

INSPECTION REPORT

ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC BOYS' SCHOOL

Bexleyheath

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101477

Acting Headteacher: Mr J Fripps

Lead inspector: Mr Graeme Clarke

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 261417

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Male
Number on roll;	829
School address:	Halcot Avenue Bexleyheath
Postcode:	DA6 7QB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Pat Carrol
Date of previous inspection:	9 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Columba's is an 11 – 18 Roman Catholic boys' comprehensive school in Bexleyheath, to the southeast of London. It is about average size with 829 boys on roll, including 95 in a small Sixth Form. Pupils come from a wider area than the immediate locality, including about a third from Greenwich and Thamesmead, where socio-economic factors are below the national average. The buildings are being extensively refurbished with a new hall and teaching rooms recently added. The school gained Investors in People status in 2002 and the Artsmark award in 2003. The school is growing in size.

At present Sixth Form teaching is provided in partnership with the neighbouring St Catherine's Catholic Girls' School. Pupils now in Year 11 wanting to go into the Sixth Form in September 2004 will join a new Sixth Form college in the town. The existing Sixth Form will phase out by July 2005. Admissions into Year 7 will increase in September 2004.

The local education authority, Bexley, has selective grammar schools where pupils gain entry following success in an optional eleven plus examination. Many pupils at St Columba's have below average attainment on entry. Most are white British, almost one tenth are black British and a very small proportion are from an Asian background. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is very low - one pupil is at an early stage of English language acquisition.

About one tenth of the pupils have special educational needs, which is below average, but 34 have statements, which is above average. Pupils with special educational needs have predominantly specific learning, speech and language, or social and emotional difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1547	Graeme Clarke	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Biology (Sixth Form)
13762	Norman Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
1085	John Laver	<i>Team inspector</i>	English
30597	Robina Howells	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics
21866	David Tracey	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science
1240	John King	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art
21416	Margaret Brookes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and Technology
12336	Malcolm Overend	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography and History
29364	Christopher Tapley	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and Communication Technology
10060	David Gutmann	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology (Sixth Form)
4426	Terry Fitchett	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern Languages
8806	Martin Flatman	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music
33131	Glen Hayes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical Education and Citizenship
16227	James Phillips	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special Educational Needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This a good school with an ethos that is conducive to learning. Good teaching in most subjects, very good leadership, strong pastoral care and good management in key areas all make an important contribution. In turn, A* to C results have improved in GCSE examinations, and are above the national average. Given pupils' below average attainment when they join Year 7, the school gives good value for money. However, the Sixth Form is not cost effective because it takes resources from the main school.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well overall, very well in art, but they do not do as well as they should in design and technology and French.
- Pastoral care is well-managed and makes a vital contribution to the ethos of the school.
- Attendance is well above national average, and pupils are punctual.
- The acting head teacher's leadership and the effective senior management team are sustaining the drive to improve standards.
- Good arrangements give support and guidance to pupils with special educational needs and promote inclusion.
- There is some weak teaching, particularly in French.
- Pupils' understanding of how they can improve in specific subjects is not developed consistently throughout the school.

The school's good improvement in raising standards in GCSE is a reflection of good progress in relation to aspects raised by the previous inspection. There have been improvements in science, in making better use of assessment information to improve progress, in sharing good practice in teaching, and in meeting National Curriculum requirements. Satisfactory progress is evident in expanding resources and extending the use of information and communication technology throughout the curriculum. However, progress in addressing low standards in design and technology and French has been unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 9 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	D	E
mathematics	C	B	C	C
science	D	C	C	B

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.

Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	C	C	B
Year 13	A/AS Level and VCE examinations	N/A	E	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 pupils attained at the end of Year 9.

Pupils achieve well throughout Years 7 to 11. Pupils' attainment is below the national average when they join the school but rises to average in tests and examinations in Years 9 and 11. Their standards in English and literacy and mathematics, and their information and communication technology skills, are also average throughout. Sixth Form students' achievement is satisfactory, and standards in their work are about average. Gifted and talented pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, in contrast, pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good throughout the school. Pupils show good attitudes to school, good behaviour and commitment in lessons. Their above average attendance and punctuality are very good throughout the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in most subjects, except in French particularly. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive the best teaching and this has led to improved GCSE results. Effective methods and encouragement from teachers sustain pupils' involvement in lessons and lead to good learning.

The curriculum is good overall and meets statutory requirements. It gives good access to pupils of all abilities. In particular, pupils take up the good opportunities for participation in the arts, in sports and in other activities. Students benefit from very good preparation for later stages in their education and from the programme of careers education. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance, although in some subjects they do not know clearly enough how they can improve. The partnership between school and parents is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The acting head teacher gives very good leadership. The senior staff team provides strong management and is supported by heads of subjects who, in the main, manage their departments well. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength. Notably, strong pastoral leadership makes a major contribution to the Christian ethos of the school. Governors have a high commitment to supporting their school. They are well informed through regular contact and diligent in pursuing matters of concern.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express confidence in the school and are pleased with the standards achieved by their children and the care the school provides. Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework that is set, but most is appropriate and reinforces work in lessons. Parents are justifiably dissatisfied with arrangements for providing information about their children's progress. They are concerned especially about the style of annual school reports, and meetings where some parents would prefer to consult with subject teachers. The school has advised parents that it is reviewing the arrangements.

The school respects and acts on pupils' views and concerns, which they express to their tutors and through the school council. Pupils are generally very satisfied and value the support and advice they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Address issues of departmental management, particularly in French, to improve pupils' learning and achievement by attending to teaching that is mundane and unchallenging.
- Encourage more pupils to study a foreign language in the school.
- Develop the use of assessment, for example to increase pupils' understanding of how they can improve in specific subjects.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall, provision and effectiveness of the present Sixth Form is satisfactory. In 2002 students' results were well below average in the Advanced Supplementary (AS) and Advanced Level (A Level) examinations. The small number entered make comparisons with national averages for different subjects of doubtful value. Students often failed to meet predictions and results at higher grades were well below average. Results improved at higher grades in the 2003 examinations, but a higher proportion was unclassified at advanced level. Changes to entry policy have led to improvements reflected in average standards of work now seen in lessons. Teaching is good and leads to good learning and satisfactory achievement. Students develop mature and positive attitudes. The school's collaboration with St Catherine's leads to reasonably sized teaching groups, but the number of boys in groups is often small. There has been little change in the quality of Sixth Form provision since the last inspection. The curriculum offers a large range of subjects but few opportunities for enriching students' experience. Given that funding from the main school budget is required to support the provision, the Sixth Form gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Improvements in teaching quality are leading to improved learning.
- The head of Sixth Form and tutors make diligent use of assessment information to give students support and guidance, which they value.
- Students' study skills are not good enough to enable them to tackle advanced level work with the degree of scholarship required.
- Examination results have been below average at higher grades.
- The Sixth Form is not cost-effective.

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	Satisfactory. Students attained good grades in Advanced Level English Literature 2002 and 2003, but from a small entry. AS results are not as high. Standards are currently average in Year 13, and higher in Year 12 as a result of good teaching and attitudes. Students achieve satisfactorily but have not yet developed good examination technique or independent learning skills.
Mathematics	Satisfactory. One candidate achieved grade C, but others failed to complete the Advanced Level course in 2002. There was no entry at A Level in 2003. AS Level results in 2003 were below average, leading to students retaking examinations. At this early stage in the course, Year 12 standards are above average with students achieving well as a result of good teaching.
Science	Satisfactory. Biology teaching is satisfactory overall. Examination results have been poor. Students' work reflects good motivation and endeavour, which is now leading to good achievement and attainment at about the national average.
Information and communication technology	Good. Standards reached are about average, and are in line with students' potential reflecting satisfactory achievement. Students are strongly motivated and show good attitudes to their work because of good, well-organised teaching.
Humanities	Good. Students have good opportunities to study both history and geography. Students make good achievement in geography as a result of good teaching, but their attainment is below the national average
Visual, and performing	Satisfactory. Students in art and design make steady progress and achieve

arts and media	satisfactorily. They have a good grasp of form, line and colour but there are weaknesses in drawing and links to recognised artists' work.
General education	Satisfactory. All students follow a general course that includes religious education, personal, social and health education, ethics and physical education. The general studies examination in January of Year 13 is followed by opportunities to enhance study and key skills. Study skills are underdeveloped in Year 12.

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

Students are well supported throughout their time in the Sixth Form. Advice and guidance are very good, and are freely available throughout Year 11. Parents are fully involved in discussions. The school is familiar with what is on offer in other institutions in the area. Students are well advised about transfer elsewhere, for example to further education, when this is in the best interests of the student. A useful induction programme results from extensive collaboration with St Catherine's Girls' School. Students feel well informed and understand the implications of their decisions.

Students receive very good support. Form tutors and the head of Sixth Form know their students very well. The school effectively uses a minimum target grade system based upon GCSE performance and on-going assessment information. A scheduled approach in form time for individual discussion between tutor and student helps students to understand their target grades and to get the best out of their studies.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. Dedicated, enthusiastic leadership makes a major contribution to students' motivation and satisfaction. Assessment data is collected and used assiduously to track students' progress. Tutors are well informed and able to give good guidance and support. However, subject specific guidance takes place within departments, and is not co-ordinated by Sixth Form management. Joint arrangements for frequent discussions to co-ordinate management with St Catherine's Girls' School are very effective, resulting in both coherence in teaching and administration.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are pleased with most aspects of provision in the Sixth Form. They particularly enjoy student life in the school, and get on well with each other. Students value the way they are treated by tutors and teachers, finding their advice on their work and on careers helpful. A large minority feel there are insufficient activities to enrich their Sixth Form education.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop consistent and effective arrangements for subject teachers to give students subject specific guidance to improve the quality of their work.
- Improve students' study skills as early as possible in their Sixth Form career to enable them to address advanced level work with an appropriate degree of scholarship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, students' achievement is good. Standards were average in the 2002 statutory tests in Year 9, and in GCSE. Most students with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students in Years 7 to 9 achieve well, and achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards in Year 9 English tests rose significantly in 2003, especially at higher levels.
- GCSE standards at grades A* to C have risen significantly in 2003, and are noticeably higher than average in English, mathematics, and science.
- Standards in French examinations are well below national averages and those of other subjects in the school.

Key Stage 3

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.7 (31.3)	31.9 (31.6)
Mathematics	34.0 (35.4)	34.8 (34.4)
Science	33.9 (33.0)	33.4 (33.2)

There were 140 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Key Stage 4

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	57 (41)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	37.9	39.8

There were 120 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. Pupils start in Year 7 with below average knowledge, skills and understanding. The school is in an area where parents can opt for selective education in grammar schools following an eleven plus examination at the end of Year 6. Some catholic families make this choice, and so the full range of pupils' ability is not represented on entry to St Columba's. Pupils achieve very well in art, well in English, science, citizenship, geography, history, music and physical education. They achieve satisfactorily in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). However, pupils are not doing as well as they should in design and technology and French because they are over dependent upon the teacher rather than thinking for themselves, or because teaching is often unsatisfactory.

2. In 2002 standards of attainment at Level 5 and above in English and mathematics tests for Year 9 pupils were at the national averages. Improvement was about the same as the national trend. They were above average in science, which continued a pattern of improvement that was better than the national trend. English and mathematics results were above those of schools where pupils had

about the same prior attainments in Year 6. They were well above in science. In 2003 the results at Level 5 and above exceeded the targets in English and mathematics, but were marginally below in science. As a direct outcome of stressing the importance of literacy skills in English lessons, the English figures are much improved in 2003, especially with regard to the proportion of pupils gaining higher Level 6 results. However, the information needed to make national comparisons is not yet available, and hence it is not possible to judge whether these improvements are better than the national trend.

3. The proportions of pupils that gained five or more A* to C grades in GCSE was above the national average in 2002, average for five or more A* to G grades, and above average for one or more A* to G grades. On the basis of points allocated for each grade, the average points score of all pupils was close to the national average. However, in recent years, the rate of improvement in the average points score has been behind the national pattern. Nevertheless, results were above those of schools where pupils had about the same prior attainment in Year 9. Results changed significantly in 2003 with a marked increase in the proportion of five or more A* to C grades. However, other than in drama and music, a relatively low proportion of pupils gained A* and A grades. Information to make detailed national comparisons is not yet available.

4. In Years 7 to 9 standards in work seen are well above average in art, above average in English, about average in other subjects but below average in design and technology and French. However, as a result of generally better teaching in Years 10 and 11, above average standards are sustained in art and English, and standards improve to above average in geography, music and ICT, and average in design and technology and French. They remain average in other subjects.

5. Pupils with SEN make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the work set for them. Achievement is best in English and mathematics where the work content is better matched to their level of attainment. In Year 11 they make very good progress and in 2003 all achieved good accreditation in relation to their needs and abilities ranging from Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Bronze awards to five GCSE grades within the A to C range. Very good progress is made by pupils who need help with English as an additional language (EAL). They quickly achieve conversational skills and steadily improve in writing and grammar skills.

Sixth Form

6. Until 2003 the school had an open entry policy to the Sixth Form, which led to students' attainment at the start of their courses being below average. Students' results in the 2002 GCE Advanced Level examination were well below average. Students did not reach their predicted grade in about a third of subject entries, compared to a sixth who did better than expected. At school level, the proportions gaining A to E grades in specific subjects is about average, but the number of candidates entered is often very small making comparisons of doubtful value. In 2003 students gained more higher grades in A Level examinations, but a higher proportion was unclassified. Nearly a quarter of entries were unclassified at AS Level because students did not address the work with the scholarship and attention to detail needed at this level. Changes to the entry policy have led to a more realistic match between students' prior attainments and the courses they follow. These improvements are reflected in average standards of work now seen in lessons. In subjects inspected in detail, students achieve well in biology, mathematics, geography and ICT, and satisfactorily in English and art.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

7. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Their attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Attendance is well above average and punctuality is very good.
- Almost all pupils have positive attitudes towards the school and learning.
- Pupils' personal development is good and most behave responsibly.
- The behaviour of a minority in a few lessons is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

8. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and value the teaching and personal support that they receive. Most work conscientiously and do their best. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good except in a minority of lessons where teaching is insufficiently stimulating. Pupils' participation in school activities and clubs is good.

9. Attendance and punctuality are very well promoted and pupils want to come to school because they enjoy it. Absence is effectively followed up. Attendance in the last reporting year was 93.2 per cent.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.3%	School data :	0.5%
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.

10. Almost all pupils behave well and conduct themselves in a responsible manner. In a few lessons, behaviour is less than acceptable at times, either because discipline is not effectively applied or the activities lack challenge. Effective support is provided for those pupils who have difficulty exercising appropriate self-control. The number of exclusions and detentions awarded is low. Relationships between pupils are good. Pupils are tolerant and mutually supportive. Incidents of anti-social behaviour are few.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
637	13	1
15	1	
13	3	
9	2	
56	3	

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

11. Pupils are generally willing to take on responsibility. A youth enterprise scheme provides many pupils with opportunities to work as a business building team that not only develops a range of personal and key skills but contributes much to the growth of their self-esteem, confidence and maturity.

12. Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, but opportunities are missed to develop cultural aspects further in some subjects. Spiritual development is very good. Many lessons start with prayers, and a quiet time for reflection. Pupils are contemplative in assembly, for example, in a lower school assembly where they considered the relationship between potential, challenge, achievement and themselves in life. Moral development is also very good. Discussion of topical and sensitive issues in drama and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons results in pupils making informed decisions. Good social development is reflected

by pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour towards one another, and involvement in the many local charitable fund-raising activities. Good cultural development takes place within the curriculum. For example, pupils are encouraged to recognise and respect individual differences, values and beliefs through art, when they explore different cultures' art forms, and in religious education lessons.

Sixth Form

13. In the Sixth Form, students' attitudes, conduct and attendance are very good. Attendance levels are similar to those in the lower school. Students are pleased with most aspects of provision in the Sixth Form. Although they do not adopt a structured approach to managing their own community, they do arrange activities for themselves that enhance social and cultural development such as visits to theatres and art galleries, and dances held jointly with St Catherine's Girls' School. The Sixth Form contributes to the life of the lower school. The head boy and his deputy take part in assemblies. Prefects carry out duties that clearly contribute to maintaining good behaviour, for example in guiding younger pupils to assembly points during a fire drill. Students lead and run the school council, and represent its views to senior staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

14. The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is enriched by good extracurricular activities. Pupils have good support and guidance backed by good assessment procedures and preparation for the next stages of education or employment.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A substantial investment in training has led to improvements in effective teaching and learning for all pupils and Sixth Form students.
- Teachers foster positive relationships and use appropriate and well-managed activities to help develop pupils' good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils with SEN benefit greatly from the use made of learning support assistants.
- Unsatisfactory lessons include shortcomings in planning for learning or managing pupils' behaviour.
- Homework is often used well, but at times it is not consistently set.
- Students' independent study skills are inconsistently developed, with an inappropriately greater emphasis in Year 13 than in Year 12 leading to over reliance on teachers.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 122 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (2%)	14 (11%)	55 (45%)	39 (32%)	10 (8%)	1 (1%)	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.

15. Teaching is satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 9, and good in Years 10 to 13. Although no pupils' in Year 11 could be observed during the inspection because they were out of school on work-experience, a quarter of lessons in Year 10 are very good or excellent. Eleven unsatisfactory lessons were seen mostly in two subjects in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is very good in art, and good in all other subjects except three. Teaching is satisfactory overall in ICT, but unsatisfactory in design

and technology and French. Where teaching is effective, it leads to effective learning. Pupils' positive attitudes compensate for unsatisfactory teaching in French and lead to satisfactory learning overall. This is a considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection. It results from a substantial investment in training, for example through participation in the national Key Stage 3 strategy, although there are further gains to be made by consistent application of the principles involved.

16. Several very good features contribute to the most effective teaching. Of particular significance is the way teachers foster positive relationships and help develop pupils' good attitudes to learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, and a clear knowledge of pupils' potential, which helps them plan and carry out their lessons well. Appropriate and well-managed activities, together with a lively pace and good time management, encourage pupils to behave well and to become involved. As a result pupils concentrate well and show interest in lessons. They work hard, both mentally and physically as appropriate. Their development of subject skills, knowledge and understanding is good. Learning is effective, and is consolidated by the ways in which teachers check and support pupils' understanding. For example, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons when questioning, support and consolidation are related to clearly stated lesson objectives. Excellent teaching leads to a high degree of learning and achievement. In Year 10 art for example, a purposeful atmosphere with close support and guidance results in high standards; and in a Year 8 citizenship lesson pupils showed excellent achievement when all were involved in discussion and could make informed decisions using real-life situations.

17. Unsatisfactory lessons include shortcomings in planning for learning or managing pupils' behaviour. Although these relate to relatively few situations, they are aspects that need improvement. In ICT, French and mathematics for example, the misbehaviour of a small minority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is not effectively managed and slows down learning unacceptably. Importantly, their misbehaviour usually stems from inadequately planned activities. Some lessons lack pace and challenge, for example, in ICT where time management is inadequate for the rigorous use of plenary sessions to consolidate pupils' learning. On occasions, pupils do not have sufficient responsibility for their own learning. In design and technology poor organisation and too much intervention by the teacher, such as telling pupils what to do, and sometimes doing it for them, leads to pupils not developing technology skills as well as they should.

18. In lessons throughout the school, teachers plan and prepare well so that suitably different tasks are set, and suitable strategies are used, to enable pupils with SEN to achieve the learning objectives of lessons. Generally good or very good use is made of the learning support assistants (LSAs), to enable these pupils to be effectively included in all learning activities and to complete tasks confidently and make good progress. In some lessons, where the support of LSAs is not available, pupils are less secure in their learning when required to carry out tasks that are too complex in relation to their literacy and numeracy skills.

19. When individuals and small groups of pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra tuition in literacy skills, skilled teaching enables them to make very good progress in writing, spelling and punctuation, and in sequencing their ideas into well-structured stories. The quality of teaching and learning is very good for pupils with SEN following the accredited course ASDAN in Years 10 and 11.

20. Homework is often used well, but at times it is not consistently set, revealing wide differences between subjects and teachers. It is used very well in art, well in English, mathematics science, music and for examination work in physical education. Homework is used satisfactorily in most other subjects.

21. Though good overall, assessment is somewhat inconsistent. It is very good in art, where teachers use data to identify pupils who have unrealised potential, or who may be experiencing difficulty, and are able to provide them with additional challenge and support. It is good in English where the use of data is unusually good, and in physical education where an ICT based system is used to monitor pupils' performance. Practice is good in geography and is improving pupils'

achievement. In these subjects pupils have a very good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and know what they need to do to improve. The picture is different in other subjects. For example, weaknesses exist in using assessment in mathematics and ICT to guide pupils onto the next steps. Practice is unsatisfactory in French, where marking is too generous and the use of data is underdeveloped.

22. Pupils are given well-informed advice, guidance and support that are securely based on monitoring their performance throughout the curriculum. Areas for development are thoroughly identified. Pupils then draft targets for themselves. This is good practice because pupils learn what they need to do to improve. These targets are then used as the basis for discussion with parents and form tutors at the annual interview day. Targets are agreed for each pupil and progress thereafter is closely monitored by the form tutors. This is a very effective strategy because it ensures that pupils, parents and form tutors work together to improve all round standards. However, access to subject specific advice is limited, although it can be arranged at other times should the need arise.

The Sixth Form

23. Students benefit from generally good teaching in subjects that were focused upon during the inspection, and also in those sampled. Teaching is satisfactory in English, science and art and good in mathematics, ICT and geography. Good teaching derives from teachers having confidence in their subject. For example, in media studies well-planned, enthusiastic and expert teaching sustains students' interest and successfully draws out their skills of analysis and interpretation. Teachers frequently challenge students through effective questioning which consolidates their learning. Well-founded relationships between teachers and students promote a strong desire for learning and involvement in lessons.

24. Students' study skills are inconsistently developed. In ICT, students improve key communication skills when debating moral and ethical issues about the use of ICT. However, teachers often give more emphasis to study skills development in Year 13 than in Year 12. Students commented on this. Marking gives good advice on skills in biology, but more so in Year 13 than Year 12. Art teaching addresses some of the shortcomings in Year 12 students' learning by showing them how to research and develop their ideas. However, students depend upon their teacher too often. In geography for example, students are increasingly making use of ICT for investigation. However, they rarely take the responsibility for their own learning, and in art they are reliant on teachers to decide how they should learn.

25. Assessment is very good in improving learning. For example, in a Year 13 English lesson on *Othello*, students were well informed about how well they had done and how to improve. Similarly in mathematics, students know present standards of attainment and have target grades for future work. Diligent marking supports students' learning in biology.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- All pupils in Years 7 to 11 have good access to a broad curriculum that includes all National Curriculum subjects, and drama, with all statutory requirements met.
- Opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are enhanced by optional examination courses in drama, media studies, physical education, and engineering.
- Development in the arts is good and has led to the recent Arts Mark award.
- Extra-curricular activities are good and extend learning.
- Careers education is good.
- The very wide Sixth Form curriculum is well managed jointly with St Catherine's Girls' but draws more resources from the main school to staff small groups than Sixth Form funding provides.

Commentary

26. The school provides a sufficiently broad curriculum for all pupils. All National Curriculum subjects, and drama, are taught and statutory requirements are met. However, in modern foreign languages time allocation is below the recommended level. Specialist ICT provision is good, with pupils in Years 7 to 9 having one discrete lesson each week.

27. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a core curriculum which includes religious education and PSHE, together with National Curriculum compulsory subjects. In science, there is the opportunity for pupils to take either the double award or separate sciences. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow a GNVQ course of study in ICT. As this is equivalent to 4 GCSE subjects, teaching begins at the end of Year 9 so as to facilitate greater flexibility in Year 10. Opportunities are enhanced with the inclusion of optional examination courses in drama, media studies, physical education, and engineering which is provided off site at a local college of further education. Lower attaining pupils have the opportunity to take the ASDAN award in place of science. These developments represent an improvement since the last inspection.

28. Development in the arts is good through the art, music and drama curriculum; this is reflected by the recent award of the Arts Mark. Drama is a popular well-taught option. School stage productions and the use made of theatre in education groups in the school make an important contribution to moral and social development. Pupils also benefit from participation in a good variety of other arts based activities, including lunchtime clubs in art, drama and music and visits to a variety of artistic venues. This is an area which the school wishes to develop further.

29. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and enriches pupils' educational experiences. Activities take place mainly at lunchtime or after school and include clubs for drama, music, art, cooking, science, chess and board games. A variety of sporting activities are also offered. Year 7 pupils benefit from taking part in outdoor pursuits at a residential centre. Learning is additionally supported by extra lessons for higher attainers in mathematics before school, homework clubs and booster classes in science.

30. Provision for careers education is good. The careers education programme is well managed and taught. Support from a careers advisory service is very good. Work experience and alternative vocational experiences for selected pupils are well organised and appropriate. A special project to develop key skills and build business management awareness through *Young Enterprise* is very good. The school uses its links with other institutions and employers well to enhance provision. Information, advice, guidance and support to prepare for the next stages of education, either within or beyond school, are good and relevant to the needs of pupils and students.

31. Good arrangements are made for pupils with SEN to have full access to the curriculum throughout Years 7 to 13. Pupils with SEN who achieve the required grades in GCSE receive an appropriate level of learning support when they continue their education in the Sixth Form. Suitable alternatives to GCSE courses are available. Specific arrangements are made at a local college of further education for a few pupils in Year 11 who are disaffected with attending school. These pupils are following appropriate courses and effectively continuing their education. The school identifies its gifted and talented pupils and is providing satisfactory opportunities to enrich their experience and develop their independent learning skills.

Sixth Form

32. The Sixth Form curriculum is the result of a well managed joint arrangement with the neighbouring St Catherine's Girls' School. All students follow a broad general programme which includes religious education, general studies, physical education and PSHE. Study at GCE A Level, AS Level or Advanced GNVQ courses requires five or more A* to C grades in GCSE. For GNVQ Intermediate, students have to have four subjects at grade E or better.

33. Present students were able to choose from a very wide range of subjects, including 19 at A Level and two at GNVQ Intermediate Level. More than half the subjects are taught at St Columba's. Many of the groups are small, and draw resources from the main school to staff them. This uneconomic position will continue when the current Year 12 move into Year 13 in 2004-2005 after which the Sixth Form will close. Year 11 pupils desiring a Sixth Form Catholic education will join a new Sixth Form college that opens in 2004.

Staffing and Resources

The provision of staffing, accommodation and resources is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are sufficient qualified teaching and learning support staff who are appropriately deployed.
- New accommodation has improved facilities and planning for further building is in place.
- Inadequacies include physical education changing areas and the small school library.

Commentary

34. There are sufficient qualified teaching staff to teach the curriculum. They are sensibly deployed and have an appropriate range of skills and experience to teach what is assigned to them. The school has sufficient learning support assistants and deploys them effectively to make best use of their time and skill to support pupils on the SEN register.

35. Resources are generally adequate for all pupils to achieve satisfactorily. However, a significant reduction in the withdrawal of pupils with SEN from lessons and increased support in the classrooms is not reflected in the level of resources available for this improved provision. ICT resources are lacking in some subjects, such as for data logging experiments in science.

36. Accommodation has been improved by the provision of a new block and refurbishment of science laboratories. The school library, although a pleasant learning environment, is small for the size of school. The changing facilities for physical education are too small for the number of pupils using them. Further improvements, such as the replacement of temporary classrooms with a new block and extending the library, are in the planning phase.

Sixth Form

37. Sixth Form classes are taught in suitable accommodation, by specialist teachers with up-to-date knowledge of their subject. Students have access to ICT resources to facilitate their coursework, but many provide their own textbooks.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance. The school seeks and acts upon their views through the school council and tutor-group sessions.

Main strengths and weakness:

- Pastoral care is very good.
- Pupils feel valued, supported and safe.
- Pupils receive good academic and personal advice and guidance.
- The transfer and induction arrangements for new pupils are good.

Commentary

38. Relationships between teachers and pupils are constructive and mutually respectful. The very large majority of pupils respond well to their teachers' expectations because of the sensitive way in which they are treated. Teachers and support assistants work successfully to meet the academic and personal needs of individual pupils. Members of staff ensure they are seen about the school at all times and opportunities are frequently taken to show interest in the pupils and to provide incidental advice.

39. Child protection procedures are in place and followed. Regular health and safety checks and risk assessments are carried out but some matters require closer attention and these were brought to the attention of the school during inspection. The school is clean and free of graffiti and litter. First aid cover is adequate. Specialist external agencies provide relevant services to the school to meet the particular needs of some pupils.

40. Pupils and students are well informed about their performance and targets for improvement. They are strongly encouraged to do their best in discussion with their form tutor. Many of those who are in danger of underachieving receive mentoring support. Extra tuition is made available in some subjects, for example in mathematics and science. Pupils who have been excluded receive help to catch up.

41. Good quality information is provided about subject options, Post 16 courses, and education and career opportunities beyond school. Pupils in Year 11 and the Sixth Form are strongly encouraged to go on to higher education, but also receive appropriate guidance about other opportunities. A careers advisory service provides very good information and advice at appropriate times.

42. Formal structures are in place to assess regularly whether all pupils and students feel they are being supported well enough. The school mostly relies on pupils and students to express their concerns through the pastoral system. It respects and often acts on comments and suggestions from the school council.

43. Good procedures are followed for the identification, provision, and review of pupils' special educational needs, in accordance with the Code of Practice. Good individual educational plans (IEPs) are drawn up with clear targets set for each pupil on the SEN register. Individual educational

plans (IEPs) are used effectively to give information and guidance on the current learning targets to all staff, parents and pupils.

Sixth Form

44. Sixth Form students receive good guidance through meetings and in a booklet to help them make informed choices about courses of study. Nevertheless, a significant minority of Year 12 students felt the advice given in Year 11 was unhelpful. Each term they discuss their progress and targets with their form tutor and subject teachers as appropriate; students comment that they are always willing to help them. Year 13 students value these meetings and feel they have very good access to guidance.

45. The Sixth Form manages and runs the school council, which includes pupil representatives from other year groups. Students value their autonomy in being able to run social events, such as the leavers' ball, for themselves.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between school and parents is good. Parents express confidence in the school. The school works well with other schools and colleges and its involvement with the community is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Parents are pleased with the standards achieved by their children.
- The school and parents work well together to support the pupils.
- Community involvement enhances pupils' personal development.
- Links with other schools and colleges are beneficial to the pupils.

Commentary

46. Parents are pleased with the quality of education and care that is provided and with the academic and personal progress achieved by their children. Inspectors agree with them that many teachers have high expectations of pupils, that the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible and that pupils settle well when they start in school. Some parents are unhappy about the amount of homework that is set but inspectors judge that most is appropriate and usefully supplements lessons.

47. The school maintains a good level of contact with parents through personal communication and frequent newsletters. The parents', teachers' and friends' association raises substantial funds to support pupils and improve resources. Parents co-operate well with the school, for example regarding homework, attendance procedures and supporting events. Very good links are maintained with parents of pupils with SEN. Parents are actively involved in reviews of their child's progress and are kept well informed of the targets set, strategies being used and suggestions as to how they can help.

48. However, parents are justified in being dissatisfied with the information provided about pupils' progress. Annual school reports do not clearly describe pupils' strengths and weaknesses and their achievements with relation to expectations for age. On two occasions each year parents join tutors and their children to discuss progress and targets for improvement. These arrangements do not suit some parents because they would prefer to consult with subject teachers. The school is aware of the parents' views and has advised them that it is reviewing the arrangements.

49. Employers provide good opportunities for work experience and business enterprise support for the pupils. Some subjects, such as English and science, use the community well to enhance the curriculum. However, use of the community is underdeveloped elsewhere in the school in

broadening learning experiences for the pupils. Pupils make a significant contribution to charitable activities in good liaison with the local parishes.

50. Relationships with primary schools are good. Transition arrangements for pupils are efficient but curricular links are not well developed. Students are well prepared for higher education because of the arrangements in place with relevant universities. The school works very closely with a college of further education to provide vocational taster classes and alternative courses for relevant pupils. Good links with external agencies result in effective liaison and support for pupils with SEN.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The acting headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Senior staff provide strong management supported by a committed governing body.
- Heads of subjects manage their departments well.
- Pastoral leadership and management of SEN are particular strengths.

Commentary

51. The governors are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school through close and regular contact with it. Their arrangements for reviewing its progress throughout the year are secured through an appropriate and active sub-committee structure, and the receipt of regular reports from senior staff. Governors are committed and very keen to support the acting head teacher and the senior management team. Although governors tend to be reactive rather than challenging they will, nevertheless, pursue matters of concern, ask penetrating questions and seek solutions. They have recently been successful in providing facilities for disabled pupils and in dealing with perceived weaknesses in some subject areas, but they do not always ensure that decisions are based upon all the principles of best value.

52. The acting headteacher and senior managers are a close-knit team which functions effectively in promoting good achievement, mutual respect and a caring Christian ethos. The acting head teacher provides very good leadership and has high aspirations for the school. He is well respected by staff, governors, pupils and parents. Routes of communication are efficient and transparent through daily meetings with senior managers and regular visits to classrooms. There is a clear delegation of responsibilities amongst senior managers and these are well understood by staff.

53. The procedures and documentation for monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are comprehensive. Senior managers have a secure grasp of the strengths of the school through subject reviews and analysis of pupils' work over an extended period, and are well aware of specific weaknesses. They are now beginning to take steps to rectify these but this task is not yet completed.

54. Overall, the middle management of the school is strong. Heads of department in most subjects show a clear sense of purpose and have built effective teams of teachers who seek to inspire their pupils. With few exceptions heads of department lead by example and are very supportive of their colleagues. Leadership is particularly strong in art, but is weak in French. The management of SEN provision includes significant and effective changes to procedures and practices, with clear plans for continuing improvement. The acting headteacher and senior management appreciate the limitations of the present curriculum provision. There will soon be a review in the light of imminent changes to the structure of the school following the closure of the Sixth Form.

55. The pastoral leadership and management are particularly strong features of the whole school including the Sixth Form. Form tutors also act as learning mentors to their pupils and this ensures that they have a very informed picture of the academic and social development of each pupil, with frequent reviews of individual targets to encourage progress. This creates a strong link between curriculum and pastoral provision.

56. All senior managers, including the acting head teacher, have line management responsibility for a number of middle managers. Regular, focused meetings, together with a high expectation of accountability, ensure that management is good and effective. The programme of continuing professional development is well organised and training needs of teachers are closely linked to the school's priorities and to the outcome of properly conducted performance management reviews. The impact of these actions is evident in recent successes in improving marking and assessment, in sharing of good practice in teaching and in raising pupils' achievement through techniques to increase their motivation.

57. Since the last inspection the good quality of leadership and management has been sustained.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,168,043.00	Balance from previous year	-42,774.00
Total expenditure	2,180,798.00	Balance carried forward to the next	-12,755.00
Expenditure per pupil	2785.00		

58. Financial administration is very effective. The school directly aligns its spending plans to the educational priorities set out in the school development plan and fairly allocates funds to support the curriculum. Stringent monitoring of payments informs senior staff and governors of patterns of spending. Financial administration is diligent and the school is acting upon all recommendations in a recent auditor's report. The school has reduced its overspend. Given the below average attainment on entry, and the significant improvement in GCSE examination results, which are now above average, the school gives good value for money.

Sixth Form

59. The leadership and day-to-day management of the Sixth Form are very good. Although the Sixth Form will soon close, the management and pastoral team have a very clear vision of how the school can best respond to its students' needs. They have put in place very good systems for supporting students' academic and personal development, and for monitoring their progress. These are valued by students, particularly those in Year 13. Effective joint management arrangements with St Catherine's Girls' School ensure that every student has access to all aspects of Sixth Form life. The work of the head of Sixth Form, together with that of the tutors, makes a major contribution to the general education programme and success of the Sixth Form.

60. The present Sixth Form offers a wide range of subjects. As part of the Sixth Form reorganisation in the area the school has to meet agreements for sustaining the courses which students have embarked upon during the last year of the Sixth Form. This requires that more teaching expertise be drawn from the main school than Sixth Form funding provides, leading to a deficit in the budget. Although the situation has been justified, the Sixth Form is not giving satisfactory value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well.
- Standards are above average for pupils by the ages of 14 and 16.
- Good teaching results in good learning.
- The department benefits from good leadership and management.
- Pupils have good attitudes.
- The best practice in teaching is not spread consistently across the department.

Commentary

61. Standards are above average for pupils both by Year 9 and by Year 11. Although the percentage of Year 9 pupils attaining Level 6 or above was below the national average in 2002, the percentage rose considerably in 2003. Standards in the current Year 9 are above average. The GCSE results for pupils in Year 11 in 2002 were good in both language and literature. This trend has continued since. The work seen from pupils in Years 10 and 11 is of a good standard. Pupils of all abilities in Years 7 to 11 achieve well. This includes pupils with SEN, higher attainers and those identified as gifted and talented. The level of achievement by the time pupils reach Year 11 is particularly creditable since many pupils join the school with below average standards in writing.

62. Most pupils continue to display skills in speaking, listening and reading which are better than those in writing as they move up through the school. They speak with confidence and fluency, and read with accuracy and expression. Writing is sometimes characterised by careless errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. By Year 11 a significant number of pupils have developed a pleasing writing style which combines a wide range of vocabulary, good presentation and a high level of critical ability when analysing texts such as detective fiction and First World War poetry. Higher attainers achieve at a better rate than the lowest attainers do, but there is a good level of support for lower sets which does help lower attaining pupils to improve their levels of skill and critical understanding. The success of English teachers in working as a team is evident in overall pupil performance, which has in most recent years improved for both 14 and 16 year olds in line with, or better than, the national trend in English.

63. Teaching is good for pupils in all age groups. A strong focus on improving literacy skills along with pupils' positive attitudes is directly responsible for the good achievement. Almost all pupils are keen to learn, take pride in presentation, and enjoy opportunities to contribute in class, as evident for example in a Year 10 lesson on war poetry. The teaching is particularly successful when teachers have high expectations, make pupils take an active part in lessons, and encourage independent learning. This was a notable feature of a Year 10 lesson in which pupils gave presentations on their hobbies, sometimes with the assistance of computer software. This resulted in considerable gains in confidence as well as speaking skills. The best teaching is also characterised by good use of a range of resources and very helpful feedback to pupils on how well they have done and how they can improve their work further. On the few occasions where teaching is less effective, pupils'

achievement and progress are restricted by the difficulties which less experienced teachers have in managing some less motivated pupils. Sometimes the tasks are not sufficiently matched to the range of ability which exists in some younger year groups, so that some pupils do not achieve appropriately.

64. The leadership and management of English have been effective in meeting the challenge presented by frequent changes in staffing. Particularly effective in raising standards has been the emphasis on monitoring and good assessment, although the quality of marking of younger pupils' work is less consistently good than at GCSE Level. Teachers have addressed the issue of careless errors in writing under the good leadership of the experienced head of department. However, some of the best teaching practice has not been spread consistently across all departments. The department has been successful in developing the use of ICT as a regular part of teaching, and pupils enjoy the experience of using this technology.

65. The good standards and pupils' progress noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. There has been satisfactory improvement in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. A satisfactory strategy for promoting literacy throughout the school has been in operation for some years. Subject areas are expected to address literacy as a means of improving standards and achievement. Monitoring of its implementation and impact is variable. In most subject areas there is a strong focus on improving pupils' knowledge, understanding and ability to use the appropriate technical language. Often, for example in mathematics and physical education, the meaning of the language is discussed. Some subject areas, such as music and geography, make good use of display. There are variations in the way in which extended writing skills are addressed: in history, for example, there is a limited range. In modern foreign languages, although language structure and grammar are emphasised, oracy skills are less developed and insufficient attention is given to encouraging extended pupils' responses. Therefore, although the school's focus on improving literacy is having a positive impact on standards overall, that impact is not yet consistent.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in **French** is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, but particularly in Years 7 to 9, where it is mundane and unchallenging.
- Pupils underachieve in speaking and listening.
- Leadership and management are weak and do not do enough to promote foreign language study in the school.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 and pupils in Years 10 and 11 reach satisfactory standards in writing and have a sound grasp of grammar.

Commentary

67. At the end of Year 9 standards in French are below average, particularly in speaking and listening skills. Recent teacher estimates of performance at the end of Year 9 are over-generous in their assessment of overall standards. GCSE results have shown considerable fluctuation. They have been well below average in recent years, though with a marked improvement in the latest examinations, albeit based on a very small number of candidates.

68. The achievement of pupils, particularly in Years 7 to 9, is unsatisfactory because they lack confidence in speaking. They rarely speak, except to answer structured questions, and do not use French to ask questions or to seek help. Pronunciation is often too anglicised. The breadth of spoken language and underlying knowledge is very limited. Listening skills are also underdeveloped because teachers do not consistently use the foreign language and tape-recorded tasks are not sufficiently challenging. Teaching stresses points of basic grammar in written work in Years 7 to 9. This leads to standards that are close to average, especially in the top set in Year 9. Writing of French is usually satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but the scope is limited to coursework requirements with little evidence of creative writing. Reading comprehension skills are underdeveloped. In Years 10 and 11, standards in lessons and in pupils' written work are in line with national averages, with good attention to grammatical accuracy. Pupils' active use of language tends to rely too heavily upon prompts from the teacher and the textbook.

69. Overall, teaching is weak because of the large proportion of unsatisfactory lessons in Years 7 to 9. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in many lessons in Year 7 to 9 because teaching is often pedestrian and unexciting. No use is made of ICT. Although there is evidence of paired activities, their impact on oral progress is not adequately monitored and teachers do not do enough to correct pronunciation. In several unsatisfactory lessons the pace was either too slow or impeded by frequent low-level disruption by pupils. In such lessons pupils were demotivated because there was not enough variety of tasks, and they were not fully involved. Higher attaining pupils in classes which are set by ability have a positive attitude and a willingness to participate in lessons. In turn these pupils progress well in developing more personalised language. Lesson planning rarely takes account of different ability levels in mixed ability classes, particularly so for pupils with SEN. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 10, with clear explanation, a firm emphasis on grammar and good use of praise. Learning is satisfactory because attitudes to work of most pupils are usually positive.

70. Leadership of the subject is not effective and insufficient effort is made to identify weaknesses, to take decisive action to improve standards, and to raise the profile of French in the school. Management is also unsatisfactory in that there is no clear monitoring of standards. Written guidance for staff is limited. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, particularly in raising achievement and the quality of teaching.

MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11.
- GCSE results are above average.
- Pupils work hard and want to learn.
- Leadership and management focus on raising standards.
- There is not always enough challenge for the highest attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Short-term assessment and target setting processes are not rigorous enough to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

71. On entry to the school standards are slightly below average. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 show that standards were average, and above average when compared with similar schools. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels was slightly below average. Pupils make satisfactory achievement. GCSE results in 2002 were very good. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining grades A to C was above average and the proportion gaining A* to B was average. Pupils made very good progress from Years 9 to 11. The most recent Year 9

tests and GCSE results in 2003 are higher than in 2002 showing that standards are continuing to rise. Pupils are achieving well.

72. The standard of work seen in Years 7 to 9 reflects pupils' increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics. They extend their knowledge of number, algebra, geometry and handling data. Much of their work about understanding patterns, symmetry and the mathematical properties of shapes is proudly displayed. Year 7 pupils showed good understanding when they derived and used a formula for finding the area of triangles. Pupils also become adept at managing fractions, decimals and percentages and understand the relationship between them. For example, in a mental arithmetic exercise, Year 8 pupils confidently converted them from one to another. Pupils are introduced to algebra in Year 7 and by Year 9 they can solve complex algebraic equations. The standard of work in Years 10 and 11 is above average and by Year 11 pupils have covered all the topics of the GCSE Syllabus and are sufficiently prepared for the examination. Higher attaining pupils enjoy the challenge of demanding mathematics. In a Year 10 statistics lesson, pupils confidently organised sets of data showing very good understanding of polygon graphs.

73. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is mainly satisfactory to good. Most lessons follow the Key Stage 3 strategy, beginning with mental work, which allows pupils to reinforce basic skills or to focus on new ones. Where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, pupils achieve the learning objectives but some of the higher attaining pupils may not have been challenged enough. Sometimes teachers fail to make end of lesson assessments of the extent of the pupils' learning. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers plan lessons with a variety of activities to help pupils achieve suitably challenging learning objectives. They continuously assess pupils' progress and adjust questions, explanations and activities to match the needs of individuals who need extra help or extra challenge. At the end of these lessons the teachers inform the pupils of the extent of their successes and efforts. They are generous with praise for effort, which encourages pupils to work hard. The standard of teaching in Years 10 to 11 is good and results in pupils' good progress. Pupils at all levels experience challenge and display a mature attitude toward the examination course. Teachers plan well and employ a variety of teaching styles according to the needs of the pupils. They are skilled in explaining new concepts.

74. Pupils with SEN who find mathematics difficult are taught in smaller groups and benefit from the valuable support of teaching assistants who also sometimes support pupils in other classes. The standard of marking is good overall and most teachers include comments of encouragement and advice. Mathematics lessons contribute to pupils' literacy development, particularly their speaking and listening skills, because teachers encourage them to explain how they have solved problems. Teachers explain key mathematical words, which pupils use with confidence. Pupils use ICT to help support their work in geometry, in handling data and for word processing, but there are too few opportunities for classes to work in the school's computer suite.

75. The leadership and management of the department are good. The department has had serious staffing difficulties. It is now more stable, with successfully established teamwork. Although there is a focus on raising standards, procedures for short-term assessment and target-setting, and giving sufficient challenge to Year 7 to 9 higher attaining pupils are not yet well established. There is clear improvement in management and teaching quality since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Pupils' skills in number allow them to enhance their learning in a variety of subjects. Their use of numeracy in other subjects supports their work in mathematics lessons. In science pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively to collect and interpret data, to take measurements and to make various calculations. In geography pupils practice using co-ordinates during map reading exercises. They prepare spreadsheets in financial planning exercises in information technology lessons. In art pupils use mathematics in their work on patterns, shape and perspective, and in physical education to calculate measurements of speed and fitness.

77. Most heads of departments are aware of the need to prepare a numeracy policy and some have done so. The mathematics department has already provided training in the use of numeracy across the curriculum and has produced a draft policy. An audit of the extent of other subjects' use of numeracy is planned to identify where and when particular topics are being taught. Consultations between the mathematics and other departments have begun. It is the aim of the numeracy co-ordinator to ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics in all subjects. The mathematics department's initiative, while in an early stage of development, is proving to be effective in ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to develop their numerical skills and that their skills are applied appropriately.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Results of National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations in science have improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well as a result.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well considering their attainment on entry to the school.
- The provision of ICT in science lessons is weak.
- Day to day marking of pupils' work could be more effective.

Commentary

78. National curriculum tests in 2002 were average but above the average of schools where pupils had similar prior attainments. Results in 2003 were similar to 2002 confirming the upward trend of recent years. GCSE results in 2002 were above average for both grades A* to C and A* to G but a significant minority of pupils followed an alternative curriculum instead of science. Results in 2003, when most pupils took Double Award science, are likely to be about the national average.

79. Standards overall in Year 9 are average. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is below average for their age. In particular their scientific enquiry skills such as planning and predicting are limited. However, as the result of good teaching they make good progress in their lessons and their achievement is good. Scientific enquiry skills also improve to average standards because most lessons involve pupils doing practical work. Standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are also average. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of biology, chemistry and physics and appropriate practical skills. These pupils have maintained the good rate of progress and their achievement is also good. Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well because they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants in their lessons.

80. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned, often with a good focus on learning objectives and outcomes. However, this focus is occasionally missing with the result that progress is slower. Many lessons successfully follow the Key Stage 3 strategy of three sections, with a starter activity and plenary session. This uses time effectively and ensures that pupils maintain interest and learn well. Behaviour management is good so that the majority of time in lessons is used effectively. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and this is an important factor in promoting a better learning environment. Pupils are well behaved and generally have positive attitudes towards science, and this improves their rate of learning in class. Literacy and numeracy are well taught in science lessons. For example, most lessons focus on key words for the topic being studied; writing frames are used for investigations and help improve standards. Access to ICT facilities and data logging apparatus is limited and as a result computers are not sufficiently used to support and extend pupils' learning in science. Although long-term

assessment is good, and is well used to improve pupils' motivation, day-to-day marking is not sufficiently effective in promoting high standards because it does not give pupils a clear indication of standards attained and how to improve. Being able to opt for separate sciences in Year 10 caters effectively for the needs of higher-attaining pupils. However, teaching ensures that differing groups of pupils make equally good progress.

81. Leadership and management are good. Clear educational direction is resulting in improved standards. The quality of teaching and learning is well monitored within the department. The science curriculum is now more appropriate and better managed. The national strategy for science has been smoothly introduced and as a result teaching has improved. Teachers and technical staff work well together as a team to ensure that the department operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Since the previous inspection the department has made good improvement. Standards in tests and examinations are steadily improving. Staffing is stable and the department is in a good position to move forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good leadership demonstrates vision and strategic thinking for improvement.
- Accommodation and equipment have improved.
- The Key Stage 3 strategy is in place in Years 7 and 8, and is being implemented in Year 9.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly being used in other subjects.
- There is a lack of formal, formative assessment in Years 7 to 10.

Commentary

82. Pupils at the end of Year 9 achieved results in the teachers' assessments in 2002 that were marginally above average at Level 5 or above. The GNVQ results for Year 11 in 2002 were above average with the highest grades in line with the national average. Almost half attained the equivalent of a C grade. In 2003, nearly two thirds gained the equivalent of a C grade, which is a marked improvement as there was a much larger entry.

83. Standards are average overall in Years 7 and 9 and good in Year 8. Most pupils are able to access and use the Internet, use presentation software and show a basic understanding of how spreadsheets can be used. There is, however, a lack of foresight in their work and often they access the software before having a clear idea of how they will apply it. In Years 10 and 11 standards tend to be above average, due mainly to a more positive approach by the pupils and better teaching. The best work demonstrated the use of evaluative techniques such as annotation and the use of screen prints.

84. Achievement is satisfactory overall with the best achievement demonstrated in Year 10. . Where there is underachievement in Years 7 to 9, it stems directly from poor attitudes and misbehaviour that result from weak teaching. Year 9 pupils with SEN made less progress than they should, reflecting insufficient liaison with the SEN department.

85. Teaching varies from poor to good, but overall is satisfactory with good practice in Years 8 and 10. Lessons are comprehensively planned, but often with insufficient attention to adaptation of the schemes of work to match pupils' ability. Good lessons have clear learning objectives and are appropriately timed. They start with interesting introductions, which stimulates interest and set the scene for the main tasks. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are effective, for example in one

case greatly helped by a detailed written brief from the teacher. However, formal assessment is insufficient to help pupils, and many are unsure how to progress further, having little idea of course requirements. Pupils benefit from improved resources, with the number of computers about average. They make good use of ICT facilities for individual study.

86. Leadership by the head of department is good and demonstrates vision and strategic thinking for improvement. Management is overall satisfactory. There is evidence of some classroom monitoring but support for inexperienced members of the department is not sufficiently structured. The Key Stage 3 strategy is well developed, and well on the way to completion. National Curriculum requirements are met in all year groups; there is better accommodation and up-to-date hardware and software. Progress since the last inspection is good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. Since the last inspection the use of ICT across the curriculum has improved. Substantial, effective use is made in English, but other subjects make very limited use of these facilities. Difficulties have been experienced in booking the ICT rooms more than a week in advance, and arrangements require review. There is good use of interactive whiteboards where these are installed, such as in physical education.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in accordance with section 23 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996, and is reported upon separately.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement is good and standards are rising.
- Teaching is good and effective systems to assess the work and progress of pupils are in place.
- The department is effectively led and managed.
- Not enough use is made of information from assessment to assist teaching and planning.
- The department lacks information technology equipment.

Commentary

88. Pupils entering the school have average or below average levels of attainment in geography. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 standards match the national average and at the end of Year 11 standards, especially for boys, are above the overall national average. Results in external examinations are rising at a rate in line with the national rate. With the exception of 2003, GCSE results in geography have been better than in most other subjects in the school and compare very favourably with those in similar schools.

89. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and their achievement is good. They make gains in geographical knowledge about processes and places and improve their skills of geographical enquiry. In particular, their achievements are boosted through a detailed knowledge of a wide range of geographical examples that give depth to the topics being studied. Progress for pupils with SEN is also good because they are well supported in the classroom by work that is tailored to their individual needs and by help from well-informed LSAs.

90. The quality of learning is good. This is because teaching is good and pupils are well-behaved and concentrate well in lessons. Good displays of pupils' work and other geographical material in geography rooms and around the school stimulate their interest and exemplify the department's contribution to pupils' literacy. Pupils are involved in lessons, although teachers largely direct the work they do and there is little opportunity for them to take responsibility for their own learning. They work well together when required, sharing information and learning from what they do together.

91. Good quality teaching is a significant factor in enabling pupils to make progress. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. Lessons are well planned, time is well managed and there is a variety of activities for pupils to undertake. Lessons have clear aims and objectives. Teachers know their subject well, and imaginative approaches, such as in a Year 7 lesson on local land use, generate interest and enjoyment in the subject. Use of ICT is beginning to contribute to teaching and learning. All pupils have the opportunity to undertake geographical fieldwork, though greater use could be made of the local area as a preparation for more extended research. Homework is a regular feature; work is methodically marked in accordance with the school marking policy and incorporates helpful comments and targets that assist pupils to know how to improve.

92. The department is efficiently, if unobtrusively, led. Management is good. Sound administrative guidance and support is available. Schemes of work give reliable guidance, though they do not sufficiently identify the contribution the subject makes to citizenship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Proficient systems are now in place to assess the work of pupils but not enough use is yet made of the information obtained to set targets and plan teaching. Evaluation and monitoring of the work of the department is regularly undertaken and planning identifies appropriate future developments. The quality of the accommodation is much improved. The use of ICT has increased though the department lacks good facilities. Standards are rising. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HISTORY

Provision for history is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are rising.
- Enthusiastic teachers are well supported by senior management.
- Leadership and management of the department are good.
- There is insufficient use of audio visual and ICT.
- Much work is over-directed by teachers.

Commentary

93. Pupils' levels of attainment are average or below when they enter the school, but by the end of Year 9 they reach standards in line with national averages. GCSE results are average or marginally above average for boys nationally but below the overall national position. Although attainment in history is better than in several other subjects in the school few higher grades are awarded in external examinations.

94. Pupils make good progress. In Years 7 to 9 they learn how to use historical sources well. They have sound knowledge of a wide range of topics, for example the English Civil War and subsequent events. Higher attaining pupils make detailed and accurate comparisons between Britain in 1750 and today. However, lower attaining pupils have less command of detail and their

work is mainly descriptive and lacks reasoning. In Year 10 pupils fully understand the re-shaping of Europe after World War I, but achievement suffers when written work is not completed and detail to support explanations is missing. Coursework assignments in Year 11 show good analysis and interpretation from original sources, for example work on the 'New Deal' in the U.S.A.

95. Teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. It is least effective when the need to manage poor behaviour is a feature of the lesson, though overall the behaviour of pupils is good. Lessons are well planned. Aims and objectives are made clear. Lessons have a variety of timed tasks, often engaging pupils in collaborative work, through which they share findings with others and so improve their knowledge. Appropriate tasks and resources are provided for pupils with SEN and those with higher levels of attainment. Learning support assistants work alongside teachers ensuring that pupils with SEN make good progress. Teaching benefits from teachers who are knowledgeable, innovative, enjoy history and thus create interest among pupils. However, insufficient use is made of audio-visual resources and ICT as an aid to teaching and learning.

96. Learning is good because teaching is good and pupils concentrate very well. Knowledge is reinforced at the end of each lesson and homework is set to complement or extend the work done. Conscientious marking with helpful comments and targets assists pupils to improve. Written work makes a good contribution to literacy as pupils use a variety of styles in their writing and key vocabulary is a feature of most lessons.

97. The leadership and management of the department are good. Support and guidance for the two newly qualified teachers is very good. Departmental administration is proficient. New assessment policies are in place but it is too early to gauge their potential to provide valuable information to assist teaching and departmental planning. Schemes of work are sound but lack an indication of how the subject can contribute to pupils' personal development, citizenship and individual needs.

98. Accommodation has been tastefully re-furnished and good displays in all rooms help to create a historical environment for learning. Resources are much improved and extra curricular experiences are beginning to play a part in pupils' education. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Some teaching leads pupils to work purposefully and make good progress; otherwise it is undemanding and leads to superficial learning.
- Collaboration between teaching and technical staff supports safe, regular practical work.
- The narrowness of the curriculum limits what pupils can achieve.
- Assessment processes are not used effectively throughout work in progress to acknowledge what pupils do well or help them understand how to improve standards.
- Insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the department's strengths and weaknesses limits its ability to focus on important priorities for raising standards.

Commentary

99. According to teachers' assessments of National Curriculum Levels, standards at the end of Year 9 have been rising. In 2003, results at Level 5 and above were above average but there were significantly fewer pupils who gained the higher Level 6. GCSE results in Year 11 have been consistently below average since the last inspection, with the exception of 2002 when they rose markedly. They declined again in 2003.

100. In work observed, clear explanation and demonstration helped pupils to know about the properties of materials and how to carry design and manufacturing processes safely. As a result, pupils are reaching at least average standards of technical accuracy, in drawing for example. Overall, however, the achievement of the majority of pupils is unsatisfactory because they are too reliant on teachers to tell them what to, rather than thinking for themselves. Their skills of analysis and evaluation are superficial, leading to statements like, for example, 'I like this chair because it enables me to relax even when I'm bored'. Average and lower attainers produce limited responses and sometimes do not finish their work.

101. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. In the better lessons, when teachers ask challenging questions, pupils search their memory and apply previous knowledge well. High expectations of good behaviour and firm discipline help to keep pupils occupied for most of the time. Both staff and pupils benefit from the very good support of the technician who works alongside teachers and supervises pupils whilst they are using machinery. More often, however, lessons are not well matched to pupils' different abilities, particularly those with SEN. A limited range of teaching strategies leads to superficial learning. An over-reliance on the teacher 'telling and showing' does not sufficiently develop pupils' technological capability by adequately combining their understanding and practical skills. Levels of challenge and expectations of academic achievement are low, reflected by too much copying of notes and limited opportunities for research. Generally, ICT is insufficiently used as a learning tool. Satisfactory use of assessment is made during coursework for older pupils, but in Years 7 to 9 procedures such as marking and using homework do not contribute sufficiently well to raising standards.

102. The provision in Years 10 and 11 has been enhanced through links with Bexley College to provide an engineering course which pupils enjoy. However, elsewhere the curriculum is very narrow, and does not give pupils experience of working with a sufficiently broad range of different materials.

103. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because of an insufficiently clear emphasis on strategies for raising standards. The Key Stage 3 strategy has had little discernable impact and some training needs have not been met. Written policies are in place but they do not guide the work of the department sufficiently. Development planning does not focus on important priorities for improvements in the subject. Monitoring lacks sufficient depth to inform a clear evaluation of the work of the department.

104. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards of attainment have not risen significantly. There has been insufficient progress in addressing the weaknesses in teaching and assessment. Though statutory requirements in the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 are now met, there is insufficient use of ICT to meet current requirements.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- GCSE results represent very good achievement.
- Pupils have good painting and drawing skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching is very good and results in very good learning.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to art and concentrate well.
- Literacy is very good; pupils write and talk about art confidently.
- Using ICT to manipulate images, as in the previous inspection, is underdeveloped.

Commentary

105. Pupils achieve very well in art throughout Years 7 to 11. Standards are high by Year 9. GCSE results in Year 11 are consistently above the national average for all maintained schools and this represents very good achievement.

106. Pupils join the school with average standards in Year 7. As a result of very effective teaching they make very good progress and achievement is very good by Year 9. Pupils have an unusually deep knowledge and understanding of a very broad sweep of art history. They know the work of several major artists and impressively are very conversant with the Renaissance in Year 7. Their work shows an excellent working knowledge of art throughout the world such as Mexican, Egyptian and Indian art. They use a wide range of media confidently and speak and write confidently about art. They undertake extensive research and write at some length in their sketchbooks. Achievement is also very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have a good understanding of the way that artists use media and apply this well to their own work. For example, Year 10 lino prints for a book jacket show pupils have a good understanding of the way that artists such as Van Gogh used marks and how to work within the limitations of black and white. Painting and drawing from direct observation is good and secure links exist with the work of relevant artists.

107. Teaching is very good and results in very good learning. Pupils have very good attitudes to art and their behaviour is excellent. The main reason for this is the calm, harmonious working atmosphere in which pupils concentrate and make good progress. Quick-fire questions grab pupils' attention at the beginnings of the best lessons. For example, in a lesson on Pop Art pupils were required to recount the main features and relate them to the key words on the board. To maintain pupils' concentration teachers often talk quietly to the whole class as they work. Teachers provide close individual support for pupils with SEN, and those experiencing difficulties, and consequently they progress well. Practical work is well organised with tools, equipment and materials readily available. The best lessons finish with a concise plenary session where pupils recount their achievements or talk about the difficulties they have encountered. Appropriate homework is set and is marked very thoroughly and positively. Pupils know precisely how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Rewards, such as art marks, are taken very seriously and are avidly sought after by the pupils.

108. The art department benefits from very good leadership and effective management. A very positive ethos with a strong focus on high achievement is widely evident. The curriculum provides a rich programme for the pupils and has a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about art. Though pupils use ICT extensively to find out about art, as in the previous inspection, insufficient evidence exists of them using ICT to manipulate images. Assessment is excellent; school data enables teachers to identify pupils with unrealised potential and to focus on raising their standards of attainment. The department has sustained the very good quality of provision since the previous inspection.

Music

Provision in music is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Examination results in music are consistently above the national average for GCSE.
- The teaching of GCSE pupils is good.
- The music department is well led and well managed.
- There is no brass or strings instrumental teaching.
- Classroom assistants are not allocated to the music department.
- The school has not appointed a permanent second teacher to the department.

Commentary

109. Pupils have consistently attained above average results in external examinations. Many of the pupils attain or exceed their expected target grades set by the school. In most years nearly three quarters of GCSE candidates have gained an A* to C grade. The standard of work seen throughout Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 well-planned activities help pupils gain considerable experience of composing and appraising and they develop good quality keyboard and computer skills.

110. Pupils' achievements by the end of Year 9 are satisfactory and good by the end of Year 11. The most gifted and talented pupils are identified early on and given additional and more challenging work. Teachers give very good help to pupils who struggle with listening and composing. Pupils with SEN do not, however, receive any additional support from classroom assistants. During the inspection classroom singing was neither prominent nor inspirational.

111. The quality of pupils' musical education is good overall. The best teaching and learning is seen in the examination groups in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are well planned and pupils show good interest and high levels of motivation. Computers, keyboards, recordings, manuscript books and worksheets are used to promote a deep understanding of the music being studied. Younger pupils in Years 7 to 9, although not as focused as older pupils, nevertheless settle quickly to their work and enjoy singing, composing, performing and appraising all kinds of music. Pupils acquire a good vocabulary of musical terms and styles and develop their understanding of number well. Pupils' ICT skills have improved markedly since the school purchased new computers and specialised software.

112. The music curriculum is good. The school's schemes of work are imaginative and creative and fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The extra-curricular activities of choir, ensemble, keyboard club and theory sessions are popular. The school musical productions, devised with the drama department, are of a very high standard. Annual recitals encourage pupils to perform their own works. The quality of instrumental tuition is good but there are currently no opportunities for pupils to learn brass or stringed instruments.

113. The music department is well led. Effective management and monitoring of the department over many years has ensured that all pupils, irrespective of their abilities, reach their potential. There have been a number of assistant music teachers since the previous inspection because the school has not appointed a permanent second teacher in the department. Nevertheless, improvements in the taught curriculum and the targeting and monitoring of pupils have led to significant improvements in the quality of education and the musical ethos of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good overall, with the best teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management are good and provide direction for the new teaching team.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good, and provide provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Achievement is good overall, but satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 where it is hindered by limited time allocation.

Commentary

114. Physical education is taught by a new team of teachers, who are working well to develop the quality of the department. Early signs show a rise in standards, especially in both core lessons in Years 10 and 11 and GCSE results. The 2003 results were the best ever. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have good skills in games and gymnastics, and are developing their evaluative skills. However, they lack the ability to transfer the skills into competitive situations as well as expected. By the time the pupils are in Years 10 and 11 team tactics and coaching skills are far more developed and in line with expectations.

115. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are achieving satisfactorily, but their progress is limited because time in lessons does not allow for skills to be developed in competitive games. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups, and individuals are encouraged to achieve well through teachers' good feedback. Older pupils make good progress by applying previously learnt skills and are able to evaluate their own and others' performances to raise standards in games. GCSE pupils achieve well and show good practical skills and understanding of exercise and training principles, but their written work lacks consistent use of correct terminology.

116. Teaching is good overall. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better, with most lessons good, especially for older pupils. Teachers work hard to set high standards, and are patient and knowledgeable. Thorough planning helps to develop good body movement skills and pupils' understanding of how to apply them. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and this has developed positive attitudes to sport in curriculum time, and very good participation in extra-curricular activities. Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy in all years, and in ICT especially in Years 10 to 11.

117. The department offers a wide range of activities in line with National Curriculum requirements both in the curriculum and in extra-curricular time. These activities are open to all pupils, and provide opportunities for team games and individual sports. School teams are very successful and this provides an extra challenge for more talented pupils. The department has close links with local rugby and athletics clubs who share facilities and expertise. Teachers are caring, give good guidance and set challenging but realistic targets in lessons and for the year.

118. The leadership and management of the department are good, which is demonstrated by a real team effort to set and achieve high standards, resulting in improved participation and achievement. A review the subject's performance has led to a three-year development plan with appropriate performance targets. However, a formalised monitoring programme is not yet in place, although some monitoring does occur.

119. After the last inspection, there was a decline in standards, but since then there has been good progress. The new leadership and management have made good improvement to raise standards. A new system for assessment and recording has been implemented, but it is too early to say how this will affect learning and achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching.
- Leadership and management are good, although the need for further development is acknowledged.
- All pupils achieve well orally, but the quality and quantity of written work is limited.
- There are some good community activities in school, but they are not directly linked to the citizenship curriculum.

Commentary

120. The citizenship co-ordinator has been in post only since September 2003 and has successfully integrated citizenship into the PSHE programme. The overall standard of pupils' work is average, and they do well orally in discussions, but there is little written work and the quality is limited. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a sound knowledge of human rights and the basic criminal system as they apply to young people, and they are able to consider evidence and make reasonably informed decisions. Pupils in Year 10 demonstrate the ability to discuss, explain and justify their opinions orally, but the extent of their understanding is not so clear in their written work.

121. All pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teachers make sure they are all fully involved by selecting pupils to answer individually or by encouraging them to give their views in group discussion. Pupils generally apply themselves well in lessons. They use information and skills learnt previously to make carefully thought-out judgements about sensitive and topical issues such as the use of drugs and the effects of alcohol on behaviour. They work well in ethnically mixed groups, showing mutual respect and understanding.

122. Teaching and learning are good overall because sensitive issues are related to real life. All lessons seen were satisfactory or better, with most good or very good. Key issues brought out through pupils' discussions are highlighted and expanded upon by the more experienced teachers, but are sometimes missed by the less experienced. Teachers work hard to develop high standards, have good relationships with pupils and plan well, which develops positive pupil attitudes to this subject and results in enhanced progress. Individuals achieve well through good support and encouragement from teachers. All pupils have ample opportunity to use oral skills, but the use of numeracy, writing, and ICT is limited.

123. In addition to the citizenship programme the school offers pupils the chance to develop their skills of participation and responsible action by encouraging them to decide how and why they take part in community events. Involvement in fund-raising for Catholic and local charities; the school council, where pupils' opinions are taken forward by elected representatives for possible implementation in school policy; careers development; work experience; and visits from theatre groups and community agencies all make a valuable contribution to citizenship.

124. The leadership and management of citizenship are good and have resulted in pupils' good attitudes and achievement. Development planning appropriately indicates the need to link into the citizenship programme all the good community work currently going on in the school. There is some informal monitoring of lessons, but there is no formal monitoring system of lesson observations or pupils' written work.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, six subjects, English, mathematics, biology, geography, information technology and art were inspected and 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
Art and design	6	100	84.7	17	32.5	31.7	34.4
Biology	12	50	78.7	25	28.6	19.2	30.9
Drama	1	100	91.9	0	40.2	20.0	35.9
Economics and business studies	7	86	86	14	40.1	27.1	36.5
English literature	8	87	92.9	13	36	36.3	37.8
Geography	8	50	87.1	13	32	18.8	34.5
History	9	78	91.6	33	35.3	31.1	37.1
Information technology	12	75	78	17	20.8	24.2	28.4
Mathematics	10	40	71.8	10	32.5	14.0	30.1
Media Studies	9	100	N/A	22	N/A	36.7	N/A
Psychology	3	66	N/A	0	N/A	20.0	N/A
Sociology	11	64	79.1	0	25.6	14.5	30.1
Technology	4	75	84.2	25	30.6	32.5	33.1
General Studies	26	65	77	12	23.8	23.1	28.9

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
Art and design	5	100	94.5	40	40.4	64.0	79.1
Biology	2	100	90	0	32.3	50.0	70.5
Chemistry	1	100	92.7	0	42.4	60.0	78.2
Drama	2	50	96.8	50	35.1	90.0	78.9
Economics and business studies	4	75	96	0	44.8	35.0	82.5
English literature	6	83	97.9	50	42.9	66.7	83.3
Geography	3	100	96.4	0	34.9	66.7	77.3
History	8	75	96.9	13	38.4	55.0	79.7
Information technology	7	57	88.2	0	22.1	28.6	63.3
Mathematics	1	100	92.4	0	49.8	80.0	82.7
Media Studies	11	100	N/A	0	N/A	72.7	N/A
music	3	100	97.5	0	40.7	66.7	81.3
Physics	3	33	92.1	0	40.8	26.7	76.9
Sociology	6	100	94.3	50	34.1	80.0	75.1
Technology	7	86	N/A	0	N/A	51.4	N/A
Leisure and tourism (advanced)	2	100	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies (intermediate)	3	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English.

English

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Assessment is used well as a means of raising standards.
- Good leadership is coming to terms with relatively new syllabuses.
- Students have very good attitudes.
- Some students are not achieving as well as they should.

Commentary

125. Although there are a considerable number of students following English at AS Level in Year 12, numbers on the A Level course in Year 13 have been relatively small in recent years. This helps to explain the variations in examination results. The small number of students taking the A Level examination in English Literature attained good grades in 2002 and 2003, although there was a significantly higher proportion of lower grades in the AS Level examination. Standards in the current Year 13 are in line with national expectations in the key areas of knowledge, understanding and skills of critical analysis. Standards in the current Year 12 are higher. Students in Year 13 are taught well and make good progress in lessons, but overall they achieve only satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment in English at GCSE Level. This is partly due to weaknesses in examination technique and insufficient adaptation to the requirements of Post 16 work with its strong emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own independent learning.

126. Many students do make good gains in knowledge and understanding, and have very positive attitudes towards the subject. They enjoy reading and discussing a novel such as *The Handmaid's Tale*. Lower attainers find it difficult to analyse poetry in the depth required, but show a good understanding of historical context, for example when examining the Romantic movement as a background to Keats' poetry. Some students initially find Shakespeare difficult, but make good progress in coming to terms with the characterisation and the ways in which the themes and plots of *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Othello* are advanced.

127. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, although good and very good teaching was observed in individual lessons during the inspection. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, and as the result of good leadership and professional development they have come to terms with the demands of new syllabuses. Students are encouraged to debate and develop their own opinions, although a minority of students are reluctant to be drawn in and remain more dependent on the teacher. Assessment is very good: in a Year 13 lesson on *Othello*, students were left in no doubt about how well they had done in written analyses and the various ways in which they could improve their work. The same lesson was also a particularly good example of how skilful questioning and high expectations succeeded in raising the level of debate to the extent that some students were able to argue perceptively about Shakespeare's development of character.

128. Leadership and management have been effective in considering a range of strategies to deal with the demands of various texts, and the use of assessment to help students learn constructively has been a strong feature of the department. The numbers involved in Sixth Form English are too small to make meaningful comparison with the previous inspection, but the success of the department in coping with new syllabuses and changes in staffing suggests that improvement has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

129. Most Sixth Form teaching makes a clear contribution to students' oral skills. Debating skills about themes in novels are enhanced in English. Good questioning technique promotes discussion in geography and physical education, for example. Important aspects of vocabulary are strongly promoted in sociology and media studies, where students show perceptive analysis of principles. Although design and technology students respond to searching questions, they are not confident in giving oral presentations. Researching information from texts is less well developed. It is good in design and technology, and these skills are developing through work in history and geography where structured information sheets help to develop analytical skills. However, in biology some students are unable to be sufficiently selective in identifying key points from a text.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good in both year groups.
- Standards of attainment are below average.
- Many students who begin the A and AS Level courses do not complete them

Commentary

130. Students' attainment on entry to the Sixth Form is well below average. In 2002, there was only one A Level candidate, who achieved grade C. Other pupils who started the course did not complete it. There were no AS Level candidates in 2002 and consequently no A Level candidates in 2003. The AS Level results in 2003 were below average. However, more than half the pupils attained grades in the C to E range. In the light of such results, the mathematics department changed its entry requirements to the A Level course. Only those who attained the highest GCSE results and who would therefore be more likely to succeed with the intellectual demands of the course were accepted into Year 12 in 2003. The standard of work seen in the lessons and books of the Year 12 students is good. Having just begun their AS level study, they are at present revising higher level GCSE algebra before embarking on the AS 'Methods' module. In one lesson they factorised quadratic equations and sketched appropriate graphs. Most pupils needed more revision and practice but other students were able to proceed to more challenging exercises. They willingly took part in discussions and demonstrated their increasing familiarity with the language of mathematics and their higher level thinking skills, which will enable them to cope with abstract mathematics. They are achieving well and all are expected to attain AS Level grades in 2004.

131. The Year 13 A Level group is small. Students are preparing to re-sit the AS examination to improve their grades before starting the A Level course. Most achieved grades C to E in the 2003 'Methods' and 'Mechanics' modules but some of them were ungraded in the 'Pure mathematics' module.

132. The standard of teaching and the relationship between teachers and students are good. Teachers are very knowledgeable, they share their love of mathematics with the students and they

elicit the students' logical thought processes. They also help students to develop independent study skills. For example, Year 13 students, preparing to re-sit the AS examination were encouraged to take turns to explain to the rest of the group how they had solved problems on statistics. Students in both years are aware of their present standards of attainment and have set themselves target grades so that they remain mindful of the need to work hard.

133. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactorily undertaken jointly with St Catherine's Girls' Schools. The decision to revise the entry requirements for the course and the good quality teaching are raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

134. There are limited opportunities to extend students' mathematical skills more widely than in subjects where mathematics is used. In physics, for example, students can apply a formula for capacitance decay and interpret graphs appropriately, but their higher order numeracy skills are not developed sufficiently to extend their understanding of formulae. In biology, teachers properly emphasise that students must take care when measuring quantities in practical work, but the accuracy of measuring equipment used is inappropriately low for A Level work, and leads to difficulty in interpreting results. Geography students work well in together to develop skills of data collection and analysis.

SCIENCE

135. The focus was upon biology. Physics was also sampled, where the small group and very good relationships and attitudes mean that students receive individual attention. Good step-by-step questioning leads students to improve understanding, and identification of errors. Standards are below average because of limited higher numeracy skills.

BIOLOGY

Provision in biology is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students are achieving well because they are highly motivated, participate well in lessons and work hard.
- GCE Advanced Level examination results were poor in 2002 and 2003.
- Standards of current work are much improved over the previous examination results.
- Teaching is well planned and carried out but does not give enough attention to developing students' independence, scholarship and study skills.

Commentary

136. Standards in A Level in 2002 were below the national average, with the small entry obtaining low grades. AS Level results in 2002 were very mixed as half were unclassified or failed to complete the course. No one attained an A Level grade in 2003, and at AS Level only a third gained middling grades. This was a significant level of under-achievement. Current Year 13 results in modular examinations are better and reflect good achievement in relation to students' targets based on prior attainment.

137. Standards now seen in coursework and in lessons are average. Year 13 students draw on previous learning to give explanations, for example about homeostatic maintenance of blood sugar

levels. Their notebooks reflect diligent study, but their research shows weaknesses of ability to select key points. Their laboratory books reflect the lack of confidence they show in practical work.

Year 12 students work diligently, and as with Year 13, ensure their work is complete and well ordered. However, their scholarship is not sufficient to raise standards from a below average position. Nevertheless, in both years, hard work, total engagement in lessons, and ability to draw on previous knowledge indicate that students are achieving well.

138. Teaching quality is satisfactory. Expert knowledge is effectively used to plan and realise the purpose of lessons. Good use of questioning consolidates learning, and provides appropriate challenge and support. For example, students improve understanding by the teacher reinforcing care and precision in practical techniques and developing their ability to formulate hypotheses. This is good teaching. In contrast, learning is less successful when students rely too much on the teacher, momentum in lessons is lost, or practical techniques are not sufficiently refined to give clear results. The small number of boys in Year 13 diminishes the value of interaction and discussion because they tend to work separately from the girls. Homework, often making use of ICT, consolidates learning. Excellent student-teacher relationships lead to students showing a strong desire to learn and become fully involved in lessons. Marking supports students' learning, and encourages study skills, but more so in Year 13 than Year 12.

139. The subject is well led and managed. Students benefit from a carefully structured course backed by good guidance, relevant supportive notes and access to appropriate text books and ICT resources. An evaluation of recent examination results led to changes which are focused on improving standards. Formal assessment clearly contributes to the school's target setting process, but is not used in a scheduled way to give students subject-specific guidance. Progress has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. The clear commitment to support students and strengthen the work of the teaching team indicates a clear capacity for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on information technology.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching: lesson plans are detailed but flexible; assessment is good.
- Teachers have very good relationships with students, who show good attitudes.
- Lower attaining students' writing skills need improvement.
- Homework tasks are not demanding enough in Year 12.

Commentary

140. Advance Supplementary (AS) Level ICT is a popular option in Year 12. About half of students have already gained pass grades in GNVQ ICT in Year 11. In Year 13, four students are studying A2 at the girls' school, with which the school has a constructive partnership. Post 16 education is being transferred to a new centre in the near future.

141. Standards overall are satisfactory and in line with the national average. Results in 2003 improved from 2002 where they were below average. Students achieve well from their GCSE starting points, particularly as about half of those completing A2 in 2003 had not taken an examination in ICT in Year 11. Current Year 12 students achieved a C grade in GNVQ in Year 11. The lack of high A/B grades in the last two years reflects students' entry grades and some under-achievement in Year 12; some students do not work as hard as they could.

142. In lessons and work seen, Year 12 students make good progress in analysing advantages and disadvantages of different electronic communications. They develop good techniques for arguing viewpoints in examinations, and use word processing effectively to construct record cards for gym equipment. They use search engines fluently, but lower attaining students do not draft evaluations on paper. Most students do not produce enough homework, and so achieve less in examinations than they could. The four Year 13 students are progressing well, although it was not possible to sample their projects owing to staff illness. Students clearly develop good independent research skills, forging effective links with a play school, building materials firm and forensic laboratory to design and implement new database systems.

143. Teaching and learning are good overall, with several good features. Lessons are very well planned, and teachers have very good working relationships with students, using good topical examples and anecdotes to enliven lessons. Students improve key communication skills when debating moral and ethical issues about how organisations use ICT. The good teaching helps students maintain good attitudes, although Year 12 students, early in their course, tend to rely on teachers to decide how they should learn. Year 12 homework tasks are not demanding enough. In a weaker lesson, lower attaining students lost concentration as the teacher explained theory, and had insufficient opportunity to practise writing skills. Teachers mark work promptly, and give feedback. In addition, frequent tests and mock examinations help students understand the level at which they are working.

144. Courses are very well led and well managed, although opportunities for Year 12 and 13 students to collaborate are limited, as the two years are taught in different schools.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

145. Although students have good access to ICT facilities for individual study, few opportunities are taken to extend their ICT skills. In physical education, teaching makes good use of white board technology for presentation, and the technique is valued by students, who join with the teacher to make its use more interactive. In ICT lessons, students' communication skills are developed through using Microsoft Power Point software. Geography students use ICT for research. Elsewhere, opportunities to exploit ICT to enhance lessons are missed.

HUMANITIES

146. The focus was on geography. History and sociology were also sampled. As a result of good teaching, Year 12 history students are improving their skills of gathering evidence and increasing their knowledge satisfactorily. However, although students achieve well, standards attained in history are below national averages. Sociology standards in Year 13 are below average, although students respond to challenging, penetrating questions, for example in raising arguments for and against religion in government.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision for geography is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students achieve well, making good progress in their studies.
- Teachers are well qualified and teaching is good.
- The number of students taking geography is rising.
- Standards achieved are below national averages.
- Few higher grades are obtained in external examinations.

Commentary

147. The inspection focused upon teaching in St Columba's Boys' School. Students studying at St Catherine's School were away on a fieldwork exercise and it was not possible to inspect this aspect of Sixth Form provision.

148. The standards achieved by students in the Sixth Form closely reflect their prior attainment in geography. The majority of students enter the course with lower levels of attainment than in many other similar institutions but leave having successfully gained a pass grade at A level. Success rates in A Level examinations vary from year to year but results are below the national average both in terms of the percentage of grades awarded and the points scores achieved by students. The number of higher grades achieved is low. In AS Levels taken at the end of Year 12 the standards attained are similar to those obtained at the end of the course.

149. Achievement, however, is good and students make considerable progress from their levels of attainment at the beginning of Year 12 to be successful in public examinations. As they progress through the course their knowledge of geographical processes and models increases and their ability to use and analyse information to reach appropriate conclusions grows. Throughout the course they build upon and make use of their prior knowledge well. Students have a good understanding of functional zones in urban environments, of the management of change in rural areas, hazard management and the importance of hierarchies and systems of classification. They use data well to reach conclusions, for example in investigating the relationship between village size and services available or the strategies to deal with the incidence of AIDS. Their knowledge is enhanced by numerous examples that provide detail for their written and examination work.

150. Students learn well as they respond to appropriate stimulus material, share information, deliberate with colleagues and take part in class discussions. They are fully involved in lessons, concentrate well and become more confident as the course progresses. Increasingly students are making use of ICT as a means of investigation but rarely take the opportunity to become responsible for their own learning.

151. Achievement and the quality of learning are good because teaching is good. Lessons are well structured and planned to ensure that there are good opportunities for students to contribute, though some are reluctant to do so. Appropriate, well-prepared resources play a significant role in directing the work of students, and simulation and role-play are effectively used to promote learning. Teachers have a good command of their subject and frequently challenge students through effective questioning.

152. The subject is well led and managed in the Sixth Form. The chosen syllabus builds on previous learning, staff are well deployed and assessment is regular and supportive. Good quality home produced resources are an effective aid to learning. An increasing use is being made of interactive presentations and ICT in the department. The growing number of students taking geography is a reflection of the increasing popularity and success of the department since the previous inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

153. Design and technology was sampled. Expert teaching includes using searching questions to evaluate Year 13 students' presentations about a computer aided design project: they research well, and are able to respond accordingly. Students achieve well, reaching average standards because of good teaching that deepens their understanding of modern technologies used for design and manufacturing.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

154. The focus was on art and design. Music and media studies lessons were sampled. Attainment in music is above average, representing very good achievement and a commitment to learning that stems from very good, well-organised and enthusiastic teaching. Media studies is a popular course. Well-planned and enthusiastic teaching leads to students becoming fully engaged and involved. In turn they learn and achieve well. Although attainment is about average, students develop knowledge in Year 12 and show competent skills of analysis and explanation in Year 13.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students join the AS course with modest and sometimes low GCSE results. Achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress and attain broadly appropriate standards.
- Students find it difficult to work independently.
- Drawing is sometimes weak.
- Students do not link their work sufficiently to that of recognised artists.
- Research is sometimes insubstantial.

Commentary

155. AS and A Level results were below average in 2002 and declined in 2003. Because this reflects the prior low attainment of the students, it therefore represents satisfactory achievement. Students have a good grasp of the basic elements, such as form, line and colour. Their work is sometimes ambitious in scale and is often expressive and imaginative. Progress in contextual studies is slow and shortcomings exist in their drawing and linking their work with that of recognised artists. Students lack confidence and their research work is sometimes insubstantial.

156. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and though most students have positive attitudes many find it difficult to cope with the strenuous demands of the course. For example, Year 13 students have yet to place an interpretation on material they have collected for their contextual study. Teaching is structured to compensate for some of the shortcomings in students' learning. In turn, a strong emphasis on showing them how to research and develop their ideas is now evident. It focuses on the basic elements such as tone and colour in Year 12 and then proceeds to more advanced topics where students are required to be more independent and expressive in Year 13. This is beginning to be effective but some of the students still find it difficult to work independently. Assessment arrangements are adequate.

157. In most respects the leadership and management of the Sixth Form provision is sound. As an integral part of the art department it benefits from the same positive ethos and purposeful leadership. Given the needs of these students, many with low prior attainment, the curriculum does not fully match their needs in that it places insufficient emphasis on drawing and showing them how to link their work to that of recognised artists and think for themselves.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

No provision in this section could be sampled.

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	4	3
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	3
Cost effectiveness of the Sixth Form / value for money provided by the school	5	3

Overall standards achieved		4
Pupils' achievement	4	3

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

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

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

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