor their different abilities. Teachers' expectations of what can be achieved are too low and the pace of learning drops so that students do not make the progress of which they are capable. The range of teaching resources is limited and, in particular, there is insufficient use of computers for both teaching and learning.
21. Gifted and talented pupils are well supported in their learning in most subjects. In mathematics, for example, they were inspired to investigate the properties of number in an AS lesson and in science able students are encouraged to undertake independent work. In French, able students are encouraged to evaluate one another's presentations.

22. Students with special educational needs learn very well as a result of appropriate teaching methods and good collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers are informed well of students' needs through good-quality individual education plans, which are regularly updated.
23. The teaching of students who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is unsatisfactory, because there is no structured scheme of work and lesson planning is insufficiently formalised. There is good liaison between teachers over key vocabulary for these students in some subjects, but this is not ensured across the whole curriculum. Those who are not at an early stage of learning English are taught well.
24. Assessment supports learning well in Years 10 and 11 where targets are set for individual students. Where this happens, students' work is more focused and they make good progress and report that they know what they must do to improve. This has had a good impact on the achievements of students in these years. However, this practice is not systematically used throughout the school in Years 7, 8 and 9. In these years there are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and in the quality of the feedback given to students. Teachers do not have a secure enough understanding of the National Curriculum levels in subjects at Key Stage 3. They do not use detailed information about students' earlier levels of achievement sufficiently well to be sure they meet their different needs. The setting of worthwhile homework is inconsistent.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 113 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	24 (21%)	45 (39%)	42 (37%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The provision for the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is **satisfactory**.

The curriculum is mainly broad and balanced, with an emphasis on academic subjects in Years 10 and 11. It fails to adequately meet the requirements for ICT and citizenship. The school provides a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, with very good opportunities for sport and the arts. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Key Stage 3 is broad and balanced, providing equality of access and opportunity for all students.
- Very good provision for students with special educational needs.
- Enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities.
- The positive impact of the training school on staffing.
- Introduction of vocational courses in Years 10-11.
- Provision for ICT and citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- Overall accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

25. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 caters well for the differing needs of particular groups of boys and is broad and balanced. Boys in Years 10 and 11 have access to an appropriate range of courses and the timetable is arranged to enable each boy to study his preferred choice of subjects. The recent introduction of more vocational opportunities through double award art and design and business studies at GCSE level will better prepare the boys for employment or

further study. Work experience and the broader benefits of work-related learning are currently not in place.

26. The allocation of time to English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. There are opportunities for the most able boys to choose three separate science subjects in Years 10 and 11. The allocation of time for ICT is not properly planned across the curriculum, with insufficient timetabled lessons in Years 10 and 11 and, as a result, the school is not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum in the subject.
27. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs through a suitable combination of in-class support and withdrawal in small groups. Pupils with sensory and physical impairments are supported well so that they can fulfil their academic potential.
28. An enrichment programme is provided for boys identified as gifted and talented which provides them with opportunities to work with students from other schools and to visit universities and cultural centres in London. The 'Aim High' programme is used to raise the awareness of boys to the possibility of studying university courses after studying in a sixth form or college.
29. In Year 11 good support is provided for the boys when they are deciding on their options for study post-16. The school works with their Connexions Adviser to provide mentor support to targeted students and uses the progress file to record their experiences in preparation for interviews. Careers education and guidance for younger students is only partly in place and not very effective in supporting the boys' future roles and life in a diverse society. Currently little use is made of business, industry and the wider community to broaden the boys' understanding of employment opportunities open to them.
30. The school meets requirements for sex education. The provision for PSHE and citizenship is currently unsatisfactory as the National Curriculum requirements for citizenship are not fully met.
31. The school has taken account of the National Strategies for Key Stage 3 Literacy and Numeracy, but has yet to ensure that these developments are embedded across the curriculum. It is not effective in evaluating these developments on a regular or systematic basis in order to assess the impact on the boys' learning or to continue the best features into Key Stage 4.
32. Enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular provision at the school are good. Students of all abilities enjoy and benefit from enrichment activities, which include exchange visits, sports tours to Europe and well attended field trips in humanities subjects, alongside trips and visits in drama and art and design. Currently a group of Year 10 boys are working on producing a set of three-dimensional masks for the play *Much Ado about Nothing* following gallery visits and meeting stage designers. They took on the role of designers and had to consider not only the artistic requirements but also the economic constraints.
33. The College has sufficient staff to teach the curriculum and any problems of recruitment and retention are tackled quickly and often in a very enterprising way. Staff are well qualified and experienced and the impact of the training school has ensured a regular supply of good quality staff who fit into the school ethos effortlessly. The school is well supported by trained support staff.
34. In some subjects, deficiencies in accommodation and resources hamper students' achievement. Accommodation in PE is particularly poor and this was the position at the last inspection. Music and French classrooms have poor acoustics. There appears to be no planned programme of ongoing refurbishment and redecoration. Accommodation in science has been significantly improved due to the substantial building programme.

35. The care and management of resources adversely affect pupils' achievements in some subjects and some learning resources are inadequate. The provision of ICT resources across the curriculum and their use to enhance learning in all subjects are unsatisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Care, support and guidance for the boys are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The boys receive good personal and academic guidance.
- They are well supervised each day.
- A good induction programme prepares the boys and their parents well for starting at college.
- There are no formal systems for consulting the boys.

Commentary

36. The college makes sure that boys of all abilities are well supported throughout their college career, so that they can do their best. The induction process focuses well on ensuring that the boys and their parents understand the college's ethos and expectations. This means that they can settle in quickly when they start. Subject teachers and tutors keep boys and their parents regularly up to date with how well they are getting on at college. Tracking sheets are particularly useful for this in Years 10-11. The learning mentors are well deployed to help raise boys' achievement and their aspirations. Additional support for boys is available where necessary outside lessons and senior staff mentor those who need extra help before exams.
37. Good numbers of teaching staff supervise the boys around the building and the site each day and this means that break and lunchtimes are orderly and civilised occasions. The enquiries office is a helpful point of contact for the boys and office staff look after sick and injured boys sympathetically and school caretakers maintain a safe school site. First aid and health and safety issues from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed.
38. Although prefects have had meetings with senior staff, the college has no systematic approach to consulting the boys regularly about issues that concern them and incorporating their views into school development planning. Boys feel that they would appreciate the chance to make their voice heard.
39. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils with a wide range of special educational needs are well looked after. The arrangements for educating these pupils are very good. Pupils at risk of exclusion are given very good support by the college's St Mary's Pupil Inclusion Unit, which enables them to continue their studies in a closely structured environment and to be reintegrated into mainstream classes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is **good**. Links with the parish are good and links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents support the college's ethos and their sons' learning very well.
- The college gives them good encouragement to do this.
- The church and the parish have a strong influence on the boys' personal development.
- The governors do not provide parents with all the information required by law.
- Reports to parents on their sons' progress are inconsistent in quality.

Commentary

40. Parents are very proud of the college and pleased that their sons have places and so they support the college in every way they can. They uphold the college's decisions on discipline, make sure that their sons do their homework and rarely miss parent-teacher consultation evenings.
41. The college provides parents with good everyday channels of communication, for example, through the journal and jotter system and through regular fortnightly newsletters. The parents' focus group, which is soon to be revived, has proved a useful means of seeking parents' views on school improvement during the last year.
42. Parents are well informed about their sons' progress through the carefully planned system of consultation evenings and through tracking sheets in Years 10-11. Reports to parents on their sons' progress are satisfactory but inconsistent in quality. They vary from subject to subject and are better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7, 8 and 9. The best reports focus clearly on how well boys are doing in the subject and what they need to do to improve. Some reports, though, put too much emphasis on the boys' behaviour in lessons, or give targets which are too vague to be helpful to parents or students.
43. The information which the governors give to parents is unsatisfactory. It has not improved since the last inspection. The prospectus leaves out many details required by law and the statutory annual report to parents is not published at all.
44. The college's strong Roman Catholic ethos is reflected throughout its daily life and its partnership with the Church and the parish has a very profound impact on the boys' personal development. Visits from priests and sisters, work for the parish through the St Vincent de Paul Society and the collecting for charities, all help boys to make their contribution to the wider community. They welcome the chance to do this and recognise its value. The college has well-established classes for adults from the local community to develop their ICT skills and gain a qualification.
45. The college maintains good links with the large number of primary schools from which their students come. In particular, boys with special educational needs are well supported because of this good liaison. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately consulted about their sons' needs and informed about their progress. However, new parents are not sufficiently informed about the school's arrangements for special educational needs, as the requirement to publish these and the name of the co-ordinator are not met in the school prospectus. In addition, the governors do not report annually to parents on the progress made in implementing the school's special educational needs policy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the college are **good**. The quality of the leadership is good with very strong leadership from the principal. The college is managed effectively and the support given by the governing body is sound although there is a failure to comply with some legal requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong commitment to continued development for all staff.
- A very well-run training school supports the recruitment of good teachers.
- Inconsistent quality of departmental leadership.
- Self-evaluation not fully embedded.
- Best value principles have not been securely embedded in financial management.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,469,466	Balance from previous year	38,486
Total expenditure	3,519,863	Balance carried forward to the next	-11,911
Expenditure per pupil	4,855		

Commentary

46. The college is well led. The principal is a very good role model and leader for the whole school community. He is ably supported by the experienced and reflective associate principal and hardworking and committed senior leadership team. The leadership is dedicated to ensuring the students achieve highly within a firm and caring learning environment. The college's mission statement "Achieving excellence with Care" which underpins everything the school does, is being successfully implemented. The leadership has been able to maintain the high standards of achievement since the last inspection and to deepen the excellent ethos throughout the school, where all boys are helped to thrive and to develop into articulate, mature and sensible young men.
47. The leadership has a good sense of strategic vision, maintaining a relentless focus on continually improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school. To this end the principal's overriding priority over the last few years has been to ensure there are sufficient well-qualified teachers and learning assistants to support the students' learning. Good use has been made of the college's own training school, the Uden Centre, in order to provide initial teacher training opportunities. Currently the school supports teachers undergoing initial training and the training of two graduates on the Teach First scheme. Over the last few years this has allowed the college to be able to recruit teachers and, through its training programmes, to increase the professional qualifications of many of its staff.
48. Underpinned by the religious nature of the school, the principal and other leaders act as witnesses to their own high principles and inspire the boys to work hard and to have high ambitions for themselves. The curriculum the school offers is largely traditional in the firm belief that all students should be supported to gain the highest qualifications they can in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. Policies and other documentation are clearly written and there has been appropriate training for all staff. Teaching assistants are very well qualified and several have pursued studies to a high level through the school's Uden Centre.
49. The governing body is supportive of the school and corporately sets a direction for the school and formulates policies that reflect its Christian nature. It is well organised and the pattern of its meetings link well with the school's development cycle. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support developments in their "linked" departments. There is a business-like relationship between governors and senior staff in leading the school. However, some aspects of the governors' work are unsatisfactory. The governors have not ensured that the school fully meets the statutory requirements for ICT in Years 10 and 11 and for a formal teaching programme for citizenship throughout the school. There are also some aspects of the

school prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents that require attention in order to comply with the law.

50. Performance management is taken seriously and is delegated appropriately to subject leaders who monitor what goes on in classrooms. Some departments do this well and consequently are able to evaluate how well recent innovations have supported students' learning. Science, for example, is now making better use of data about the performance of different groups of students in order to plan how to improve achievement in GCSE classes this year. There is a good match between staff's personal objectives and those selected as whole school priorities for improvement although the lack of up-to-date job descriptions for all staff leads to some imprecision in setting goals. Staff are given appropriate opportunities to improve their skills and experiences. There is an impressive record of teachers and learning assistants gaining both first and higher degrees, an example set by the principal's doctorate.
51. The college needs to embed its self-evaluation processes more firmly. It has begun to establish procedures to evaluate how well it is doing with each head of department undertaking an annual review. These have varied in quality. The self-evaluation required for the inspection was honest and detailed, showing a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It was completed without the involvement of key staff and governors, however and its assessment was over-generous in a number of areas. Senior managers are undertaking detailed analysis of data about students' performance but the findings are not yet used effectively to inform practice throughout the school. A member of the senior management team has a new task of developing and clarifying the role of heads of department, which will ease the inconsistencies in the induction of new staff and in the interpretation of whole school policies.
52. Financial management has gone through changes over the last two years when expenditure exceeded the budget due to changes in grant allocation and increased staffing costs due to illness. The school is successful in recruiting or training teachers but staffing contact ratios are low despite some large classes. Heads of department generally have not had opportunities for financial management and their planning does not include costed priorities whose expenditure is monitored. The school has an agreed licensed deficit and has put measures in place to link more systematically its development priorities with planned expenditure. Finances are now being managed efficiently and with increasing effectiveness and managers increasingly understand how to get the best value from the money that they spend.
53. At the time of the last inspection the quality of the leadership and management of the school was very good but monitoring of teaching and learning was not yet consistent. This has now improved. The standards achieved are well above those of similar schools and the ethos of the school is excellent. Due to its failure to meet the requirements for ICT and citizenship and the high cost of staffing, on balance the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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 **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations of pupils.
- Strong subject expertise.
- Very good leadership.
- An inconsistent approach to assessment.
- Technical inaccuracies in language in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

54. Results have remained steady since the previous inspection. Progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is good. Attainment by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is broadly in line with the national average for all schools but well above the average for similar schools. GCSE examination results in literature are improving.
55. Standards in reading are good with students able to work out meanings in a variety of contexts. Their response to media texts in Years 10 and 11 is sophisticated and assured. They can appreciate the subtle effects of language and comment with precision and detail. Standards in writing are less secure and in this aspect of language the students make satisfactory progress.
56. Middle ability boys continue to make basic technical errors. This leads to a lowering of writing standards and does not build on the clear guidance provided in the school's spelling guide for Years 7 to 9 even though there has been a more consistent approach to grammar since the last inspection. Standards in speaking and listening are very high with boys developing exceptional performance skills by the end of Year 11 when they speak in role, linking ideas across different texts with confidence and flair.
57. Achievement is good. The pace of lessons enables boys to achieve high standards and to progress at a good rate in relation to their capability. Teachers persist and encourage boys to make detailed interpretations of the language of Shakespeare, for example. The students rise to meet high expectations with significant teacher support.
58. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. At best teaching involves engrossed pupils concentrating for sustained periods of time and judging their own work against well-defined time limits. They are highly motivated and make better than expected progress. Teaching methods are well selected and boys work diligently to interpret complex language and literature. Teachers challenge pupils by directing questions to more reluctant speakers, thus working hard to include and develop all students.
59. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good and this enables students to feel secure and well supported.
60. The assessment of writing is inconsistent across the department. Teachers work hard to respond to students' work but the messages given to them about how to improve are not always clear. At best, teachers help boys to identify errors, see how to improve and where to

seek further advice. The strengths of this approach are not always replicated by other teachers.

61. Leadership of the department is very good with clear priorities and dedication to the highest possible standards. The acting head of department has made English a high priority in the school and is beginning to tackle inconsistencies in assessment. Management is good. Teachers in English are clear about their roles and responsibilities and share the values of the department.
62. The lack of opportunity to use ICT, as planned in schemes of work constrains further development of the English curriculum.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Standards of literacy are satisfactory overall. Minimal use, however, is made of the display of key words in some classrooms, except in science. Despite the provision of a very comprehensive whole school spelling guide which is used productively to track spelling progress in Years 7-9, subject specific words and terms are not cross-referenced to this important whole school guide.
64. Standards of reading are good. Pupils in geography and science, for example, are confident in extracting information and reinterpreting it for their own use. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their reading through multi-sensory approaches to *Macbeth*, for example. This allows them to make progress through touching and looking in order to develop their understanding of plot and character.
65. Support for writing is currently an underdeveloped area of literacy. However, the recent production of a booklet as part of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, to support teachers in teaching non-fiction, provides them with a wide range of approaches. The sharing of this booklet with teachers, tutors and parents and monitoring of its use needs to be of the same high quality as the book itself. Literacy development has slowed down since the last inspection, not because of the imaginative work of the co-ordinator, but because of the lack of structured support across the school.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department provides good leadership.
- Teaching and learning are a strength in most lessons.
- Most pupils have a positive attitude to French.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- Two out of the three French rooms are acoustically poor and in need of redecoration.

Commentary

66. Since the last inspection standards at GCSE have dropped considerably, with results in 2003 well below average at grades A*-C (but in line with national averages at grades A*-G). However, one Year 10 boy gained an A grade, with six others gaining A* and A grades in Spanish, Italian or Chinese. Standards in the current Years 9 and 11 are below national expectations, but there is a significant improvement in Year 8 where standards are above what is expected. Students' pronunciation is often good or very good and their writing is mainly accurate; however, it is limited in range and there are few examples of extended writing.

Students' achievement over time has been unsatisfactory, but is now mostly good or very good.

67. Teaching and learning are good in general, with teaching in all lessons except one being satisfactory or better and in the majority good or very good. Despite the disadvantage of some very large classes, (for example 34 boys in Year 8) and a lack of in-class support for boys with special educational needs, teachers succeed in meeting the needs of the vast majority of their students. Activities are varied and interesting and teachers plan their lessons well and use and model the French language expertly. Learning is also good, with students making steady gains in skill and knowledge during their lessons.
68. The recently appointed head of department has introduced a good system of tracking the National Curriculum levels of boys in Years 7 and 8, but there are few records of students' attainment in other years. Marking, however, is well done and there are some examples of good peer assessment in lessons. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, although the use of ICT is under-developed. The head of department gives a good lead in developing a positive image for French and students respond equally positively in most, but not all years. The development plan is wide ranging and forms a good basis for further improvement.
69. Accommodation is a major weakness, with poor acoustics and decoration in two out of the three rooms. Resources are adequate apart from a lack of reading material in the library and in classrooms.
70. Although there has been a decline in standards since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in the last five months, which are already raising standards of attainment.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by students in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are good.
- Teaching is good and supports the good progress made by the boys in mathematics.
- Provision for the highest attaining boys, enabling them to achieve high standards, is very good.
- Teaching and learning generally lack sufficient variety and the provision of resources for the use of ICT and practical activities is unsatisfactory.
- Initiatives to raise standards of achievement in the application of mathematics to learning in other subjects are uncoordinated.

Commentary

71. Boys enter the school, aged 11, with standards of attainment in mathematics below the national average. Progress in learning is good and by the end of Year 9, in the National Curriculum tests, overall standards of attainment are above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. There has been a steady overall improvement in these results since the last inspection in 1998.
72. Students maintain good progress in mathematics during Years 10 and 11 and the proportions of pupils achieving grades A*-C and A*-G in GCSE examinations are consistently above national averages and well above those in similar schools. Good GCSE results have been maintained since the last inspection due to the hard work of the department as a whole. The college maintains good links with the large number of primary schools from which their students come. Boys identified by the school as mathematically gifted and talented are entered for GCSE one year early, in Year 10 and last year all achieved either A* or A grades. These

boys continue to study mathematics for AS level during Year 11. Students with special educational needs make good progress through both key stages and in 2003 all achieved at least a grade G in GCSE.

73. Achievement in using and applying mathematics within the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory but generally below that in the other aspects of mathematics because there are insufficient planned opportunities for teaching aimed at developing these skills.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school, but more consistently good in Years 10 and 11. When teaching is very good or excellent, teachers show a passion for mathematics, have very good relationships with students and use probing questions to stimulate, engage and motivate them. Such teaching ensures boys are inspired to gain meaningful insights into mathematics. However, occasionally the pace of teaching is slow and the learning activity chosen does not engage students. In these lessons teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and boys make very limited progress.
75. Lessons are usually well planned to have a good structure with clear objectives. There is usually a good pace to whole class teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics. They generally have high expectations and maintain a good standard of behaviour. Teaching promotes equality of opportunity and teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. However, learning in some classes is over reliant on textbook and worksheet exercises to practise and consolidate the skills that have been taught. Overall there is a lack of variety in the teaching and learning of mathematics. In particular, the use ICT and of practical and collaborative learning activities are undeveloped. The marking of pupils' work and the use of constructive feedback to help students understand how they can improve is inconsistent.
76. The teaching materials made available are effectively deployed, but the provision of resources, particularly for ICT and practical activities to enhance the curriculum, is unsatisfactory. The tracking of individual student attainments and the setting of achievement targets, particularly for GCSE, are good.
77. Boys' attitudes to learning mathematics are very positive. Most expect to do well in mathematics. The provision for the most able pupils, enabling them to achieve high standards is very good and is good for pupils with special educational needs. But the high turnover of teachers in the last three years has meant a lack of continuity for many students and inconsistencies in the application of department policies and standard procedures. This has restricted the capacity for significant improvements to be made in mathematics since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Standards in the basic skills of numeracy are generally good. In particular, students' ability to apply mathematical skills in science and geography makes a significant contribution to their achievements in these subjects. However, strategies to ensure that students are able to cope with the mathematical demands within the whole curriculum are uncoordinated across the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department has worked effectively to improve the provision in science.
- 2003 teacher assessments of standards in Year 9 are above national averages.
- Teaching is good.
- Statutory requirements for ICT in science are not met.
- Visual aids are poorly utilised and insufficient to meet modern teaching methods in science.

Commentary

79. Overall, standards observed in lessons and in the scrutiny of students' work are good. This is the result of a well-planned curriculum. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection.
80. Although GCSE results have been improving year on year, there has been a recent decline in the good progress made in Year 9. The college is addressing this issue with a strong emphasis on improving middle range grades by setting and monitoring targets for students. Since the last inspection the science department has introduced three separate science GCSE subjects for gifted and talented students. The curriculum for younger students is differentiated so that it is sufficient to challenge the most able and be stimulating for the least able students.
81. All students are set targets for achievement, which are precise and challenging. Students' progress is monitored and checked against these targets but the results of this initiative have yet to be seen in examination results. Teachers' assessments are in line with the National Curriculum results in Year 9.
82. Considerable learning takes place in lessons due to the fast pace and high targets set by the teachers. Students are enthusiastic and skilled in using algebraic equations. Students acquire very good investigation skills where fair tests and reliable results are gained. Students can work independently, but in most lessons observed they were not able to do this because the lessons were teacher directed and prescriptive.
83. Most students are aware of their progress and their attainment levels and are encouraged to aim higher. Many students are able to learn by discovery and therefore gain skills beyond expectations and they have a good knowledge and understanding of science. Certificates are awarded for students' excellence by the head of department.
84. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Students clearly enjoy science and they are complimentary about their teachers. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all lessons and good or very good in over three quarters of them. Teachers have established a strong working relationship with their students. Their enthusiasm within the classroom has encouraged students to produce some very good work. Good features include the good pace of lessons, high expectations of behaviour, the interesting content of lessons and feedback from tests and homework which is often positive and rewards students for good work.
85. In many lessons, however, teachers have a strong didactic style and speak with very loud voices, which leads to an uncomfortable learning environment. There is a strong departmental behaviour policy to maintain discipline and class management is a strength in many lessons.
86. Leadership and management are good. The department is well organised and proactive in managing improvements. There is an effective strategy in place which will ensure that the improvements that have been made recently will continue. The head of science has put in

place secure and well-researched schemes of work. They include many good educational features such as clear lesson objectives, clear mapping to the National Curriculum and consideration for the utilisation of resources.

87. The use of ICT in science is underdeveloped and does not meet National Curriculum requirements. This was an area for concern in the last inspection. Classes are deprived of facilities such as data projectors and data logging computers. There are students and staff talented in the use of ICT who would benefit enormously from such equipment.
88. In other respects, resources are good. Equipment is well maintained and the technicians are competent and respond rapidly to the needs of the department. The provision for technical support is adequate, but technicians are under considerable pressure to meet tight deadlines throughout the day. New science laboratories have improved the learning environment. Health and safety conditions are now good and risk assessments are adequate.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not guarantee a programme of study for all pupils in Years 10-11 and therefore is not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Examination standards reached by pupils studying GCSE ICT have fallen to very low levels.
- The standards reached in Years 7-9 are too low and pupils have not been given sufficient teaching time to cover the requirements of the programme of study.
- There is insufficient use of ICT throughout the curriculum and its introduction is still restricted due to insufficient development of the school network and lack of ICT equipment in subject areas.
- Steps have been taken to secure greater resilience in staffing arrangements and to begin a development plan for improvement.

Commentary

89. By the end of Year 9 standards in ICT are **poor**. The levels of attainment currently achieved by pupils are below those expected and are no greater than the standards now realised by pupils in primary schools at Key Stage 2. The achievement of higher standards is restricted by aspects of the current teaching programme in Years 7, 8 and 9, in that activities planned for work in class do not lead towards the development of higher levels of knowledge, skill and creativity. By Year 11, examination success achieved by students taking GCSE has declined to a very low level. In 2003 only seven per cent of the students entered for GCSE ICT achieved a grade in the range A* - C compared to the national average of 55 per cent. Remedial action by the school has now strengthened the teaching of GCSE ICT particularly in respect of coursework. Standards of boys' work inspected are now commensurate with the demands of their examination. Apart from the group studying GCSE ICT, most other pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not being taught ICT since very few of them follow the voluntary after school enrichment programme that is offered. Students' standards are not currently being developed elsewhere as the use of ICT across the curriculum is patchy and underdeveloped. The overall judgement must be that standards in ICT in Years 10-11 are **unsatisfactory**.
90. The quality of teaching and learning by Year 9 is **satisfactory**. Following a period of staffing uncertainty there is now a team of teachers working effectively and closely together to secure improved standards. They offer well-planned lessons, use appropriate teaching methods, establish good relationships with pupils and secure behaviour that is generally satisfactory. Work is assessed and pupils know what they need to do to improve. However, the teaching currently provided does not stretch the most able students sufficiently. Boys are taught how to

use ICT tools to communicate using text and illustrations often in the context of business but they are not yet challenged to develop methods of communication for many different audiences, to present ideas in a variety of ways, to use email and multimedia components and to develop a clear sense of audience. Spreadsheets are used by students handling numerical data for a football league table but they do not explore the effect of changing the rules underlying the scoring, predict the outcome or compare their models with real information. The current tasks set for students are often too prescribed and will not help them to attain Level 6 of the national ICT attainment targets. Enrichment of their programme has begun in Year 7 using the resources offered by the national strategy programme in ICT. At Key Stage 3 the school needs to offer teaching that is consistently good, providing demanding and imaginative challenges for pupils to secure the standards now expected.

91. In Years 10 - 11, the inspection of the teaching of ICT could only be sampled briefly due to the pattern of the school timetable on the days that inspectors visited the school. Teaching of GCSE ICT is now satisfactory.
92. The present management arrangements for ICT are new and steps are being taken to remedy previous difficulties. However, there are a number of key strategic initiatives in ICT that the school has not satisfactorily developed. The school leadership of ICT is **poor**. The deficiencies are:
 - Poor curriculum provision in Years 7, 8 and 9 due to insufficient time. The predominant theme of a business context is restricting pupils' understanding of the importance and ubiquity of ICT throughout modern society and culture.
 - Non-compliance with National Curriculum requirements at Key Stage 4. The present voluntary arrangement for pupils to undertake after-school ICT enrichment classes to achieve a short GCSE is not monitored properly and is little used. It does not constitute a legally guaranteed programme of study. There is no alternative route for pupils to be taught ICT through planned opportunities in subjects across the curriculum.
 - There is a poorly developed school infrastructure for ICT. There is no school wide network, little ICT equipment in subject departments, very limited use of associated technology (eg few data projectors and no interactive whiteboards) and limited availability of Internet services and no electronic mail. The school has yet to reach the 2004 government target ratio of computers to pupils.
 - The lack of incorporation of ICT in school policies on matters such as literacy, numeracy, PSHE and citizenship.
93. New staffing arrangements have secured better day-to-day management of ICT provision. Given the deficiencies, management remains **unsatisfactory** but there is potential for rapid improvement.
94. Many students in the school have access to a computer at home. There are good arrangements for boys to work on computers after school and staffing is provided. In this context there is considerable potential for pupils' progress in ICT to be developed and for it to contribute extensively to the quality of their work. Currently this opportunity is not encouraged sufficiently by teachers. The potential of ICT to fascinate and motivate pupils is not well exploited. Applications such as the development of websites, music and video editing, virtual role play presentations, computer art and design, scientific measurement, team working on projects using ICT tools, control and robotics do not yet feature in the teaching programmes and there is a risk of overkill if the business milieu alone forms the main focus of pupils' work. The motivation and commitment of students are high. Pupils want to work with ICT and succeed. Some have remarkable levels of detailed technical knowledge already through their use of computers outside school.
95. Since the last inspection, the quality of provision and standards in ICT have deteriorated. GCSE standards have declined as has curriculum provision. Although the school now has

three networked ICT suites with broadband Internet access and pupils' interest and motivation remain good, the recent progress made has been **poor**.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

96. The use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped. It is now a priority area within subject development planning and the school will shortly be using government electronic learning credits to purchase additional software. Present developments are, however, restricted through a lack of equipment and the very limited school network provision. When access to facilities is available some interesting work takes place. In a religious education lesson held in an ICT suite, Year 7 pupils were developing a worksheet for primary age pupils on the life of a chosen saint. A short biography had been written and improved and comprehension questions added. A word square puzzle had been designed and appropriate graphics included. Students were developing and refining their work and were very aware of their audience. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, also held in an ICT suite, pupils were using a spreadsheet confidently to use a 'trial and improvement' (iterative) method to find the cube root of a number. This work was challenging boys both in terms of their mathematical understanding and also in their development of ICT skills. ICT is used by pupils with special educational needs. Both productivity applications and specific learning software items are used. However, the general extent of students using ICT in their subjects is poor and the lack of facilities inhibits many staff. Boys' own use of ICT for their school work is limited. Use of computers in the library by boys to undertake research on the Internet and to work individually is very low. Students have not been provided with secure arrangements for electronic mail. The school now has broadband access via the London Grid for Learning to the Internet but access around school needs to be offered to all departments and to teachers who are using the growing number of laptop computers being provided by the government scheme. Departmental development plans now have the improved use of ICT as a common thread but rapid development is needed and progress must be carefully monitored.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good by the end of Year 9 and very good by the end of Year 11.
- The quality of teaching in geography is good in Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4.
- There is very good subject leadership.
- The quality and range of fieldwork are very good.
- The lack of ICT facilities means that students have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to enhance their geographical understanding and develop independent learning.
- Greater consistency is needed in the marking of students' work so that all students know what they need to do to improve.
- Systems for monitoring students' progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 need further development.

Commentary

97. Attainment on entry to the school is below the national average, but by the end of Year 9 achievement is good and attainment is in line with national averages. The work undertaken in Years 7, 8 and 9 develops a wide range of geographical skills and knowledge. Students start to appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. In Year 8, studies of the tropical rainforest and the Sahel enable students to develop a growing understanding of issues related to the less economically developed world and the links between man and his environment. The work on hurricanes in Year 9 gives students an increasing understanding of the links between

physical and human geography and shows the impact of natural events on man. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.

98. By the end of Key Stage 4 students continue to make good progress and their attainment at GCSE is above the national average. This represents very good achievement. Geography is a very popular GCSE subject and students work particularly hard on their coursework. This coursework is of a very high standard and is based on fieldtrips to Cornwall and London Docklands. These visits enable students to collect and evaluate data very effectively but above all else encourage them to tackle the coursework with a real understanding and enthusiasm. The coursework on Tregantle focused on the development of a new holiday complex and its impact on the surrounding area. The boys' work demonstrates a very good understanding of how the environment needs to be managed. Students with special educational needs are very well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The work with gifted and talented students still needs further development, although it is very encouraging to see that their needs are being identified and starting to be met through extension material and additional fieldwork opportunities. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy and numeracy. Students make good use of a range of graphical techniques when analysing data as part of their coursework.
99. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The lessons are very well planned and teachers are committed and effective. They insist on high standards of behaviour and effort and students work hard. The assessment of work is satisfactory but this could be further developed if the marking of the work enabled all students to know what to do to improve next time. In a mixed ability Year 9 lesson on coasts, the teacher provided a lively and stimulating introduction. A whole range of resources was used to illustrate issues related to coastal erosion and the imaginative approach immediately engaged the students. Throughout the lesson the pace was brisk and pupils were constantly challenged to explain their understanding of difficult concepts. Students had a positive attitude and worked well and the teacher used his knowledge to great effect. As a result all students learned a lot about coastal erosion and the resulting landforms.
100. The leadership of geography is very good and the management is also very good. The subject leader has a clear vision of the nature of geography and a real enthusiasm and commitment for the subject. She is the only full-time teacher in the department and supports her colleagues with lesson planning, assessments and day-to-day organisation.
101. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved and at GCSE consistently good results have resulted from focused examination preparation and additional support given to students undertaking fieldwork. Further improvements in teaching and learning could result from the provision of better ICT resources, the careful tracking of students' progress in Key Stage 3 and providing additional feedback to individual students on how they might improve their work.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well throughout the school and standards are above average by the time they leave.
- Teaching is good in both key stages with the result that students learn effectively and have very good attitudes to the subject.
- Leadership and management are good and the quality of teaching is more consistent than at the time of the last inspection.

- Students' learning opportunities lack variety and their access to resources is limited, with insufficient use of ICT.

Commentary

102. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with those found nationally. This reflects good achievement by the students, a significant number of whom enter the school with below average standards, particularly in writing. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average. GCSE examination results have been above national expectations and improving for a number of years, although in 2003 they were average which was disappointing for the department. The reasons for this have been analysed carefully and students currently in Year 11 are expected to do well this summer. Throughout the school students achieve well because of good quality teaching which motivates them to succeed. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well.
103. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and expect boys to work hard. The teaching is enthusiastic and very clear in direction with a particular focus on developing learning skills, especially the ability to write about people and events. The best features of this approach were seen in a Year 9 lesson on nineteenth century Leeds where students were required to analyse a variety of sources relating to the unhealthy conditions in that city. The teacher's lively presentation was followed by a sequence of tasks with very challenging deadlines. What made the learning very good in this lesson was the way the boys were encouraged to bring up pertinent points on their own initiative and the way that the prompts for the written task required them to think. In other lessons the teaching is good in many respects but can lack this sharpness with the result that some boys, particularly the higher attainers, do not always show what they can do. Lower attaining boys, on the other hand, are invariably well catered for and the work of the support assistant helps them to make good progress.
104. In Key Stage 4 the teaching embodies many of the qualities found in the earlier key stage, but is now well focused on what students need to do to succeed in the GCSE examination. In a Year 11 class dealing with the Peterloo Massacre, for example, the teacher dealt with strategies for answering questions on the sources paper, an element of the examination which had caused difficulty for students last year. This was handled very positively with good humour and friendly banter. Indeed, the good quality of the relationships between the teachers and students is a particular feature of the way this subject is taught and makes a key contribution to the very positive attitudes of the boys. Their motivation is well reflected in the quality of GCSE coursework which demonstrates their ability to carry out research tasks independently.
105. Leadership and management are good and the effectiveness of the subject has been maintained at the good level seen at the time of the last inspection. There is an urgent need, however, to develop a more varied range of learning activities for students. The limited variety of resources available in many lessons restricts their opportunities to form their own judgements and to discuss different interpretations of historical issues. The use of ICT resources is very restricted within school and students would welcome the opportunity to visit places of historical interest.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan satisfactory lessons.
- Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good.
- Assessment of students' work is inadequate.

- Too few opportunities are provided for students to use computers to produce their coursework.
- The department does not provide a balanced curriculum. There is no opportunity for students to experience a full range of materials in Years 7-9.

Commentary

106. Results in GCSE examinations in 2002 were in line with the national average with a steady improvement since the last inspection. There was a drop in results in the 2003 examinations with a significantly lower number of students gaining A*-C grades.
107. Current standards in Years 7-9 are below the national average. This represents underachievement for a number of pupils. During the inspection there was little evidence of students' previous practical outcomes, so no judgement on the standards of their practical skills could be made. Overall, presentation and written work are poor in many areas of the subject; students require considerable help. In Years 10-11 the standards are below the national average but indicate an improvement on standards over the last three years. The standards in food technology are good compared with the rest of design and technology. The coursework standards in Year 10 are below the national average. Year 11 coursework is adequate in most areas but still not achieving standards in line with the national average. All coursework lacked creativity but practical skills were acceptable. There is a significant weakness in electronics, resistant materials and not enough evidence of the use of ICT.
108. The progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory; they are well supported by their teachers and, together with pupils for whom English is an additional language, cope well alongside others. They would benefit from specialist support especially during practical sessions.
109. The quality of teaching of the newly arrived staff is satisfactory in all areas of technology. The majority of lessons were adequately planned and organised with clear objectives. Some very supportive teaching aided students' learning especially in food technology. The main weakness in the teaching occurs when pace is slow and students are insufficiently challenged. Assessment findings are not shared with the students to help them improve their learning. Resources used in all areas were well chosen to suit the tasks set and ensured that all students could undertake the activities required. In Years 10 and 11 teachers helped students to review their previous work by effective questioning which helped them to reinforce their knowledge. All homework when set was relevant and used as part of the lessons.
110. Support from senior leadership for the department has been inconsistent to effectively support the inexperienced and unqualified staff. The majority of the staff has changed since the last inspection; the department is now a young committed team with a clear vision for the subject. A basic assessment programme is in place but is inadequate because teachers do not use levels of attainment to inform students how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. All staff need further training in assessing Key Stage 3 technology. Currently students do not have access to textiles or cad-cam technology.
111. Accommodation is adequate although some areas need refurbishment especially that for resistant materials.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching and support for students, with an emphasis on individual attention for every student.
- There is detailed analysis of students' work, which gives them a very clear idea of how they can improve.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning.
- More needs to be done to help students discuss their work and use art vocabulary appropriately.
- Students are committed to their art work and concentrate and behave well.
- There are opportunities for students to extend their understanding of art by visiting galleries, working with artists and going on extra courses.

Commentary

112. GCSE results in 2003 showed that all students entered gained a grade and that more than half of those entered gained the higher GCSE grades. Although this is below the national average for all students of this age, the results are similar to the national average for boys.
113. The work seen during the inspection showed that although some students arrive at the school with limited experience of observational drawing, most have good drawing skills and produce good work in their sketchbooks, particularly when doing portrait work. Further progress is made during Year 8 where students know how to produce artistic effects using line and tone and by the end of Year 9, most students are producing practical work of the standard expected of students their age. There are some excellent examples of work. For example, Year 9 students carried out a study of the art deco movement and then applied its principles to their own work, resulting in some clever and effective tea-set designs.
114. Students who have special educational needs make good progress in art and design, because of the individual help and attention they receive from their teachers and because of the support they have from their friends. Even students with physical difficulties produce work of an acceptable standard. Most of the boys learn their art vocabulary and are able to answer direct questions from their teacher correctly. They do not make sufficient use of correct vocabulary when discussing their work, however and this leads to a lack of fluency when they are trying to describe their intentions.
115. Students who have chosen to follow the GCSE examination course are currently producing work of a higher standard than recent examination results would anticipate. This has been encouraged by the introduction of a GNVQ double award. In Year 10, students are now conducting thorough background research to support their practical skills. Work on display includes some excellent three-dimensional masks based on the theme of "The Seven Deadly Sins" and observational drawings show very skilled representations of line and tone. Year 11 students performed well in the recent "mock" examinations and they too are beginning to associate research-based preparation with their technical skills. They have a good understanding of predicted grades and of the work they can still do to improve their eventual grades.
116. Teaching in the art department is good. Teachers help the boys to make the best possible use of the time they have for art activities by regularly reminding them of how time is going and helping them to structure their work in the time they have left. The teaching approach aims to

give a high level of individual attention by analysing students' work as they go along and giving thoughtful suggestions of how it could be improved. This results in students of all abilities making good progress. Lessons are well planned and the assessment of students' work gives them a clear idea of their progress and enables them to set their own personal targets. There are good relationships between teachers and students and the boys show commitment to their work. They behave well and concentrate on the tasks set.

117. The acting head of department has made a good start and careful analysis of examination results and a review of the curriculum are leading to a plan for the further development of the department. There are plans to relocate the department in better facilities. It is essential that this planning includes more opportunity to use ICT to support learning in art. Some learning is supported by visits to galleries such as the Horniman Museum, some students are able to study on additional courses provided by local galleries and there are enrichment projects run in conjunction with artists from the Tate Modern.
118. Since the last inspection standards have been broadly maintained and standards of teaching, attitudes and behaviour are similar to those described in the previous inspection report. There have been improvements in the quality and use of assessment to support learning. There has been no progress in the provision of ICT to support learning and this should now be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the department are good; many key areas such as the schemes of work are under review and are progressing well.
- Numbers accessing instrumental tuition have increased and in class all boys are taught basic keyboard instrumental skills.
- The department does not yet have effective routine assessment and recording procedures in Years 7-9 to carefully monitor the boys' progress and identify areas that need improvement.
- In composition, the boys do not receive sufficient consistent and meaningful comments on how to improve their work.
- Opportunities for pupils to access learning and make better progress in Years 7-9 are not provided often enough.

Commentary

119. At the time of the last inspection no pupils were entered for GCSE and since 2001 the numbers of students opting for GCSE have steadily increased. Half the students entered for the exam this year gained A* - C grades, which is lower than average, but 90 per cent of the pupils gained A* - G grades which is higher than the national average.
120. Throughout the GCSE course students make good progress. Over half of the pupils in Year 11 are demonstrating that they are capable of achieving an A* - C grade this summer. All pupils at GCSE are encouraged to play a musical instrument and almost all Year 10 students are working at grades 1 - 3 in the national qualification framework for music. For those who have only been learning since last September this is very good progress. The standards demonstrated in listening and understanding music are not as high as those seen in student performances and the GCSE group would benefit from a greater variety and range of focused listening tasks. The majority of Year 10 students are on course to attain a grade C or D at GCSE. In one class everyone can read and play simple melodic phrases from the treble clef and even though pupils can identify the names of the notes on the bass clef, performing simple bass parts has yet to be developed.

121. In Years 7 to 9 achievement is comfortably in line with that expected and overall the boys make good progress. The standard of work seen among the less able boys in Year 9 is particularly good. They can play off beat chords and syncopated one note bass parts. Some boys can play two hands independently and most can play a treble and bass part with a partner with full awareness of how the two parts fit. This represents very good achievement for those who started Year 7 with below average musical skills and knowledge. Higher ability Year 9 groups have made good progress. They listen well and understand about different musical styles. They use musical vocabulary with good knowledge and understanding and can evaluate the structure and purpose of music appropriately. In all years, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Their achievement is due to the individual attention they are given by the teachers and through adapting appropriate strategies of working. For example, they can play things as slowly as they want and select more appropriate worksheets.
122. Overall, teaching and learning have remained the same since last the last inspection and are good. The lessons for Years 7-9 are currently being updated and are not complete but the planning so far shows a clear structure. All boys are beginning to learn how to use dedicated music software for composing and arranging and are able to access the computers after school to continue working. There are not enough computers and the department staff have to continuously maintain all technical equipment.
123. The department does not have effective assessment procedures. In Years 7-9 although the standard of some compositions may be relatively high, the work is not marked frequently enough and lacks meaningful comments to enable the pupils to improve. Work stored on audiotape is not stored with sufficient care or labeled clearly enough. Teachers need to make precise use of their assessments to ensure that really challenging and engaging work is ready for all pupils as they move to a higher level.
124. There is a tendency to use the same teaching methods in each lesson. Pupils would make better progress if they could experience a range of different ways of learning and a wider range of tasks. For example, in a Year 8 class there was a tendency to sing out of tune and not enough ways were used to show the boys how to sing in tune. In some lessons teachers are not always successful in motivating small isolated pockets of boys to work. For such groups their lessons need more detailed planning with a wider range of specific work set at appropriate levels.
125. The leadership and management of the department are good. Since the last inspection there is an additional part-time music teacher. The department has introduced a new GCSE syllabus and initiated a detailed analysis of exam results. They have identified listening and performing as two areas that require most attention and introduced a range of ideas to increase the marks that pupils can gain in the exam. All GCSE students are encouraged to learn to play an instrument and be examined on the instrument. All instrumental students throughout the school have to supplement their studies with theory exams, use the music progress book to monitor and remind them about practice and continue to take every opportunity to perform in public events. The number of boys learning to play an instrument has increased and visiting instrumental teachers provide very good value for money.
126. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because the work undertaken by the head of department since 2000 to raise standards of achievement, introduce ICT and raise the overall profile of the subject has been extensive and has taken time to become embedded into the school. This should enable far greater progress in future.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good leadership and management.
- High standards at GCSE.
- Good range of extra-curricular activities and high participation by students.
- Poor and inadequate accommodation.
- Lack of breadth of activities in Years 10 and 11.
- Little formal arrangements for classroom observations and professional development.

Commentary

127. Standards by the end of Year 9 are satisfactory. A range of skills were demonstrated in Year 8 football where the majority of students successfully achieved the skills of basic passing, control and running with the ball during the lessons. Standards in swimming and badminton were more variable with a number of the boys experiencing difficulties achieving a satisfactory technique in backstroke, and finding the technical skill of achieving a good serve frustrating.
128. In Years 10 and 11, students observed in PE were performing in line with national expectations, with a number of the boys in a Year 10 volleyball lesson achieving higher standards.
129. GCSE PE is a core subject, with the majority of boys in Year 11 completing the course successfully. Standards in the last three years have been well above national results in this subject, with a significant number of the boys achieving A*/A grade at GCSE in 2003. The department is one of the most successful in the school at GCSE and has set itself realistic and achievable targets for the next two years.
130. The department has correctly identified that standards would rise further with targeted support for those boys who find the theory aspect of the course challenging. These five key development areas are identified in the exam analysis and need to be incorporated into the department development plan.
131. Achievement at both key stages is satisfactory. The majority of boys, including those with special educational needs, achieve at least as well as those in similar schools and make satisfactory progress.
132. Overall standards of teaching are good. Teaching methods are imaginative and lead to a high level of interest from the boys. Individual needs are catered for where lessons are planned to include differentiated work. Adults relate well to the boys and expect them to work hard, but the level of challenge is realistic and students are usually productive. Staff understand the next steps students need to take in their learning and they provide a wide range of activities to help them learn. Organisation, control and instructions are clear and efficient, with standards of discipline firm but fair.
133. Learning overall is good, the impact of keen teachers results in keen learners. Students make progress in planning, doing and reviewing. There is good application of learning to new tasks, with a willingness to observe and improve levels of skill. Participation rates are high in all years.
134. Both leadership and management are good. There is a drive for improvement and a sense of direction and this is supported by a team of hard working and skilled specialist colleagues in

the department who are all working hard to provide a rich physical education experience for all the boys at the school.

135. The PE accommodation and facilities are poor. The accommodation has many weak features, especially for practical activities and no base for theory teaching. The department and the boys are working very hard to maintain high standards in locations that are inadequate. Areas are poorly maintained and dirty, walls are damaged and toilets broken and leaking. Large areas require urgent attention with at least some refurbishment to provide even the most basic working and learning environment. This situation is having a detrimental effect on the department's aspiration of raising standards even further and is hindering the boy's learning.
136. The department reviews its performance and evaluates the effectiveness of teaching currently in an informal manner. A more formal structure needs to be adopted to ensure that all colleagues in the department get the professional support they need and to ensure a consistency of high standard teaching in the department. Carefully planned professional development for the whole department needs to be a priority, so that the benefits of working and learning from other colleagues can further support the drive to raise standards.
137. Provision for PE and sport has improved since the last inspection. All the boys in the school can now take GCSE and the results are amongst the best at the school and have been consistently above the national results for at least the last three years. The accommodation and facilities, however, are still poor overall and fail to give both the staff and the pupils the resources they deserve and need to take the subject to an even higher level.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory** as the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject are not met. The opportunities presented by subjects across the curriculum are not co-ordinated effectively.

Commentary

138. Boys are articulate and express their views thoughtfully listening sensibly to the views of others. From their work in English, drama and personal social education, boys in the lower school have a sound understanding of the significance of the media in society. In Years 10 and 11 boys studying geography show good research skills when exploring topical issues. In history students have a good understanding of aspects of the work of parliament and of Britain's relationship with Europe and with the wider world.
139. Where aspects of citizenship are covered within other subjects, such as English, geography and history, the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, the opportunities presented across the subjects are not coordinated effectively.
140. The school's Catholic Christian ethos underpins its broader work in developing the students' awareness of being a member of society and part of the Christian community. However, the school has not taken the steps to meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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