

Addendum

Summary report page 2
and
Full report page 7

Delete the third bullet point under **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

And replace this with

- “Improve provision for work experience.”

Full report page 29

Delete the statement on provision under the heading **Design and Technology**
and replace this with

“ Provision in design and technology is **excellent.**”

Delete paragraph 63
and replace this with

“This is an outstanding department, and the quality of its work is excellent. All areas of its work are rightly highly regarded within the school, particularly the quality of design and the care students take to finish work to a high standard.“

Serco QAA

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

Woking

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125302

Headteacher: Miss A Magill

Lead inspector: Mr J Bald

Dates of inspection: 22nd to 25th September 2003

Inspection number: 260943

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 students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	994
School address:	Elm Bridge Lane Woking
Postcode:	GU22 9AL
Telephone number:	01483 729343
Fax number:	01483 727578
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Wells
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St. John the Baptist School is a specialist language college that has won many awards, including Charter Mark, Sports Mark, the Schools Achievement Award, Investors in People, an International Award and the Millennium Award for the best school in Surrey. The school's social and economic circumstances are above average, and students joining in Year 7 have reached well above average standards for their age. The proportion of students with special educational needs is below average, but the school has a significant number of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs, often related to serious behavioural difficulties, and some students who have been excluded from other schools. The vast majority of students are white, and a substantial number speak Italian as their first language. Roughly a twentieth of students have a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; a few of these students are in the early stages of learning English. The school population is stable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17932	John Bald	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector	
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics
23080	Rob Isaac	Team inspector	English
20832	Mohindar Galowalia	Team inspector	Science
11258	Ivor Rushforth	Team inspector	Art and design, design and technology
32858	Marita Smith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
4829	Ian Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	History, Business studies
32370	Roger Fetherston	Team inspector	Geography
23499	Howard Seymour	Team inspector	Music
22590	Robert Castle	Team inspector	Physical education, Health and social care
29212	Melanie Smith	Team inspector	Citizenship
11720	Philip Winch	Team inspector	Special educational needs
1819	Roger Crowther	Team inspector	Travel and tourism
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	12
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	16
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	22
THE LANGUAGE COLLEGE	24
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES THREE AND FOUR	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	54

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very effective** school, with excellent features in important aspects of its work. Standards are well above average, and achievement is high among all groups of students. The school is a strong, welcoming and successful learning community, with a very strong partnership with parents. Value for money is **very good**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards and achievement are high for all groups of students.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, and management is highly effective.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school, and at times excellent.
- Students develop excellent attitudes to work and a sense of service and responsibility.
- Arrangements for the care, welfare and involvement of all students are excellent.
- There is an excellent range of activities outside lessons.
- Some day-to-day marking does not provide enough guidance on improving work.
- Some sixth form students do not make full use of their time outside lessons.
- There is very limited provision for work experience.

The school has maintained its strengths and developed its work very well since the last inspection. There has been a very effective response to the small number of points that required improvement. Standards have risen at an above average rate, the curriculum is wider and richer, and teaching is better focused and more varied. Arrangements to involve all students in the life and work of the school have been extended, and excellent systems established to help those who most need support. The language college is very effective, and provision in mathematics is now excellent.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Note: Year 13 comparative grades are not yet available for 2003. The grade A* indicates that the school was in the top five per cent of schools nationally in this category.

Achievement is very good among all groups of students.

In 2003, standards were high in all the national tests in Year 9. GCSE results were also better than those in 2002, with a high proportion of A* grades. There was also improved performance from lower-attaining students, all of whom left with at least five GCSE passes. GCSE results are now strong in all subjects. Standards during the inspection were similar to these test and examination results. Achievement is very good in Years 9 and 11 for all students, including those with additional learning needs. There are no significant weaknesses, but some students could do better still by improving their written work.

Students develop excellent personal qualities, and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are excellent as a result of the school's provision and its partnership with parents. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good. Teachers ensure that all students have interesting and engaging lessons that help them to develop very good patterns of work. This leads to very good learning across the school for all students. Excellent features include teaching and learning in mathematics, and specialist teaching for students with special educational needs. Day-to-day marking, however, does not always give students sufficient guidance on improving their work. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and effective. There is excellent additional teaching outside lessons.

Care, guidance and support for students are excellent, enabling all to complete their education successfully, with thoughtful and sensitive additional help where it is needed. Assemblies and form periods provide a very good start to each day. The curriculum meets students' needs very well, though it would benefit from an organised programme of work experience, and there is no provision for work with textiles in the main school. There are excellent learning opportunities outside the classroom, ranging from homework clubs to community service in Kenya. There is too little accommodation for the library and for indoor physical education. The school works very closely and effectively with parents. Annual reports on children's progress and parents' evenings are well organised and informative.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher inspires everyone connected with the school to do their best. Senior managers work highly effectively as a team, and all management systems are closely focused on raising standards and ensuring equal opportunities for all students. The headteacher and senior colleagues work closely with governors to keep all aspects of the school's work under critical review, and have established a strong sense of teamwork among staff. Governors play a full and very effective role in the direction of the school.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school. Many expressed warm appreciation of what it had enabled their children to achieve and for the high quality of its care, particularly in times of trouble. Students who are absent, for example, are contacted each day.

Students are very pleased to be at the school. They appreciate the quality of education they receive, and the school's sense of community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the consistency, quality and use of day-to-day marking
- Improve accommodation for the library, indoor physical education and music practice.
- Improve provision for work experience, and develop provision for textiles.

Sixth form

- Improve the consistency of some students' work outside lessons.
- Tackle the problem of very small teaching groups in modern foreign languages.

THE SIXTH FORM AT ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good. Examination results in 2003 showed improvements from the average standards reached in the previous year. Standards during the inspection were above average or better in all courses that were inspected as a result of very good teaching and learning. They represent very good achievement as some students did not begin with above average GCSE results. A high proportion of students complete their courses and move on to higher education. There is very good provision for students' personal development, and for students with special educational needs. The overall cost-effectiveness of the sixth form is **good**.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons is very good.
- Very good leadership and management are leading to a rapid rate of improvement.
- Provision for mathematics is excellent.
- Learning outside lessons has improved, but needs further development.
- Provision for key skills and for students' personal development is very well organised.
- The sixth form has excellent relationships with students and their parents.
- A minority of students do not make full use of their time outside lessons.
- Teaching groups in modern foreign languages are very small.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good. Standards in English, French and Italian, are well above average. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.
Mathematics	Excellent. Standards and achievement are very high as a result of excellent teaching, particularly of more difficult concepts.
Science	Very good. Above average, and sometimes better, standards represent very good achievement. Literacy skills need improvement in biology.
Information and communication technology	Very good. Standards have improved to high levels over the last three years. Students have particularly good attitudes to work. Teaching is good overall, and the best is excellent.
Humanities	Very good. Standards are above average, and represent very good achievement from students' GCSE grades. Teaching is very good.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good. Students achieve high standards in examinations and practical work. Teaching and learning are very effective in classes and the studio.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good. The travel and tourism course, which was inspected, is well organised, and enables students to achieve well from their starting points.
Business	Good. 2002 A-level results were above average. Standards, teaching and learning in classes are very good, but more work experience is needed, particularly for the intermediate course.
General Education	Very good. Key skills courses in literacy, numeracy, ICT and critical thinking are very well organised and taught to a very good standard.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The overall quality of guidance and support is very good, and it is excellent in some subjects, including English. Students greatly appreciate this. The school has recently restructured its guidance and support on a wide range of activities outside lessons through the Surrey graduation scheme; this is very well organised and includes very good opportunities for community service. Students receive good guidance on the use of their time in induction courses, but some need more structured guidance in order to make full use of their time outside lessons. Tutorial support and care of students are very effective.

An evening for parents of new sixth form students during the inspection was planned and presented to a high standard, and very well attended. Parents in discussion with the inspector attending this meeting expressed high levels of satisfaction with the sixth form. There was particular praise for its work with students who had joined the main school with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. A recent review of provision by the senior management team, in consultation with the local education authority, has improved the consistency of teaching and learning, leading to standards during the inspection that show improvement on the 2003 examination results. Development planning for the sixth form has clear priorities, including encouraging students to make full use of the facilities outside lessons. There are, on the other hand, limited arrangements for co-operation with other schools and colleges.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students strongly approve of their sixth form, and appreciate the quality of education they receive. They admire their teachers' high levels of professional skill and knowledge of their subjects, the quality of their marking and guidance, and their willingness to help them whenever possible. Their views were summed up by a group of Year 13 students, who told inspectors that, "The school made us realise what we could really achieve."

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are well above average and achievement is very good among all groups of students in Years 9 and 11. Sixth form students reached average standards overall in 2002, the latest year for which national figures are available, but the standard of work seen during the inspection was above average and improving rapidly. Overall achievement in the sixth form is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average, and very high in several subjects.
- All students taking GCSE in 2003 achieved at least five passes at grades A* to G.
- The school met or exceeded all of its demanding targets for GCSE in 2003.
- Results in Year 9 national tests are well above average in all subjects.
- Students with special educational needs achieve very well throughout the school.
- All groups of students achieve very well at GCSE.
- A minority of sixth form students could achieve more by working more consistently outside lessons.

Commentary

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	82 (80)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	47.0 (n/a)	34.3 (n/a)

There were 173 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. National comparative

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	38.2 (38.6)	33.3 (33.1)
mathematics	39.5 (38.6)	35.3 (34.5)
science	37.3 (37.9)	33.7 (33.2)

There were 157 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The school enables all groups of students to develop very effective patterns of work, so that boys achieve as well as girls, and students with special educational needs make very good progress. The school's analysis shows that students with minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well overall as others. Specialist teaching makes a strong impact on learning difficulties, and is followed through well in students' work in subjects. Students with behavioural difficulties make excellent progress as a result of specialist help and the support of the whole school community. These students often achieve

particularly well with the support of ICT, which enables them to present their work to the same standard as other students. By Year 11, there is very strong achievement among gifted and talented students, though these students could achieve more in some subjects by Year 9 – test scores and teachers’ assessments, for example, show a higher proportion of exceptionally high performance in mathematics than in other subjects. Consistency in teaching ensures that achievement remains high across the whole range of the curriculum, from practical subjects, with a particular strength in design and technology, to mathematics and science.

- Standards in Year 9 national tests and at GCSE have been rising at an above average rate over recent years. In 2003, standards in national tests remained well above average, and there was a significant improvement in GCSE. All targets were met or exceeded, and all groups of students did very well, with many A* grades among the highest-attaining students, and a very high pass rate for all, including those with special educational needs. Every student achieved five GCSE passes at A* to G. The standard of work seen during the inspection was very similar overall to that in the most recent examinations. There was evidence across several subjects, however, that standards could be still higher if students paid more consistent attention to detail and accuracy in their written work. The consistency and quality of teaching, and its effect on achievement, are the result of senior management’s emphasis on teaching in all of its training and monitoring activities.

Sixth form

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	98	96.2 (89.1)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	54	39.4 (37.9)
Average point score per student	245	263 (n/a)

There were 56 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. National comparative data are not yet available for 2003.

- Some higher-attaining students choose to continue their education after GCSE in schools closer to their homes, and the GCSE scores of students joining the sixth form have until recently not reflected the very high standards achieved across the main school. There was, however, a major improvement in GCSE results among students joining the sixth form in 2002, giving students in Year 13 at the time of the inspection a higher starting point. A-level results in 2002, the latest year for which national comparisons are available, were broadly average. There were considerable variations between subjects, with exceptionally high standards in mathematics and physics, but well below average standards in communication studies. They represent satisfactory overall achievement. There are no national comparative figures for 2003, but the school’s analysis of the results shows that they are higher, and represent good overall achievement. Students with special educational needs, some of whom went on to higher education, did very well in these examinations.
- The standard of work during the inspection in Years 12 and 13 was well above average in English, French and ICT, and very high in mathematics. It was above average in every other subject that was fully inspected. Students who had been identified as having special educational needs in the main school continued to achieve well. Evidence from individual students’ work in several courses, and more generally in biology and art and design, suggested that standards could be improved further if these students paid more attention to reading, study and research outside lessons. Once account is taken of students’ starting points, current

achievement in the sixth form is good, and the quality of learning following the school's extensive review of the sixth form puts the school in a strong position to raise standards and achievement further.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students in the main school have excellent attitudes to school and learning. Their behaviour and relationships are exemplary, reflecting the school's very strong provision for personal development. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, and the moral and social aspects of this work are excellent. Attendance is well above average. Many sixth form students also have excellent attitudes and work hard, but a minority do not maintain these high standards outside lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school helps students develop excellent behaviour, attitudes and relationships.
- All students work and play in a harmonious and friendly atmosphere.
- Students who arrive with serious behavioural difficulties make rapid progress.
- Tutorial periods and assemblies provide a very good start to each day.
- Students exercise positions of responsibility with consideration and maturity.
- There is very effective planning for the personal development of sixth form students.
- There is some immature behaviour from a minority of sixth form students outside lessons.

Commentary

5. The school helps students develop self-discipline, motivation and a thirst for knowledge. They strive for excellence, entering into discussions in an organised way and expressing their opinions confidently. Students become mature and polite, and give a warm welcome to visitors, often making it clear that they are happy to be in the school. Relationships among students are a major strength, and show the effectiveness of the school's commitment to equal opportunities and to race equality. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are rare. There are very few fixed period exclusions, and there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. This excellent feature is the result of high levels of care and support for students, including those who have been excluded permanently from other schools. Students told inspectors that the sense of community was particularly strong in times of trouble, including bereavement.

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White - Irish
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
599	2	0
26	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
14	0	0
14	0	0
4	0	0

Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	31	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	14	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	10	0	0

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

6. The school has very effective arrangements to encourage spiritual development in the context of its Catholic, Christian mission and there are good opportunities for reflection in many, though not all, subjects. The excellence of its moral and social provision stems from the same core values. Service to others, for example, was a key feature of a pilgrimage to Lourdes. The school's excellent range of activities outside lessons plays a key part in moral and social development, and all students take part in enthusiastically. They enjoy sports, including football, rugby, and netball, and compete fairly but passionately with each other and with other schools. There is a wide range of participation in the school's outstanding dramatic and musical productions. Students visit the theatre, listen and play different instruments, and visit places of historical significance such as Winchester and the battlefields sites in France. They receive an effective introduction to key features of cultures other than their own through the study of major faiths in religious education. The school encourages students to serve the school and wider community as members of the school council, sports captains, librarians and fund raisers.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.6%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	2.4
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

7. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is very good. The school works hard with parents and the education welfare officer to promote attendance, and is rigorous in deciding whether absence should or should not be authorised. It effectively discourages parents from taking holidays in term time.

Sixth form

8. Sixth form students are leading members of the school community. They have a strong sense of responsibility towards it, and appreciate the high quality of education they receive. Students led an assembly very well during the inspection, and many are involved in community service. They work very hard in lessons and most carry this through into their coursework. A significant minority, however, do not make full use of their time outside lessons for study and learning, and these students need more guidance on this aspect of sixth form work if they are to do themselves justice in examinations. There is some immature behaviour in the common room. The personal development of sixth form students is planned very carefully through the Surrey Graduation Scheme, which ensures that all have a balanced

approach to developing skills, personal interests and community service. Attendance in the sixth form is very high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is very good, with excellent features in several areas. Very effective teaching enables students to reach high standards in relation to their starting points, and the school builds very effectively on the values students bring from home to enable them to develop maturity, independence and a sense of responsibility to themselves and to others, within and beyond the school community. The school provides education of equal quality to all of its students and prepares them very well for life in modern society. The quality of education in the sixth form matches that in the main school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning across the main school and in the sixth form are very good. Teachers plan interesting lessons, with clear learning goals and a good range of activities to engage students, who enjoy their work. Teaching in a small but significant number of lessons is of exceptionally high quality and leads to rapid gains in knowledge and understanding. Consistency in the quality of teaching, despite the high turnover of staff, is maintained by highly effective training and monitoring by the headteacher and her senior colleagues. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their subjects very well, and departments work well as teams.
- Lessons are well prepared, with a good variety of activities, and clear goals for learning.
- Students work hard in lessons and homework, enjoy their work and are eager to learn.
- Teachers and assistants ensure that students with special educational needs learn very well.
- Teachers make very effective use of ICT and other media.
- Teaching and learning are excellent overall in mathematics.
- Long-term assessment is highly effective, but some marking gives too little guidance.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 189 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (4%)	89 (47%)	71 (38%)	20 (11%)	2 (1%)	0	0

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

9. There has been a significant rise in the proportion of good and better teaching since the last inspection. Teaching throughout the school is based on a collection of principles that ensure a clear focus for each lesson and a variety of teaching techniques. This framework enables teachers joining the school, including those who are newly qualified, to teach to a good overall standard from the outset, and to develop their teaching to a very good standard in a short time. Variety in teaching is often the result of good use of ICT for presentations by teachers and students, and to give students immediate feedback, for example, by playing back conversations in language lessons. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching lacks pace and challenge and leads to too little being learned. Excellent lessons contribute more to learning than their number might suggest. Teaching in these lessons is exceptionally effective in making difficult ideas clear to students, and in enabling them to apply what they have learned. Work is very well matched to the needs of students with learning difficulties. Specialist teaching for these students is excellent, and they receive highly skilled support from teaching assistants. Gifted and talented students also learn very well in the course of their school career, particularly as they approach GCSE. However, their needs are not always specifically considered in planning, and at times they could achieve more. Overall, teachers and students create an atmosphere of shared interest and enjoyment, and this sense of common purpose leads to very good learning.
10. Teachers' use of assessment is good overall. Long-term assessment is used very well to track progress and set targets, and is a key factor in raising standards in national tests and at GCSE. It tells students what they need to do to improve, and teachers check on progress towards targets. Students, particularly those in Year 11, told inspectors how much they appreciated teachers' work in this area. The best day-to-day marking gives effective guidance and

contributes to learning. However, much marking does not give enough guidance, and does not do enough to encourage students to pay attention to detail in their use of English. This sometimes holds back learning, particularly where students are having specialist teaching in aspects such as the correct formation of tenses. Assessment of special educational needs, and for students with English as an additional language, is carried out to a very high standard. It is used well overall, and to an excellent standard by specialist teachers and teaching assistants, some of whom are highly skilled in anticipating points of difficulty and devising resources to deal with them.

Sixth form

11. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. The strengths and weaknesses of work in lessons are very similar to those in the main school, and teachers provide good support to students adapting to the demands of sixth form work. The induction course and additional teaching in key skills are well organised and very well taught. Students respond very well in lessons, and most also work hard on their coursework and preparation, making good use of the very good ICT facilities in the sixth form block.
12. All aspects of long-term assessment and target setting are very well organised and effective. Marking is good overall, and guidance on improvement is excellent in some subjects, particularly English. On the other hand, marking and assessment does not always address weaknesses in literacy skills, and this allows some basic errors to persist into coursework, where they can cost marks. Teachers give generously of their time to provide individual guidance to students who need it. Students spoke highly of this to inspectors, and also valued their teachers' high levels of professional understanding in their subjects. These views were confirmed by inspection evidence.

The curriculum

Very good learning opportunities make a key contribution to standards, achievement and personal development of all students in the main school and in the sixth form. Provision for enriching the curriculum, particularly through activities outside lessons, is excellent. The small number of points for improvement does not detract significantly from these strengths. Accommodation and resources for learning are of good quality, though there are some gaps in accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are sensitively grouped, and timetabling is flexible and efficient.
- The language college has successfully extended opportunities and raised standards.
- The curriculum is adapted very well to meet the needs of individual students.
- There is a wide and exciting range of enrichment outside lessons.
- Critical evaluation of the curriculum keeps it close to the needs of teachers and students.
- There is too little provision for work experience in vocational courses.
- There is repetition in the ICT curriculum and there are no opportunities for work with textiles.
- There is limited collaboration with other schools and colleges over the issue of very small teaching groups in modern foreign languages.

Commentary

13. The school uses its curriculum as a flexible and dynamic instrument for promoting the learning of all students, and there are many outstanding features. Timetabling, for example, is flexible enough to allow students a wide range of option choices – it does not block subjects in Years

10 and 11 – and to allow departments to group students according to their preferred approaches to teaching. The needs of students who require additional learning support for any reason are met very effectively, both by well organised and efficient specialist teaching and by individual programmes that include work placements for students who most need them. Thoughtful choices of themes in many subjects, particularly drama, allow work across the school to contribute to personal development and citizenship. This complements effective programmes of personal, social and health education and careers education, and ensures that students are prepared very well for the next phase of education. On the other hand, learning opportunities in design and technology do not include any work with textiles, and repetition of topics in the curriculum for ICT limits opportunities for students in Years 7 to 9 to reach very high standards. Very effective vocational courses lead to high achievement, sometimes from lower-attaining students, but do not make systematic provision for work experience. Senior managers' excellent evaluation of the impact of the curriculum on standards and personal development ensures that it is constantly being developed and improved.

14. Opportunities for learning outside the school day are extensive and the participation rate is very high. Many subjects offer after-school classes, and there are regular and effective homework clubs, as well as a well-attended breakfast club and a computer club with a special club for girls. There is excellent provision for drama in lavish and professional productions with large casts of students and staff. Other outstanding activities include a cooking club, film club, chess club, environmental and gardening clubs, and a good range of theatre visits. The annual art exhibition is spectacular. Sporting activities involve about a third of all students. These include football, rugby, cricket, athletics, basketball, karate, gymnastics, netball, and rounders. There are excellent opportunities for musical performance, closely linked to students' interests. Longer residential visits contribute both to personal and spiritual development, and sometimes directly to standards, particularly in history.

Sixth form

15. Following a review by senior management, the curriculum meets students' needs very well overall, and its wide range of courses is attracting growing numbers of students. There are effective induction programmes, a very well organised and taught programme of key skills and critical thinking. While the balance of lessons and non-contact time enables most students to work effectively, some need a more structured approach to personal study. The curriculum includes systematic provision for additional learning and personal development through the Surrey graduation scheme, which includes some opportunities for work experience as part of community service. Otherwise this aspect is underdeveloped, and limits the effectiveness of some vocational courses, particularly for students who do not intend to proceed to higher education. Apart from Spanish, where teaching is shared with another school, there is too little co-operation with other schools over the issue of very small teaching groups in modern foreign languages.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

16. Senior management has worked hard and well to ensure that the school is fully staffed by well-qualified specialists. They make full use of their contacts with teacher training institutions, and provide very effective support for teachers and for teaching assistants, some of whom work to a standard above that expected of qualified teachers in their fields. Students, particularly sixth formers, had high praise for teachers' expertise. Inspectors agreed, and found that younger teachers were adapting very well to the demands of their profession. The school has an excellent record in training teachers to take up senior management posts, and almost a quarter of the staff moved to promoted posts at the end of the last school year. Administrative and all other associate staff, including lunchtime assistants and kitchen staff, and caretaking and cleaning staff keep the school buildings and grounds in good order.

17. The quality of accommodation is good, and it is arranged and decorated with displays of work and posters that create a positive learning atmosphere. It has some very good features, including a well-equipped drama studio, but learning opportunities in physical education are restricted by the lack of indoor accommodation, and there are too few music practice rooms. The library is much too small to meet students' needs. Books are well chosen, and the library is very well managed, but inspectors agreed with students who said there were too few books and other resources to meet their needs for study and wide reading. The new sixth form block provides very good accommodation and facilities for teaching and study.
18. Learning resources are good, and their broad range, particularly in ICT and media equipment, helps teachers to present exciting lessons. Teachers create good learning resources to meet the needs of students with additional learning needs. There are some excellent resources for gifted and talented students, such as software that allows them to explore geometric theorems, but their needs are not always given specific consideration. Parents told inspectors that there were not enough textbooks in some subjects, but there was no evidence of this during the inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes excellent care of its students and provides high levels of personal support, particularly where and when it is most needed. The quality of guidance on their work and personal development is very good. Arrangements for the involvement of all students are excellent.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Child protection and health and safety are monitored very effectively.
- The pastoral team is very well led and highly effective.
- Students at risk of exclusion receive close support and effectively modified education.
- There is very good guidance on careers and educational opportunities.
- Arrangements to support students joining the school and sixth form are highly effective.
- Staff take every opportunity to address students' concerns and listen to their suggestions.
- Guidance on academic work in the sixth form is very good, and at times excellent.
- A minority of sixth form students need more guidance on using their time outside lessons.

Commentary

19. Care for students makes a consistently outstanding contribution to standards and personal development. Tutorial periods and assemblies start each day in an atmosphere of clear purpose and good humour. Teachers and teaching assistants carry this on all day, building relationships, confidence and trust. Parents and students told inspectors that the level of care was exceptional, particularly in times of trouble, when, as one put it, "everyone is there for each other". The chaplain provides effective additional support for students and their families, particularly where students have behavioural difficulties. This contributes to the excellent pattern of behaviour. The headteacher's personal influence on care, even in brief exchanges with students, is very strong.
20. A very good personal social and health education programme informs students about healthy living, relationships and discourages the taking of dangerous substances and enables them to make informed and responsible choices. Careers advice is well organised and effective. All arrangements for child protection and health and safety meet local and legal requirements. The school promotes attendance and interest not only by following up absence, but by keeping in close touch with students who are ill, contacting them every day to keep them in touch with the community.

21. The school encourages all students to participate in its work. As at the time of the last inspection, the school council is influential and effective, and uses its budget sensibly.

Sixth form

22. Care and guidance for sixth form students are of similar quality. Provision is well organised, and students' progress and personal development closely tracked. Additional structured guidance is quickly provided if students fall seriously behind with their work, though some students need more guidance on work outside lessons at an early stage in their course. Students told inspectors they particularly appreciated the high quality of personal guidance they received from their teachers, and inspectors saw many examples of this in practice.

Example of outstanding practice

There is excellent provision for the involvement of all students in the school's work through careful arrangements for additional support and teaching where it is needed.

A significant number of students have additional learning needs ranging from serious behavioural difficulties to arriving with no knowledge of English. The school analyses each student's needs when they join, and designs a personal programme of support which combines specialist teaching, participation in normal lessons and additional personal support to the students and their families. Each student soon comes to understand that they are a valued member of the community, and makes rapid progress in personal development as well as in school work. Teaching assistants are highly organised and provide excellent support. One, supporting students with English as an additional language, works closely with teachers to identify potential points of difficulty and designs attractive, laminated versions of the resources used in class, modified to allow additional explanation and practice with vocabulary and concepts such as the symbols on Ordnance Survey maps. Students respond very well to the personal interest and support they receive from the headteacher and chaplain, developing confidence in conversation and making friends. Over time, they come to share the core values of the community, complete their courses successfully, and are well prepared to continue their education in the sixth form and, in some cases, higher education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school and sixth form enjoy a very constructive and purposeful relationship with parents and the wider community. This relationship is supported by very effective links with Catholic primary schools, and by outreach work by the language college.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Parents have high levels of confidence in the school and its management.
- Annual reports to parents are very informative and efficiently produced.
- There are very effective links between the school and the wider community.
- Links with primary schools are very good, and include effective promotion of French.

Commentary

23. The school works with parents in an atmosphere of shared values and trust. Communication is very effective, and the school allocates additional support quickly where it is needed. Annual reports to parents are clearly written, and very well produced. Imaginative and efficient use of ICT allows teachers to combine efficient communication of standards with comments that remain personal. Attendance at parents' evenings is very high, and there is very effective day-to-day communication through students' planners, which are often used intensively by parents and teachers. The prospectus and governors' annual reports are attractively presented in straightforward English and meet all legal requirements. Regular newsletters inform parents

of events in the school and community and instil a sense of belonging for parents and their child. Parents unable to communicate in English are supported well by bilingual staff. The working partnership fostered by this close co-operation is a key factor in the consistency of learning.

24. The school keeps in close touch with its main partner primary schools through a roadshow presented by the headteacher. The language college's very effective outreach work in French gives teachers and students a valuable base for work in Year 7. The school shares Spanish teaching with a local college, but otherwise has few links with colleges or with other sixth forms. There are good links with local businesses.

Sixth form

25. The school takes great care over its relationship with sixth form parents. A meeting for them during the inspection was organised to an excellent standard, with attractive, well-paced talks and multimedia presentations. There was very high attendance by tutors, parents and students. Many parents expressed strong support for the school, and were grateful for the achievements of both higher-attaining students and those with special educational needs. Students have very positive views of the school, and particularly value their relationships with teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Excellent leadership, management and governance are the main reasons why the school is able to provide education of a high standard despite very high staffing turnover. The headteacher and governors provide vision, inspiration and a strong sense of community. They ensure that all teachers and departments work to the best standards of which they are capable, and that the school provides effectively for the personal and academic development of all of its students, from the gifted and talented to those whose attitudes and behaviour have led to serious problems in other schools. The result is a successful, inclusive learning community that is achieving rising standards and preparing its students and students very well for further and higher education, employment, and life in the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's excellent leadership and management promote the highest possible standards, inspire a strong sense of community, and get the best from all resources.
- The governors contribute very effectively to the ethos and direction of the school.
- Senior managers have clearly defined responsibilities, and work very well together.
- Parents and staff have very high levels of confidence in the school's management.
- Middle management is consistently effective, and at best excellent.
- All areas of management have a clear focus on teaching, learning and raising standards.
- Recruitment, performance management and professional development are highly effective.
- All aspects of the school's performance are kept under critical review.
- Development planning is very effective, but written criteria for judging success lack detail.
- Some whole school initiatives need to be more closely tuned to the needs of subjects.

Commentary

26. The governors have been highly effective in shaping the direction of the school since the last inspection. They are closely involved with all aspects of its work, provide highly skilled

financial management and support, and have a strong and highly effective working partnership with the headteacher and senior staff. They ensure that the school's core values of Christian principles, high standards and a sense of the value of all students are carried through into all areas of its work.

27. The headteacher's leadership inspires the whole school and helps all to do their best. The school is closely and effectively involved with a teacher training institution, and much attention is given to recruiting effective young teachers. All new staff receive a very helpful introduction to the school, and systematic performance management procedures ensure that talent is recognised and promoted and weaknesses are addressed. The Investors in People award reflects very effective provision for the professional development of all members of staff, and the school operates on the principle that each post should be open to the person best qualified for it. Senior and middle managers carry out their responsibilities very well, fostering teamwork and focusing closely on standards and on provision for all students. Excellent management of special educational needs provision is a key factor in helping all students to make progress and to complete their education in mainstream school. The hard work, good humour and realism of the staff help prepare students very well for success in the adult world.
28. All aspects of the school's work are analysed closely, and the results used to inform development planning. For example, the school assessed the social as well as the academic effects of grouping students in Years 7 to 9 according to abilities, or by mixed ability, and each department made its own decisions on the basis of this evidence. On the other hand, some initiatives involving the whole school need finer tuning to meet the needs of all subjects. For example, guidance that teachers should spend more time on planning lessons than on marking did not include an assessment of the levels of marking that might be needed for different subjects. The school development plan has clear and suitable priorities, but setting out criteria for success would enable some aspects, particularly those related to learning, to be assessed in more detail, particularly where success cannot be expressed in absolute terms. Very good use of ICT, particularly in assessment and in organising annual reports to parents, helps the school to get the most out of data while keeping paperwork to a minimum. The principles of giving and obtaining best value are central to the school's management approach.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,090,584	Balance from previous year	98,053
Total expenditure	4,130,637	Balance carried forward to the next	58,000
Expenditure per student	4,316		

29. Costs are above average. The headteacher and governors use funds very well to promote high standards, provide for students' personal development and develop the school site. In view of the continued pattern of rising standards, the school continues to provide very good value for money.
30. The only significant barrier to learning is the high turnover of staff, with the difficulty of recruiting specialist teachers in all areas. The school tackles this with ingenuity and determination, but it takes up a great deal of governors' and managers' time, and two major departments had temporary heads of department at the time of the inspection. The most important aid to learning is the bond created by the strong sense of common purpose between the headteacher, senior managers, governors, parents, students and teachers. The school loses no opportunity to strengthen it further.

Example of outstanding practice.

Excellent leadership and management ensure very good teaching and learning, despite a high turnover of staff.

The headteacher's personal involvement in all aspects of the school's life and work keeps her in close touch with its effectiveness, and particularly with the quality of teaching, learning and students' personal development. The senior management team is highly organised and efficient, with a high degree of delegated responsibility. Its members teach to a high standard, encourage and support colleagues, and analyse the school's work perceptively, taking account of personal development and the involvement of all students as well as of standards. The headteacher, senior staff and governors take great care over the recruitment of staff, and consult students sensitively over this. Performance management is used highly effectively to develop the careers of all staff, whether or not they are qualified teachers, and enables new managers to take up the reins quickly and effectively. Paperwork is kept to a minimum, and ICT is used to sharpen analysis and save time. The outcome is education of consistently high quality, and a dynamic sense of purpose among all staff. Almost all of those who leave do so for promotion.

Sixth form

31. The overall quality of leadership and management in the sixth form is very good, and it is founded on the same principles as in the main school. Analysis of the 2002 results, in consultation with the local education authority, led to a review of the whole of sixth form provision. This was followed by systematic action that, with the higher profile of standards among new students, led to the above average standards and very good teaching and learning seen during the inspection. During the inspection, the school was developing this further, with a systematic approach to students' personal development and very effective guidance. On the other hand, more could be done to develop work experience for students taking vocational courses in Year 12, and to improve co-operation with other schools and colleges in modern languages, where teaching groups are too small to provide satisfactory value for money. The school continues to assess the effectiveness of each element of its approach, and is in a very good position to improve its work further.

THE LANGUAGE COLLEGE

The language college has created a climate of rising interest and participation in languages in the main school and in local primary schools, and the investment in additional resources has extended the range of languages taught and helped raise standards. The language college allows courses of high quality to be offered in the sixth form, but has not had a significant impact on participation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in the main school and in the sixth form.
- The language college makes a very effective contribution to students' personal development
- There are very good opportunities to study a wide range of languages.
- The number of students taking two languages to GCSE is below the school's target, but is growing.
- The number of sixth form students is still very small.
- There are extensive and very effective links with the community.
- Provision is very effectively led and managed.

Commentary

32. Very effective leadership and management have brought about significant improvements in standards and participation in the main school since the last inspection. The original target of having all students take two languages to GCSE has not been met, but the proportion of

students doing so is greater than in most comprehensive schools, and includes one-third of the students in Year 10. Standards at GCSE and in the sixth form are very high, but the numbers taking most languages in the sixth form remain very small. Teachers use additional resources, including a dedicated ICT suite, very effectively. There are many opportunities for students to study different languages, with additional classes after school, and community use of facilities at weekends. The college works closely with the Chinese Association, which provided insights into Chinese culture, involving language, music, dance and art, during International Week last year. Outreach work with primary schools enables students in Year 7 to build confidently on what they already know, rather than starting from scratch. The school and parents are kept informed of all events in a termly newsletter.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and overall achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject. As a result, students understand quickly and share their ideas freely.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Long-term assessment is very good, but there are some weaknesses in marking.
- The library has too few books to support independent reading and research.

Commentary

33. Results in national tests and at GCSE are well above average and have been improving at an above average rate since the last inspection. Girls do better than boys in Year 9, but there is little difference between girls' and boys' GCSE results. Standards during the inspection were also well above average in Years 9 and 11 in all aspects of the National Curriculum. Students with special educational needs achieve very well overall. Those with English as an additional language make excellent progress in the early stages of learning English, but their progress in the more advanced aspects of English is held back by some marking that does not point out grammatical issues, such as the construction of verb tenses, that they need to address. Overall, however, these students' achievements are good, and the pattern of achievement in English across the school is very good.
34. Teaching is good, with some very good lessons, in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, good relationships, good discipline, confidence, a sharp focus on the task, and thorough planning. Students are eager to learn from their mistakes and enjoy discussions of good quality because the teachers know and make clear exactly what they want them to learn. Teachers develop students' knowledge through informed questioning, and help them to focus clearly on their work by setting out clearly the learning goals for each lesson. Teachers usually use final summary sessions well to draw conclusions and establish what has been learned. However, these were sometimes dropped during the inspection when students arrived late for lessons because assemblies had overrun. The match of work set to the needs of individual students is usually very good through careful grouping of students according to the standards they have reached and their learning needs. Very occasionally, lessons are not planned in sufficient detail. Assessment procedures are very effective, particularly in Years 10 and 11, but some marking does not encourage students to pay enough attention to detail in their writing. Teachers often use ICT very effectively in lessons, and make an appropriate contribution to number work.
35. The English department is led and managed very well. The department has a clear sense of its educational direction and this comes through clearly in its handbook, the schemes of work, and in lessons. Links between the department and senior managers are good. The department provides very

good support for new staff. Accommodation is good. The library is well furnished and used enthusiastically. Books are generally well chosen, but there are too few of them.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

36. Strategies for teaching literacy skills in a broad range of subjects are good. Key words are displayed in many classrooms, and students are encouraged to use specialised vocabulary. Teachers encourage students to read texts in detail as part of lessons, and there is increasing and effective emphasis on using the Internet for research. There are good opportunities for students to make their own notes and to use wordprocessing to present their writing, for example, in analytic work in art and design. On the other hand, marking in several subjects does not do enough to encourage students to pay attention to detail, or to improve on their first draft.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and Italian were fully inspected, and German was sampled.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Challenging and enthusiastic teaching leads to high standards and very good achievement.
- The school offers a wide range of courses to students and the community.
- Students' attitudes to language learning are very positive.
- Leadership and management promote the aims of the language college very effectively.
- Students do not make full use of teachers' corrections and guidance in marking.
- Teachers contribute well to students' moral, social and cultural development.
- Resources are good, and teachers make very good use of ICT.
- Assessment in Italian needs to be improved.

Commentary

37. Students in Years 7-9 learn French and either German or Italian. They may choose to begin Spanish in Year 10. They reach well above average standards in all languages in Year 9 and at GCSE. Standards during the inspection were well above average except for German, where standards were above average, but had been affected by a high turnover of teaching staff during the last year. There is little difference in the standards reached by boys and girls, but fewer boys choose to study two languages at GCSE. The number of students studying two foreign languages is rising, and some students learn three languages. Students who speak languages other than English at home, including a substantial number who speak Italian, are encouraged to obtain qualifications in them, and achieve high grades.
38. Overall, achievement is very good. Students develop good understanding of day-to-day speech through teachers' consistent use of foreign languages in every lesson, and do very well in speaking and listening, both in exchanges with the teacher and in work with other students. They acquire a very good knowledge of the vocabulary of topics they study in depth; they are guided carefully and thoroughly through grammatical constructions and different tenses of verbs for use in written work. There is, however, scope for students to improve their writing by paying more attention to detail and by making better use of their teachers' marking.

39. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Students' attitudes are very positive and they respond and apply themselves to tasks with great endeavour; for them, the teaching they receive is a rewarding experience. Teachers know their subjects very well, and many are native speakers. They make very effective use of the foreign language in the classroom to challenge students, although students often need to be prompted to use it themselves. Teachers make very good use of time, introducing different activities and skills that help to motivate and interest students, so that they are productive, work at a good pace and maintain their concentration. Lessons are well paced and enjoyable, with a good variety of activities and games to reinforce understanding by approaching issues from various angles. ICT is used regularly to enhance learning, with some particularly effective multimedia presentations to explain points of difficulty, such as conditional clauses. Teachers build well on students' previous understanding of languages, particularly in Italian, but also in French, where the language college has an effective partnership with primary schools.
40. Homework is used well to extend the work of the classroom. Students' written work is marked and corrected very well, with targets and very helpful comments about improvement: too few students, however, redraft work or complete corrections in order to improve its accuracy. The department does, however, offer good opportunities for writing, and incorporates number work into lessons where appropriate. Longer-term assessment is used effectively except in Italian, where it needs to be developed.
41. All aspects of leadership and management of modern foreign languages are very effective in raising standards and interest in languages and in promoting students' personal development by giving them experience of the cultures of other countries. The department consists of a team of talented and enthusiastic linguists, who are all committed to the school's aim of high achievement. Their relationships with the students are excellent. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high by Year 11, and represent excellent achievement.
- The overall quality of teaching is excellent, and the best is exceptional.
- Teachers explain difficult ideas clearly, and make innovative use of ICT.
- The department has created a climate of very high expectations and achievement.
- Long-term assessment is excellent, but some day-to-day marking could be improved.
- Leadership is excellent, and the department evaluates its own work critically.

Commentary

42. Results in Year 9 national tests and at GCSE are very high, with significant numbers of students reaching exceptional standards in Year 9, and A and A* grades at GCSE. The standard of work seen throughout the school during the inspection reflected this. Higher-attaining students in Year 9, for example, are expert in using the rules of indices when simplifying complex algebraic expressions. Overall achievement is excellent.
43. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in almost every lesson, and was never less than good during the inspection. The best lessons are excellent, with outstanding explanations of difficult ideas that generate a high level of commitment and involvement from students.

Teachers know all aspects of the subject very well, and some have an exceptionally clear view of difficulties and patterns of progress in mathematics. They apply these skills consistently well. For example, high attaining Year 10 students extended the work on rules of indices in Year 9 to include fractional powers and solving equations with unknowns in the powers to base 2 and 10. The lesson demonstrated clear continuity and progression contained within schemes of work, and also the beauty and power of number. This was discussed amongst the students at the end of the lesson in an excellent final session that was typical of the use of this part of lessons across the department. Work is equally well matched to the needs of lower-attaining students, with very well organised “bite-sized” activities that provide variety and maximise students’ ability to concentrate. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to work with all students, particularly those with special educational needs. The use of time within lessons is excellent, and ICT is used imaginatively and at times innovatively, for example, to enable students in Year 9 to investigate a range of geometrical theorems based on the circle. Teachers’ very effective use of specialised language contributes well to literacy and communication skills.

44. High and realistic expectations of all students have led to a climate of shared excitement and achievement, and to excellent relationships. There is regular and effective homework, and work is regularly marked. Regular assessment is used very effectively to plan work, track progress and set targets, but there is not enough guidance to students in some day-to-day marking. Teachers make good links between mathematics and other subjects.
45. Leadership is excellent and the department is very well managed. There is clear vision and very high aspirations, facilitating opportunities for colleagues to focus on planning and teaching, with continuous evaluation of the department’s work. Grouping students according to their learning needs contributes to achievement by enabling teachers to design work that enables all to learn effectively in every lesson. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection, and continue to improve. The teaching staff work hard, are an effective team and are committed to raising standards further. Provision for mathematics is a major strength of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. The National Numeracy Strategy is used very well in mathematics lessons, and other departments have systematically planned for the development of numeracy. In art and design, design technology, English and science, schemes of work identify what students are likely to know, understand and can do in mathematical terms. There are particular strengths in data handling and statistics.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent provision for mathematics leads to very high standards in the main school and sixth form.

Mathematics teachers combine excellent knowledge and understanding of mathematics with very clear understanding of patterns of progress and points of difficulty. They consistently and enthusiastically challenge all students to think, and structure work and guidance to enable them to succeed. Complex ideas are taught in an inspiring way, often in a practical context, with very effective use of computer programs that are carefully selected to focus exactly on the concept being studied. The range of topics is wide, both in the main school and in the sixth form, and the teaching of each includes an excellent balance of instruction, demonstration and independent work. Explanations are lucid, and students are very well involved in evaluating and improving their own work. Students learn consistently to identify patterns and explain their reasoning clearly to the teacher and the group. They develop high levels of personal commitment to the subject and take pride in their achievements.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are very good.
- The curriculum is very challenging; and teaching strategies very effective.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of marking and provision for literacy could be made more consistent.

Commentary

47. Results in national tests in Year 9 and at GCSE are well above average, and standards in Year 9 have risen rapidly over the past four years. The standard of work seen during the inspection was also well above average. Achievement is very good among all groups of students, and in all areas of the National Curriculum.
48. Teaching inspires students to learn and achieve very well. Teachers know the subject very well, plan in detail and use a very good range of methods to promote learning. For example, they make very effective use of dance and drama, to help students grasp the idea of spacing of atoms in solid, liquid and gas, digestion and body's defence mechanisms against germs. Highly energetic teaching with a focus on key words and processes, for example, zygote, gamete, and fertilization, led to excellent learning, achievement and enjoyment. In one very good lesson, the teacher superbly analysed students' misconceptions about kinetic energy and made very effective use of interactive language and practical work to enhance learning in a lower ability set. In another, the teacher kept students engaged in a very productive discussion by passing around a soft toy to elicit responses. Work in pairs is also used very well to help students clarify their ideas. On the other hand, the final, summary session is often under-used to consolidate new learning, and this loses some of the impact of the strengths of teaching in other areas.
49. Leadership and management are very good. There is richness of ideas, which are shared formally and informally. Curriculum opportunities are very good. Students can choose from separate sciences, double science or a single science. There is very good collaboration with the mathematics department to ensure consistency of numeracy skills such as drawing of graphs - for example, the mathematics department teaches ratios before numerical work begins in science. The use of literacy is satisfactory, but is less consistently well planned. There was too little evidence on the use of ICT to support a judgement because of building work in the science department. Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good and help them to learn and achieve very well. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been very good, and there has been a steep rise in standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average, with a good proportion of A* grades.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good.
- Independent learning is fostered, and teachers' relationships with students are very good.

- Students too often repeat work; a very small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Good long-term assessment contributes to success at GCSE.
- The contribution of other subjects to ICT is not monitored closely enough.

Commentary

50. Standards are well above average throughout the school, and the most recent GCSE results show a very high level of achievement. Boys and girls do equally well.
51. Students have a good range of skills by Year 9. They create multimedia presentations and web sites, and use spreadsheets for calculations, sorting and filtering. Through their work in design technology students can plan, test and modify sequences of instructions to control devices. Nevertheless, analysis of work and discussions with students show that work is often repeated in Years 7 to 9, and that more could be achieved if this were avoided; the school has revised its scheme of work to tackle this. By the end of Year 11, students use ICT independently, and apply their knowledge well through a range of software. Their integrated tasks use mail merge, creation of presentations and web sites and the design and interrogation of databases and spreadsheets. They apply their skills well in a wide range of subjects, and the best work, including presentations in health and social care, shows that ICT is having a very positive impact on learning.
52. Teaching is good overall throughout the main school. Relationships are good, learning goals clear and shared, and classes well managed. Teachers use data projectors well, though they do not always make full use of the capacity of interactive whiteboards. Students and parents have access, from school and home, to very good Intranet learning resources developed by the advanced skills teacher and the newly appointed curriculum leader. Teaching assistants gave highly effective support to students with special educational needs. Assessment is good, and teachers give clear suggestions for improvement. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work, and to make constructive suggestions for improvements. There is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, which lacks pace and challenge.
53. Management and leadership are good. Teaching is well monitored, responsibilities have been reviewed, weaknesses identified and action taken. However, aspects of the National Curriculum delivered by other departments are not monitored effectively. Improvement since the last inspection is good. In Years 10 and 11, all students now follow an examination course, assessment has improved, and GCSE results have risen significantly.

ICT across the curriculum

54. It was not possible to assess this fully, because of building work. Evidence available during the inspection showed that good use is made of ICT to support learning. Teachers often use ICT to present information and the Intranet is used well to store resources. Students apply their ICT capability well in many contexts. This includes multimedia presentations, simulation software, Internet research and spreadsheets. The learning support base for students with special educational needs uses computers well to encourage independent learning.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good for all groups of students.
- All aspects of planning are thorough and effective.
- Teaching strategies are creative and exciting, so that students enjoy their work.
- Fieldwork opportunities are limited and more use could be made of the local environment.
- Textbook resources have improved but more resources are needed.

Commentary

55. By Year 9, standards are above average, reflecting very good progress from Year 7 when there are gaps in students' knowledge and skills. Year 9 students have a very good understanding of the interrelationship between physical and human environments, as shown in work on Japan's tectonic environment.
56. GCSE results are well above average and value-added scores have been high, demonstrating very good progress and achievement. Year 11 course work shows an impressive range of responses to well-constructed tasks, ranging from the effectiveness of parks to the impact of a mosque. By the end of Year 11 students have a very good sense of place and geographical processes, which they relate to real situations. ICT is used very well, and contributes to research and collaborative work.
57. Teaching and learning are very good. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is enthusiastic, with very good use of praise and timed activities. Lessons are very well planned, delivered to suit a variety of learning styles with pace, and there is a sense of enjoyment. All lessons begin crisply and end with review and a lively activity. Teaching assistants are skilled in identifying and tackling points of difficulty for students with special educational needs and English as an additional language. In Years 10 and 11, learning involves increasing independent work, often based on detailed case studies. Students take part in all lessons with enthusiasm, and relationships are excellent. Teaching makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy skills, although marking does not always provide enough guidance on improving work.
58. The subject is very well led and managed. There is clear direction and vision, and schemes of work are thorough and up to date. The grouping of students according to learning needs in Years 8 and 9 helps teachers match work to the needs of all. Teaching is monitored well, and there is very good support for a new teacher this term. Classrooms are very attractive learning environments with some excellent use of posters and students' work. There have been many changes since the last inspection and most points for improvement have been successfully tackled. Overall, improvement has been very good. However the subject would benefit from more locally based fieldwork and further development of its resources, both books and ICT software.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 9 and 11.
- Excellent use is made of visits to historical sites.

- Teaching is very good; lessons are well planned, and resources are very well used.
- The department is very well managed and led.
- In a minority of lessons, work is not closely matched to the needs of all students.
- The choice of topics in history makes a very good contribution to citizenship.

Commentary

59. Standards in examinations and in students' work are well above average throughout the school, and overall achievement is very good. Teachers promote high standards in literacy and historical understanding as well as in factual knowledge.
60. In Year 9, students talk enthusiastically and with good understanding about the topics that they are studying. Their learning benefits greatly from first hand experience through visits, to sites in this country, such as Winchester Cathedral, and abroad. Work on the First World War is exceptionally well planned, and benefits from field trips to battlefield sites. Course work in Year 11 reflects this excellent experience. In Years 7 and 8, students develop a high level of skills, for example in using and evaluating evidence.
61. Teaching, assessment and learning are very good. Work is carefully assessed, and students often work in pairs and groups and to evaluate and review their work. Each lesson provides a variety of experiences, and teachers' knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise inspire their students. All students, including those with special educational needs, use different types of sources to provide evidence about the past. The department's limited ICT resources are used well. In a minority of lessons, teachers' emphasis on challenge leads them to ask too much of students with special educational needs.
62. Management and leadership are very good, particularly in the development of resources, monitoring and planning. There is a clear emphasis on progress, continuity and an appreciation of history in a variety of learning experiences. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the department is very well placed to improve further.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are very good in Year 9, and excellent in Year 11.
- Teaching is consistently very good and has excellent features, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers use a variety of assessment methods very effectively.
- Subject leadership is forward thinking, and has high expectations of staff and students.
- There are no opportunities for work with textiles.

Commentary

63. This is an outstanding department, and the quality of its work in Years 10 and 11 is excellent. Provision cannot be described as excellent overall because the school has no teacher of textiles, so that students have no opportunities to work in that area. All other areas of its work

are rightly highly regarded within the school, particularly the quality of design and the care students take to finish work to a high standard.

64. GCSE results are very high. Very nearly all students have achieved grades A*-C in each of the last two years, and in 2003 over three-fifths passed with A or A*. The standard of work in Year 11 during the inspection was equally high. Achievement is very good in Year 9 and excellent by Year 11.
65. Standards in Year 9 represent very good progress, particularly as there are gaps in many students' skills when they join the school. Students develop a wide range of skills in design, production and evaluation against specific criteria. They take great care to produce their work to the highest standard of which they are capable. They use computer technology and graphical media effectively, create imaginative food products, and design and make products from resistant materials that would be suitable for mass production. They develop skills in delegation, quality control, teamwork, designing, making and problem solving, and pay good attention to health and safety.
66. Teaching and learning are very good, with excellent features. Lessons are consistently well planned to match students' learning needs. Teachers know their students very well and foster an ethos of high achievement and challenge through the quality of their demonstrations, explanations and subject knowledge. Lessons start briskly with sharing aims for learning, and questions are targeted to the class to assess their grasp of previous learning. Practical demonstrations ensure that students know what to do and how to do it, and short-term targets are set and reviewed. Lessons end with a review of what was achieved and the next stages in learning. Teachers give students the confidence to make mistakes, and value all of their work. The organization of the workshops and classrooms is excellent and the displays of students' work, stimulus materials such as key words, health and safety procedures, codes of conduct and spiritual quotes make a positive contribution to learning and are well respected by students. The presentation of students' work and marking make a positive contribution to literacy, and they have good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills. Learning resource booklets for each unit of work are of high quality.
67. Leadership, management and teamwork are excellent. Strategic planning is first rate and realistic, and the head of department is aware of the areas for further development in the curriculum. The department uses ICT very well, and its use of computerised assessment to track standards and set targets is excellent. The departmental website is used comprehensively to aid students' work outside school, and includes activities aimed at extending the most able learners as well as offering further guidance for those needing greater support. Many units of work have good links with charitable fundraising, environmental issues and other aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
68. The department has improved on the high standards reported at the last inspection, and rising standards are reflected in growing numbers of students in the sixth form. The quality of teaching and learning has improved greatly. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design was fully inspected, and inspectors saw a substantial sample of work in drama.

Art and Design

Deleted: 1

Provision in Art and Design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve high standards in examinations and in all of their work.
- Lessons offer a wide range of interesting and challenging activities.
- Assessment involves students very well and keeps them fully informed.
- Very good leadership has built a strong team of teachers and a positive climate for learning.
- The range of media in Years 7 to 9 could usefully be extended.

Commentary

69. Students reach high standards in all of their work and in examinations. This represents very good achievement, particularly as there is a very wide range of standards among students joining Year 7.
70. Standards throughout the school are very high in drawing and painting. Students make lively and exciting use of sketchbooks, draw from observation well, plan their ideas and build upon their study of other artists' work. In three dimensions, students plan and create exciting large scale sculptures based upon the observational drawing of everyday objects and their study of artists such as Roy Lichtenstein and Claes Oldenburg. These large scale constructions are exhibited throughout the public areas of the school and make an exciting contribution to the visual environment. The range of media used is, however, rather wider in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. An art exhibition during the pre-inspection visit showed outstanding achievement across a wide range of styles and media.
71. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Students respond with enthusiasm to very well planned lessons that use a wide range of techniques, including very effective visual presentations. Reference materials are well chosen, and displays of work are highly stimulating. Teachers pay close attention to literacy, and help students develop good understanding of specialised vocabulary. Assessment uses a wide range of strategies to involve students in evaluating their own and others' work, and puts a consistent but sensitive emphasis on improvement. Students help set their own targets, and understand the National Curriculum levels and assessment criteria for GCSE.
72. Leadership and management are very good. In a relatively short time in the school, the head of department has assessed what needs to be done and has produced an effective action plan. Management tasks are well organized and resources and accommodation for the subject have been revitalized. All members of staff contribute to curriculum planning and have ownership of what is taught within a common framework. However, there are too few opportunities for students to work with textile materials or a broad range of three-dimensional media and the development of the creative application of ICT is at an early stage.
73. High standards in Year 11 have been maintained since the last inspection, and standards have improved significantly in Year 9. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Drama

74. The overall quality of work sampled in drama was very good, with excellent features. GCSE results and standards in Year 11 are well above average, and achievement is very good, both in performance and in

students' wider understanding of drama. Students develop good understanding of the impact of gesture and body language, and use technical terms and theatrical concepts fluently. They discuss Stanislavski's method-acting techniques with understanding.

75. Themes in drama are well chosen to contribute to all aspects of personal development and citizenship. In one excellent lesson, students in Year 11 became engrossed in investigating the effects of mental illness on a family, unpeeling the inner motivations of each character as they reacted to events planned or unplanned. Students co-operate very well in performance, and evaluate each other's work sensitively.
76. Teaching is very good overall, and occasionally excellent. Lessons are well planned, and taught with high levels of skill and sensitivity to involve all students. Extra-curricular work, particularly productions combining music and drama, is of high quality, and include spectacular annual productions which give excellent opportunities to a very large cast. Leadership and management are very good, and accommodation, particularly in the drama workshop, is excellent.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 9, and well above average at GCSE.
- Teaching and learning are good, and students enjoy their work.
- Good leadership and management are enabling provision to recover from recent instability.
- Music features strongly in school productions.
- Some aspects of classical music are under-represented.
- There are too few practice rooms, and too little use is made of ICT.

Commentary

77. Standards in Year 9 are above average, and GCSE results well above average. This represents good achievement from the average overall standards reached by students joining Year 7.
78. By Year 9, students acquire basic keyboard skills and play elementary melodies accurately with correct fingering. They develop good awareness in listening, can imitate rhythmic patterns and recognise different instruments. They also become aware of key musical structures such as ternary form and the Blues, and understand their effects. They sing enthusiastically, though their control and refinement needs development, and some students found it difficult to maintain continuity and steadiness in playing Blues because of limited co-ordination and weak note-finding. By Year 11, students understand how musical means can be used to dramatic effect, and can make informed judgements on matters of style. They handle specialist terminology related to chord structures and modulation with confidence. Their work in performance, however, requires more attention to balance and sense of ensemble.
79. Teaching and learning are good. Positive relationships are a striking feature, and contribute significantly to motivation and achievement. The best lessons are full of challenge, creative curiosity and well structured learning experiences, with students responding well to the teacher's warmth and enthusiasm. This was clearly evident in a Year 9 lesson on the Blues where students explored a range of techniques, making full use of their individual skills and ideas. In a few instances, teaching could be improved by breaking down complex tasks and planning shorter, more varied activities. The development of core musical skills, in performance and in handling notation, requires more careful progression and regular attention.

80. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed head of department has a clear vision of what is required, and is well supported by senior colleagues. Her flair and energy have already achieved a satisfactory improvement after a period of some instability. There is a need, however, to extend instrumental teaching to include strings and brass, and to improve provision for the Western classical tradition and for music from the British Isles. ICT is under-used, though this is set to improve thanks to new facilities. The shortage and location of practice rooms is a serious handicap to all aspects of the department's work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, learning and progress are good throughout the school.
- Good leadership and management provide clear vision and good support to new staff.
- There are extensive opportunities for learning outside lessons.
- Some tasks and guidance for students could be more closely matched to students' needs.
- Marking and monitoring of students' work need to be improved.

Commentary

81. Standards throughout the school are above average, and results in the GCSE course are well above average. This represents good achievement for all groups of students. The quality of work is consistently good across all areas of the National Curriculum, and students reach well above average standards in lessons where the teaching is very good.
82. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the main school, and very good in a quarter of lessons. Teachers know their subjects very well and plan active lessons with a good range of activities that are carried out at a brisk pace. Teachers capture students' interest and involvement, build good relationships and ensure that learning goals are met. In a minority of lessons, however, tasks for students are not matched closely enough to what they need to learn. These lessons have good features and learning is satisfactory, but students could be achieving more, for example, in strategies and tactics for getting away from opponents in basketball. GCSE coursework is effective, and there are satisfactory systems for marking and assessment. Sharpening up these areas would, however, help teachers plan work more effectively.
83. The new head of department has clear vision and direction. He has improved consistency and structure through the new departmental handbook and development plan, and has identified the main areas of work that could be improved. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection especially in examination results and activities outside lessons, where there is an extensive and very successful programme of sports and dance. Gifted and talented students do very well, and students have gained international honours in rugby, football and athletics. On the other hand, a lack of indoor accommodation restricts the range of work, and leads to some loss of time through travel. The prospects for further improvement in the department are very good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have recently improved sharply and are now very high.
- Teaching and learning are very good, and courses are very well designed.
- All groups of students achieve very well. The best coursework is excellent.
- There is no organised programme of work experience.
- Assessment and the use of target grades are highly effective.

Commentary

84. All but five per cent of students taking business studies at GCSE in 2003 passed at grade C or above, and over half achieved grade A or A*. This represents a rapid improvement over the past three years, and is an excellent result, particularly as a significant proportion of students taking the course had special educational needs. The standard of work seen during the inspection, in lessons and in coursework, was well above average. Students develop a wide range of investigative techniques, particularly in their work on marketing strategies in large companies, and understand the use of graphs to present information for different purposes. Coursework makes very good use of ICT to organise and present large projects; the best of this work, at A* level, is highly imaginative as well as sharply analytic. In some cases, students are already working to the standard expected at A-level. All groups of students achieve very well and develop very good attitudes to work.
85. Teachers know the subject very well and prepare challenging and relevant tasks that interest and involve students, helping them to build strong portfolios of coursework and preparing them very well for the examination. The range of skills required in the business world is carefully developed, and teachers ensure that students understand terminology by giving them work that requires them to apply and use it. This is particularly helpful to those with English as an additional language. Teachers use a very good range of teaching and learning styles, and make particularly effective use of ICT. Students learn to work independently, and are very well prepared for the sixth form. Work is well marked, and the best marking is excellent, with clear guidance both on improving the overall quality of work and on points of detail. Long-term assessment is thorough and accurate, and used very well to plan lessons and set targets that make students fully aware of what they need to do.
86. There are good links with other subjects, including effective application of statistical techniques used in geography. The course makes a very good contribution to literacy and numeracy skills. There is, however, no programme of work experience, and the school accepts that this needs to be developed. Departmental leadership and management are very good, and the course is very well organised. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Health and social care

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination standards have improved over the last year, and the pass rate is now high.
- Teaching is good overall, and the best is excellent.
- The teacher adapts her extensive knowledge and experience well to the needs of students.
- There is some very good use of ICT, but some work is simply downloaded without analysis.
- Resources are of good quality, but their range is limited.

Commentary

87. Examination results in 2003 show a high pass rate, with a significant number of high grades. Standards during the inspection were also above average. This represents good achievement from the students taking the course.
88. Students develop a clear understanding of the role of the local services such as the police and fire service. They undertake independent research, and, in the most successful lessons, make very effective presentations to the class using ICT, for example, on the work of a local centre for the homeless. Their best written work involves very good use of word processors, and sometimes computerised illustration. Some notes in folders are, however, simply downloaded or copied, and this does not give a clear indication of what students have and have not understood. The course makes a good contribution to students' skills in literacy, speaking and listening and using computers, and a satisfactory contribution to numeracy skills through analysis of issues such as costs and wages.
89. Teaching and learning are good, and range in lessons from excellent to satisfactory. The teacher has a wide range of experience and expertise, and uses this well in lessons to engage and interest students. She modifies and adjusts her prepared material to meet a wide range of learning needs. Students appreciate this, form positive relationships and work hard in and out of lessons. Students' progress through their course is well tracked. Where the teaching is excellent, it makes an outstanding contribution to individual research and ICT skills, as well as focusing students' minds closely on their own patterns of learning. The quality of discussion in these lessons is very high. Where the teaching is satisfactory, planning is of similar quality, but explanations are not always clear, and students' attention occasionally wanders.
90. The leadership and management of the course are good. There is a clear vision and direction for the subject, recent improvements have been made in its organisation and management, and standards have risen. Students would, however, benefit from a wider range of resources and library provision. The course was not offered at the time of the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good coverage of the National Curriculum for Citizenship.
- Work in most subjects contributes to citizenship, and work in drama is excellent.
- Teaching is good and as a result, students learn and achieve well.
- The student council is effective and all students feel involved in its work.

- Arrangements to audit provision and assess students' progress need further development.
- Teaching materials are not always matched to the differing learning needs of students.

Commentary

91. Standards are above average in Year 9. Students are aware of the rights and responsibilities of citizens. They take part in a variety of school and community based activities and have a broad knowledge and understanding of democracy and the role of central and local government. This is demonstrated through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, which encourages students to justify their opinions about topical issues. For example in a good Year 9 PSHE lesson, students were able to demonstrate their skills of enquiry and communication by discussing the dangers of alcohol, with reference to their own independent research in the media and on the Internet.
92. Teaching is good overall and students achieve well. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress thanks to well targeted support in the classroom but teaching materials could be more closely matched to their needs. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have very good relationships with their classes. They plan lessons well to include a variety of activities which engage students' interest and make effective use of resources such as video and worksheets to stimulate discussion. They vary the organisation of the classroom to enable students to work collaboratively in pairs and groups and conduct the lessons at a brisk pace, which keeps students on task. Teachers' skilful questioning ensures that a balanced view is given.
93. Several subjects contribute to citizenship through debate of key concepts. For example, prejudice and discrimination are explored in religious education and, in history, there is a focus on the monarchy, parliament and political processes. Work in drama makes an exceptionally strong contribution through the choice of themes, such as mental illness and through group dynamics, that require students to consider issues in a realistic, practical context. Students have good understanding of the range of services funded by central and local government, and use multimedia very well to present their work.
94. The citizenship theme of participation and responsibility is well established through the student council, which has control of significant funds. Students in Years 10 and 12 undertake community service such as visits to the elderly and in a new county initiative, sixth formers now receive accreditation for their work in the community. Students regularly participate in fundraising for international as well as local charities and recently entered an 'Active Citizenship' competition. The school draws well on the local community by inviting local councillors and businessmen to talk to students. Army personnel have been invited to talk about Kosovo, which has heightened students' awareness of human rights issues.
95. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has successfully integrated citizenship into the PSHE programme and ensured thorough coverage of the citizenship programme of study. A comprehensive audit of cross-curricular provision would facilitate co-ordination further. The co-ordinator provides practical guidance on effective methodology, has built up a good stock of resources, and is developing assessment procedures. Further work in this area is needed, however, particularly in the recording of students' achievement in citizenship. There is a good team spirit within the department and good practice is shared. Since the last inspection, the student council has expanded and now involves the whole school.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Other social studies	8	37.5	83.2	0.0	32.5	10	33.6
Sociology	7	85.7	83.7	42.9	33.6	35.7	33.8

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	9	100	91.6	22.2	26.3	68.9	74.1
Business Studies	18	94.4	96.4	50.0	32.8	82.2	76.5
Business	16	100	87.1	0.0	16.5	46.3	60.1
Chemistry	5	100	94.0	60.0	45.9	96.0	81.1
Communication Studies	10	100	98.3	0.0	36.8	66.0	81.1
Drama	5	100	98.1	60	41.5	80	82.9
English literature	9	100	98.5	55.6	43.7	93.3	84.3
History	6	83.3	97.1	66.7	41.0	86.7	81.2
Information technology	18	73.0	84.3	43.2	24.5	68.6	64.3
Mathematics	10	100	93.3	100	52.2	114	84.7
Modern foreign languages	6	100	94.0	83.3	63.6	106.7	92.0
Other social studies	7	100	94.3	42.9	38.9	80.0	77.7
Physics	9	100	92.8	77.8	42.8	104.4	78.6
Sociology	13	100	95.4	61.5	39.6	92.3	79.1
Travel and Tourism	12	100	88.1	8.3	15.7	60.0	61.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English, French and Italian were fully inspected and German was sampled. Standards in German are average, and teaching and learning satisfactory.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and students share a strong commitment to success and work very hard.
- Very good teaching and learning lead to high standards in all aspects of the subject.
- Co-ordination and teamwork among teachers are very good.
- Work is very well marked, with very good guidance on ways of improving it.
- A minority of students do not fully support their ideas with textual references.

Commentary

96. Results at AS and A-level are consistently well above average, and all students retaking GCSE in 2003 achieved at least grade C. The standard of work during the inspection was above average in Year 12 and well above average in Year 13. This represents very good achievement.
97. Students in Year 12 are rapidly acquiring precise vocabulary to describe and analyse language. For example, in one lesson students made excellent use of computers to research the meanings of terms such as synecdoche and metonymy, to help with their work on American poets. They identified the themes of Keats' *Eve of St Agnes*, but sometimes struggled to explain the richness of the imagery. In Year 13, students are more confident in describing complex Shakespearian characters confidently, and understand the historical context of works they study. They write accurately. Higher-attaining students make very good use of quotation to support ideas, but some average-attaining students lose marks by omitting these. All students work very well in groups, sharing ideas and preparing presentations, developing strong independent and co-operative learning skills.
98. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, enabling them to ask telling questions to assess students' understanding and extend their thinking. They vary methods of teaching, using media and games both to reinforce learning and to keep track of what students have and have not understood. Occasionally, the teacher does not allow sufficient time in the conclusion to review what has been understood, and a little of the lesson impact is lost. Teachers promote a very high level of involvement from students, so that all are encouraged to contribute and become adept at expressing their views confidently. Students say how much they appreciate the time teachers give them, outside lesson time, for individual help and to bring out the best in them. Essays are very well marked, with comments giving very valuable advice on how students can improve.
99. Leadership and management are very good. English courses are very well co-ordinated. The head of department meets the other four sixth form teachers regularly to plan and review. More experienced teachers give excellent support to the less experienced. There is a common commitment to involving students actively in their own learning and to attracting more students to study A-level English. The numbers in Year 13 are the highest in recent years. Standards, which were high at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained, and the range of teaching methods extended. This represents very good improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

100. Key skills and study skills courses are helping students to build very effectively on their existing skills, and to adapt them to the demands of advanced work. This is a key factor in the current strong rate of improvement in the sixth form. Teachers and students understand the importance of literacy in sixth form work, and it is promoted in almost all courses, though more emphasis is needed on literacy in biology. Teachers introduce specialist vocabulary carefully, ensuring that students understand it, and give them many opportunities to use it in speaking and listening as well as in writing. They make very skilful use of question and answer sessions and discussion to help students develop their ideas and to make sure that they understand.

French and Italian

Provision in French and Italian is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good for both languages.
- Standards in both languages are well above average.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Teachers contribute effectively to students' cultural development.
- Group sizes are small, particularly in Italian, but numbers are rising in French.

Commentary

101. All candidates for both languages in 2003 passed with A or B grades – in French, this was a significant improvement on the previous year. The single candidate in German also obtained grade A. The range and quality of work in Year 13 was well above average in both languages in speaking and listening and in writing. There are only two students in Year 13 in French, and Italian groups are also very small. However, the French group in Year 12 is larger, with eight students. These students have reached high standards at GCSE and were making very good progress in the initial stages of their AS course.
102. Teaching and learning are consistently very good in both languages. Teachers work very well as a team, and use a wide range of strategies. Speaking and listening skills are developed by encouraging active participation, and French or Italian become the normal means of communication in the classroom. In one Year 12 French lesson, two students gave very good presentations on the dangers of smoking and obesity. In Italian, students showed high levels of fluency and accuracy in discussing a contemporary film, and made very good progress in organising their notes. Teachers make very effective use of television and ICT, including digital cameras that allow instant analysis and feedback of oral work. The students were able to discuss the topic reasonably successfully with the relevant topic vocabulary, with gains in vocabulary prompted by the teacher. Homework includes independent research, and students studying both languages write extensively and accurately.
103. Leadership and management are good. Students are given very detailed information on entry into the sixth form; for example, the best way of learning vocabulary, guidelines for independent learning, useful websites, examination criteria for assessing students' work and assessment records. Teachers make a very good contribution to their cultural development. Students' attitudes to study are very good. Students in Year 13 spoke highly of the help that they had received from teachers, which went beyond A-level. "We are learning for life."

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics was fully inspected.

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection, and are now very high.
- Teaching and learning are excellent.
- Teachers explain complex and difficult concepts with great lucidity.
- There are very good relationships between teachers and students, who work hard.
- Some day-to-day marking could usefully provide more guidance to students.
- Student numbers are rising.

Commentary

104. In 2002, A-level results were very high with all students achieving grades A and B. A-level results for 2003 and the quality of work seen during the inspection reflect this outstanding performance. A high proportion of students complete their courses, and standards represent excellent progress from students' GCSE results.
105. In Year 12, students make very good use of past GCSE work to move into new areas. For example, in coordinate geometry, they could solve questions involving parallel and perpendicular lines and the midpoint of lines. They then linked this well with other areas of the topic to solve more complex problems. In Year 13, students recall knowledge and apply it confidently in lessons. For example, in a lesson where the teaching was excellent, students were involved in detailed discussion at the whiteboard on the dynamics of connected particles, evaluating and making improvements to their work. Regular presentations by pairs of students to the rest of the class build communication and reasoning skills.
106. Teaching and learning range from very good to excellent, and are excellent overall. Teachers have high levels of mathematical knowledge and understanding, and apply their skills very well in designing purposeful and highly effective lessons. There are excellent relationships in the classroom. As a result, students are highly motivated, are prepared to work collaboratively and think for themselves. Excellent use is made of the whiteboard to sustain students' higher order learning skills. The school's best teaching is intellectually demanding, stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging, stemming from expert knowledge of the subject. Homework is set regularly and marked up to date. The department is aware that homework questions could better reflect students' levels of attainment and that marking could contain more supportive annotations related to individual examination targets. The use of the plenary session at the end of all lessons is excellent.
107. Leadership and effective management are excellent. There is clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the department. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. The teachers work as an effective team and are committed to raising standards further. The induction of new staff has been managed successfully without compromising standards. Teachers are approachable and give up much of their non-contact time to support students as part of an 'open door' policy. Consistent self-evaluation has resulted in strategies for maintaining the very high standards and student numbers are increasing. The department is a major strength of the sixth form.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Mathematics is used very well across the sixth form curriculum to promote learning in all areas where it is relevant, and is very well represented in key skills courses.

SCIENCE

Biology was fully inspected, and chemistry and physics were sampled. Teaching and learning were very good in the subjects sampled, and standards above average in chemistry and well above average in physics. This represented an improvement on 2003 A-level results in physics and chemistry, which had a high pass rate, mostly at middle grades. There has been considerable fluctuation in results in all science subjects over recent years, and physics results in 2002 were very high.

Biology

Overall provision in Biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is very good.
- Standards are above average, and achievement is very good.
- Leadership and management, despite dislocation due to building work, are very strong.
- Students work hard and want to learn.
- Achievement is limited by weaknesses in some students' literacy and study skills.

Commentary

108. The standard of work during the inspection was above average, following some years of fluctuation in examination results, and 2003 results were better than those for 2002. They included passes at all grades, but national results were not available for comparison at the time of the last inspection.
109. Very good learning stems from teachers' planning of challenging work, monitoring performance closely and guiding students on improving their work, for example, by sharing marking schemes. Teachers' subject command is superb and the very brisk pace of lessons leads to highly productive learning. They use a good range of strategies, some providing more interaction between students than others, for example, 'what I am activity' testing their knowledge of various parts of the respiratory system. Occasionally, teachers' pace is too fast for some students to cope with, and this limits learning. Learning benefits from students' excellent attitudes to work and keenness to learn. Teachers make a satisfactory contribution to numeracy skills, but more is needed to address students' relatively weak literacy and study skills, which were reflected in errors in some coursework. It was not possible to observe work in ICT due to building work.
110. Very good leadership and management ensure consistency in teaching and have created a strong sense of teamwork in the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The advanced vocational course (AVCE) was fully inspected.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results and standards on AVCE courses are very high.
- Teaching is good overall, and the best is excellent. Assessment is very good.
- Students are very keen and well motivated.
- Very good leadership has led to a rapid improvement in standards over the past three years.
- There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.

Commentary

111. Standards are average at the start of Year 12. In 2002, seven-tenths of students achieved grades in the range A to C at AVCE. Over nine-tenths did so in 2003, with over two-thirds of candidates achieving A or B grades. The standard of work seen during the inspection was significantly above average in Year 12 and Year 13. This represents very good achievement.
112. Students in Years 12 and 13 have reached high standards across a broad range of work. They create websites using hypertext markup language (HTML) and Javascript, and include hyperlinks to other web pages. They have also designed and run complex programs, spreadsheets, and a range of databases. They develop a better understanding of concepts such as database normalisation through the expert help of their teachers. They develop a good knowledge of web design and learn quickly how to use electronic mail to good effect. Students use commercial presentation software to compile very good multimedia presentations.
113. Teaching and learning are good overall, but range in quality from unsatisfactory to excellent. Where teaching is good or better, there is a very good partnership in learning between teachers and students. Teachers are experts; students respect this and want to learn more because the subject matter is made relevant to them. Teachers ensure students improve their literacy well through their accumulation of a good technical vocabulary. Assessment of work in lessons is very good and students know how well they are doing. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching lacks pace, challenge and clarity; it leads to very slow progress. Excellent teaching by an advanced skills teacher has been a key factor in raising standards within the department.
114. Very effective leadership over the past three years has led to standards rising much faster than in most schools nationally. The department continued to be effectively managed during the inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of standards and students' progress are very good, and students make very effective use of them. The computer network is very well managed. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been very good and the AVCE course has made an excellent addition to the school's provision.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

115. Across the sixth form, students and teachers understand the importance of ICT, and use computers very effectively for research and to present their work. Students are starting to use email to exchange documents with teachers and this helps teachers assess their progress. The key skills course includes very good provision for ICT, and there are very good Internet facilities in the sixth form suite. In some subjects, particularly business studies, the use of ICT in lessons is held back by a lack of access to equipment.

HUMANITIES

History was fully inspected and geography and government and politics were sampled. Standards, teaching and learning in the subjects sampled were very similar to those in history.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

- Teaching and learning in lessons are very good.
 - Students develop the full range of skills required for examination success.
 - Resources have been developed well, and include very good handbooks and course guides.
 - There is good fieldwork, but there could be more opportunities for independent learning.
116. A-level results were above average in 2002, and improved in 2003, when two-thirds of candidates achieved A or B grades. Results have been consistently above average in recent years although relatively few students have taken the subject. The standard of work during the inspection was also above average. Students tend to achieve higher grades than those predicted from their GCSE results, and overall achievement is very good. Teaching groups have been small, but numbers are growing.
117. Students in Year 13 show good understanding of complex issues such as the political factors that affected the campaign to abolish the Corn Laws. They complete research and essays confidently. The highest attaining students write essays of high quality and all students can evaluate documentary evidence to a good standard. Students in the early stages of Year 12 are responding very well to detailed study of economic and social history. Some struggle with archaic vocabulary and spelling but most show good levels of understanding in evaluating Tudor documents. The highest attaining students are able to identify the major grievances of the rebels in Norfolk and to consider whether they might apply to all areas in England. Fieldwork, including a visit to Ironbridge Gorge, is very well used. Students prepare well for classroom discussion, plan their work well and are active rather than passive participants in lessons.
118. Teaching is very good. It promotes a high level of participation, very good learning and prepares students well for examinations. Assessment and marking are very thorough, and teachers' detailed advice on strategies for improvement makes an important contribution to standards. Students appreciate that teachers are really knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. They learn using carefully prepared course books and other resources. They make good use of computers, though they need more opportunities for independent study.
119. The consistently very good quality of teaching and learning is a result of the very good management and development. The department has a good balance of responsibility for different aspects of the course. Standards have been improved and new courses developed well; the subject has improved well since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design was fully inspected, and media studies and drama were sampled. Standards in drama and media studies are above average, and teaching and learning are good.

Art and Design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in examinations and practical work.
- Very good teaching challenges and broadens students' creative experiences.
- National and international study visits have inspired students' coursework units and extended their knowledge and understanding of historical and contemporary art.
- Very good assessment develops students' critical skills and creativity.
- Students could usefully develop their skills in researching art history.

Commentary

120. The most recent examination results at AS and A-level have been well above average and represent very good achievement from students' GCSE results. The overall standard of work during the inspection was similar, and overall achievement is very good.
121. Students draw with precision and accuracy with a variety of media. In Year 12, students experiment with mood and expression in drawing to achieve lively and exciting results. They are developing high level skills in using a sketchbook and annotate and evaluate their work confidently. In Year 13, work is increasingly developed using their knowledge and understanding of contemporary artists and significant movements in the past. There is a strong commitment to developing ideas using a wide range of source material, but some students do not have sufficiently well-developed research skills to make the most of the opportunity this provides, and this limits their ability to benefit from innovative teaching.
122. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are well constructed to develop students' capacity for independent learning and to refine and extend their knowledge and understanding of art and design. Teachers use group discussion and students' presentations to help them reflect upon their work and refine their creative ideas. Visits to galleries, museums and other countries are skilfully used to place the students' practical art and design work into a wider context, and this shows in the range and quality of the finished work and sketchbooks. Students are well motivated and many make very good use of the small, dedicated sixth form studio for independent work. Many students speak with confidence and are articulate about the subject, but some are more reticent. Teachers are making good efforts to address this through mentoring and individual support. Assessment is very well used, and students know their strengths as well as what they need to improve. Folders of work show a good volume of work being produced and care and imagination is taken in its presentation.
123. Leadership and management are very good. Teachers know the demands of examinations, and are continually evaluating the progress being made by individual students. The sixth form curriculum offers good breadth, and the range of work produced in both two- and three-dimensional materials is impressive. Improvement in the sixth form since the last inspection has been very good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The AVCE course in travel and tourism was fully inspected. The AVCE course in health and social care, and physical education at A-level, were sampled. Standards in physical education are above average. Teaching and learning are good, and very good in some lessons. Standards in health and social care are below average. Teaching and learning are good, and students achieve well in relation to the standards they have reached in the main school. All sixth form vocational courses, including business studies, would benefit from more extensive arrangements for work experience.

Travel and Tourism

Provision in travel and tourism is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The course is well organised and well taught.
- Average standards represent good achievement from students' starting points.
- Students respond well and work hard, and there is a good working environment.
- There is too little provision for modern foreign languages.
- There are too few resources for learning in the department and in the library.

Commentary

124. A high proportion of students complete the course successfully, and some achieve higher grades. Standards during the inspection were broadly average, and students were making good progress in the transition to A-level work, developing sound study skills in lessons.
125. Lessons are well organised and reflect students' varied learning styles. Students are engaged by the brisk pace of lessons and the time limits set for each activity. At times, the planned content of the lesson was too much for the time available, which led to hurried ends to lessons. Questions are used well to assess knowledge, encourage thinking and ensure concentration. Final summary sessions to lessons provide opportunities for setting objectives, enhancing study skills and measuring progress. Students learn the standards they have to reach through good opportunities to assess each other's work. They are co-operative and relaxed but work hard; they have the skills they need to succeed in the course, and make thoughtful responses in discussion. The facilities of the language college are not, however, used to develop their knowledge of foreign languages in the context of tourism.
126. Leadership, management and organisation are good. The course has recently been effectively revised, and there is a good development plan. Book resources are limited, both in the library and in classrooms, partly because there is no consistent base for the subject. New teachers joining the department are supported well and are already full members of the team. The department has established some useful contacts with local employers.

BUSINESS

Business studies was fully inspected at A-level and intermediate vocational level.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high pass rate in examinations, and the standard of work during the inspection was above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good, and students develop very good attitudes.
- Management of the department is very good.
- ICT is used well by students on the intermediate course but others have too little access during lessons.

- Business links are good.

Commentary

127. A-level results were above average in 2002. Results in 2003 showed a high pass rate, but with only one grade above C. AS candidates performed well in 2003, and 18 students continued to A-level. Overall, the standard of work during the inspection was above average in AS and A-level courses. Students adapt well to the demands of a higher level course, as not all have taken the subject at GCSE. Achievement is good, and most students do better than their target grades. Standards in the intermediate GNVQ course in 2002 and 2003 were below average, but this represents good achievement as a significant number of students had special educational needs. Students taking this course during the inspection responded very well to the vocational approach and to the challenge of working independently and using ICT extensively. Early in the course they were working independently on promotional campaigns.
128. Teaching and learning in lessons are very good. The challenge and pace of work in A-level lessons is impressive. Teachers use questions very well to assess understanding and higher level thinking. Students' assignments indicate a good grasp of business theory and a clear understanding of the examination board criteria because these aspects of the course are very well taught. In Year 13, students are confident about investment appraisal and can use the average rate of return to make decisions about a company. In Year 12, they understand the basics of marketing mapping and product lifecycles. Students in both year groups apply their skills and knowledge very well. Use of computers in some lessons is limited by lack of access to specialist rooms.
129. There is a well-planned programme of visits, and information about the courses is easily accessible. Leadership and management within the department are very good, and there is very good support for newly qualified teachers. New courses have been effectively introduced, planning is good and assessment information is well managed. The GCSE business studies course in the main school provides a very good basis for AS level work, but there is no clear progression for students completing the intermediate GNVQ course. Standards and the range of courses have shown good overall improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

Key Skills

Provision in key skills is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is well organised to promote intellectual development and study skills.
- Teaching is enthusiastic and well focused.
- The Surrey graduation programme offers wide opportunities and promotes responsibility.

Commentary

130. Provision for key skills and critical thinking, and the induction programme for the sixth form, are closely matched to the school's approach to teaching and learning and to the needs of students. Imaginative, dynamic and practical teaching generates a strong sense of purpose and makes the reasons for each aspect of the work very clear to students. Work is very effectively related to each student's own courses and personal planning. Topics during the inspection

included setting and meeting targets, assessment and the concept of value added as well as practical approaches to learning, including the use of memory. The Surrey graduation programme was introduced to students in Year 12 during the inspection. It provides wide ranging opportunities for additional study with community service and some work experience. Students' participation is effectively assessed and recorded, and responsibility is promoted by providing each student with a small grant to promote their work. All aspects of these programmes are very well managed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is	2	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	2
Overall standards achieved	2	2
Students' achievement	2	2
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2	1
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	2	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	1
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2	2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets students needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2	1
Accommodation and resources	3	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	2	1
Support, advice and guidance for students	3	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	3
The leadership and management of the school	2	1
The governance of the school	2	1
The leadership of the headteacher	2	1
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	1

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

