

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL

Lincoln's Catholic High School

LINCOLN

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120717

Headteacher: M Burrowes

Lead inspector: W K Baxendale

Dates of inspection: 9th-12th February 2004

Inspection number: 262829

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

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Terms used in this report

*Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students of all ages at school.*

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

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievements** reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, **similar schools** are defined as those with comparable attainment in the previous national tests taken.*

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11-18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	613
School address:	Western Avenue Lincoln Lincolnshire
Postcode:	LN6 7SX
Telephone number:	01522 871400
Fax number:	01522 871404
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Briggs
Date of previous inspection:	25/01/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Lincoln's Catholic High School is a much smaller than average, over-subscribed school educating 613 boys and girls. The figure includes 88 students in a sixth form that is part of a sharing arrangement with 2 other, nearby schools. The school was recently awarded specialist science college status. It also has an Investor in People award; three consecutive School Achievement awards; a Sportsmark and a Quality Mark from the Basic Skills Agency. The pupils' standards on entry are now average, but those in Year 9 and beyond were below average when they started. Pupils come from below average socio-economic circumstances. Most are from a white British background, but about 80 are from other ethnic origins; seven of them are refugees. Pupil mobility is high. At 16 per cent, there is an above average entitlement to a free school meal. The incidence of pupils with a mother tongue believed not to be English is above average. The school's unit for special educational needs has 22 pupils with moderate learning or emotional difficulties allocated to it. A broadly average proportion of the pupils is on the school's special educational needs register, but an above average proportion has a Statement of Special Educational Need, mainly for moderate learning difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
02928	W K Baxendale	Lead inspector	
19743	A Taylor	Lay inspector	
27984	A Whitehall	Team inspector	Mathematics
19214	G Price	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
12356	R Dickason	Team inspector	Science
15940	N Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design
19096	S McClean	Team inspector	Design and technology
30978	E White	Team inspector	Geography
31191	D Sylph	Team inspector	History Citizenship
03793	J Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
18846	P Priest	Team inspector	Music
17987	B Coates	Team inspector	Physical education
30046	R Parker	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Saint Peter and Saint Paul is an **effective** school. Achievement between Years 7 and 11 is good; from typically, below average starts, pupils leave with above average standards. Sixth formers do well. Teaching and learning are good. The school has numerous very good features. It produces very well rounded young people. Very good assessment raises standards. The school is very well led and governed. Pupils, parents and the community hold the school in high regard. There are weaknesses. Staffing problems affect provision adversely in English and science, particularly. Specialist college status is giving opportunities to raise science standards, which are too low. The latest national test results for 14 year-olds were very low, partly because the school, parents and pupils paid the tests too little attention; the school has taken very good steps to make sure this does not reoccur. Considering the now good quality of education against above average costs of educating each pupil, **the school provides satisfactory value for money.** The sixth form is also cost-effective.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Within a strong Christian framework, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good; there is a high level of care.
- Pupils are made very clear as to how they are doing and what to do to improve.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- GCSE results are above average.
- Results in national tests for 14 year-olds were far too low in 2002 and 2003.
- The senior managers produce some outstandingly good plans to improve teaching and learning but the way they make sure these are put into practice is not working well enough.
- Management of the shared sixth form is inefficient.

Improvements since the previous inspection are good. The main inspection findings have been put successfully into practice. Long-term planning is very good, as are measures to make sure everyone is fully and well involved in learning. Leadership is very convincingly focused on eradicating weaknesses and raising standards. The school has achieved, at the first go, specialist college status. Higher-level, A*-C, GCSE results have risen at a faster rate than nationally, except in science where results are lower than they should be.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			Similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	B	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	B	E	C	

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average - E in the lowest 5 percent nationally.*

For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Achievement is good overall. There are variations. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 has been poor over the last two years, but it is now satisfactory, as the school has allocated suitable resources to stop national test results comparing very badly with those of similar schools the measures are working.

GCSE results are above average. The value added to pupils' education (see page 1) in Years 10 and 11 is also well above average. Results in French, art and history are well above national averages. The achievement of pupils now in these years is good: they are on course to obtain GCSE results above those to be expected from their prior attainment. There are weaknesses in science and, to a lesser extent, English, but achievement is satisfactory in both. Pupils with special educational needs achieve just as well as the rest because of the very good extra help they receive. Boys' performance

is much closer to that of girls than is the case nationally. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do equally as well as the rest. Originality in creative work, application in study and independent use of ICT help to produce good learning. Good communication and research skills help, too. There is scope for improvement in science investigations and independent work in ICT lessons. Sixth formers achieve well and A-level results improved substantially in 2003.

Pupils' attitudes are good; behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Relationships are very positive and supportive. Pupils enjoy belonging to the school and are proud of it. Just a few lack maturity. Within a strong Christian framework there is a high level of care that leads to very good personal development. An above average rate of temporary exclusions for misbehaviour is because the school sets high standards for its pupils and is consistent in its application of rules. Very few are excluded more than once. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Despite improvements, attendance is just below average; absences undermine achievement for some in Years 10 and 11.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Pupils' good overall achievements stem from good teaching that leads to good learning. Good specialist teaching, based on very clear information on pupils' special educational needs, helps these pupils to learn well and learning assistants make effective contributions. Oral work and getting the pupils to find out even more for themselves are areas for improvement. Assessment is very good. Pupils know what they are doing and why; they also are made very clear as to how to improve their work.

The curriculum is good: it gives pupils the best opportunities within the constraints imposed by a small school. Pupils with special educational needs benefit particularly well. Care and guidance are also very good. They help pupils improve their work. Settling-in arrangements are good. The school responds satisfactorily to pupils' views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is very good. Management is satisfactory. Leadership raises achievement through getting the staff and others involved with the school to pull very well together as teams dedicated to improving pupils' learning. Checks on how the school is doing are rigorous; under-performance is dealt with effectively. There is a weakness in the management system, as the very good regular checking of how senior managers are doing their jobs is not replicated with middle managers. Governance is very good. The governors hold the school very closely to account. Governors insist on patience in finding qualified staff to satisfy need, which is difficult.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very good views of the school. They find it gets hard work out of pupils and that it is well led and run. It helps pupils settle in very well. Parents and pupils think there are too few extra-curricular activities, but inspection evidence suggests the school needs to get its message across more clearly, as provision is good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue the efforts to find quality staff for English and science.
- Improve the management system to check closely how teaching and learning relate to policy.
- Raise standards in English, mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and science generally.
- Pursue rigorously the issue of absences that undermine standards.

Sixth form:

- Take steps to make the sharing arrangement more efficient and easier to run.

THE SIXTH FORM AT SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL SCHOOL

This is a small sixth form of 88 students. Arrangements have been drawn up with two other schools to broaden the opportunities available to students. There is a satisfactory range of

A-level courses but vocational and other course provision is narrow.

OVERALL EVALUATION

Within the school, this is an effective sixth form. Sixth formers achieve well and play very important parts as members of the school community. Standards have risen substantially since the previous inspection. The sixth form sharing arrangements are inefficient. The participating schools have not made enough adaptations to their individual provision to make the best of the possibilities. The sixth form is **cost-effective** against the school's budget and standards reached.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching and learning are good.
- A/S and A-level results improved substantially in 2003; they were below average but represented good achievement on the part of the students.
- Nearly half the A-level passes were high grade, (A/B), about the national average.

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 literature	Provision is good . Teaching, learning, leadership and management are good. A wide range of students has good attitudes and achieves well. Standards are average.
Mathematics	Provision is very good . Teaching, learning, leadership and management are very good. A wide range of students has very good attitudes and achieves well. Standards are above average.
Chemistry (shared)	Provision is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and students' positive attitudes contribute to satisfactory achievement. Standards are below average.
French (shared)	Provision is good . Teaching, learning, leadership and management are good. A wide range of students achieves well. Standards are average.
History (shared)	Provision is good . Teaching, learning, leadership and management are good. A wide range of students has very good attitudes and achieves well. Standards are average.
Information and communication technology (shared)	Provision is good . Teaching and learning are good and result in students achieving well. Standards are below average .
Psychology	Provision is very good . Teaching, learning, leadership and management are very good. Standards are above average and achievement is very good.
Business studies (shared)	Provision is good . Standards are average with students achieving well against their prior attainment. Teaching and learning are good.
Health and social care (shared)	Provision is good . VCE standards are average. Good achievement arises from good teaching.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

(refers only to Saint Peter and Saint Paul school)

Students receive very good advice, support and guidance about their work. Subjects provide clear, unambiguous guidance about how work is to be organised and improved upon. The head of sixth form is taking appropriate steps to improve the work ethos.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

(refers only to Saint Peter and Saint Paul school)

Leadership and management are good within the school. The head of sixth form is very successful in making sure the students do their best and that they attend regularly. Suggestions of weaknesses in provision are latched upon very rapidly and steps taken to amend them.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

(refers only to saint Peter and Saint Paul school)

Students' views are welcomed and the school council is listened to; it is an active force. Students are generally very positive; they appreciate the support staff provide them and the positive atmosphere. Some are not happy with their accommodation or with the range of enrichment activities offered outside main lessons.

Arrangements for the shared sixth form

Sixth form students can follow a wider range of courses than would be possible in the separate sixth forms, through shared teaching and facilities. The sixth form co-ordinators in all three sixth forms are effective and it is clear that there is scope to expand the provision successfully. However, the overall management is unsatisfactory, the system is not cost effective and is currently inefficient because there has been too little strategic planning. Communication between the schools is not sufficiently structured.

At present there is a number of parallel subject courses running with very small numbers in more than one school. Not all subject specialists are sufficiently aware of the provision for their subject in the other schools. Lessons in the City of Lincoln Community College are at different times from those in the other two schools and students have difficulty getting to lessons on time. The shared sixth form cannot reach its considerable potential and become cost-effective until these problems are resolved.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well overall. From what are now about average starts, the pupils make halting progress, but leave with above average standards. Results of national tests for 14 year-olds were well below average in 2002 and 2003. Achievement over that period was poor. GCSE results were above average in both years; value-added is well above average in this period.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE standards have risen consistently since the previous inspection.
- Pupils receive a lot of personal help that raises standards and achievement.
- The pupils' GCSE results are significantly above national ones in art, history and French.
- Pupils do least well in science GCSE.
- In 2003, the performance of 14 year-olds in national tests was very poor compared with similar schools in English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

1. Since the previous inspection, improvements in GCSE results are good. The school has won three consecutive national achievement awards for improvements in pupils' GCSE performances. Average point scores were well above the national average in 2001 and 2002. They remained above average, but fell a little in 2003, reflecting a drop in overall attainment (mainly among boys) in that year. The value added to get to this situation is well above average for 14 to 16 year-olds. Because the school provides well for its pupils and lets them take examinations early, several obtain a lot of GCSEs; this raises point scores. When restricted to the eight best GCSEs, points scores were still above average. These 'capped' point scores were average compared with similar schools, but the full range of GCSEs was above average.
2. Although girls do better than boys, the difference between the genders is much less than that found nationally. In 2003, pupils obtained their best GCSE results in art, French and history, with well above average point scores per entry. They also obtained above average point scores in nearly all other subjects, the exceptions being geography and English language, where they were just below average, and science where there was much leeway to make up. The pattern is fairly consistent over the past three years. Science is clearly in need of the real boost the specialist college award brings. However, the proportion obtaining higher grade GCSE passes in all three of English, mathematics and in science was the highest in the school's history and well up to the national average.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	57 (57)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (87)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	36.5 (38.1)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 88 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of individual help and the school's very good and improving assessment procedures that keep them and their parents informed of what they need to do to improve. Revisions of the way leadership and management are organised have given fresh impetus to the gathering and use of data on performance: this is raising standards.
4. Characteristics of good achievement at this stage are originality in creative work; there are outstanding examples in art and design and technology, application to study and independent use of ICT to help learning. Good communication and research skills help, too. There is scope for improvement in the way pupils are challenged to do their own investigations in science and to work more independently in ICT lessons.
5. Pupils from ethnic minority groups are thoroughly integrated into all activities and social groupings. In all subjects they are achieving well up to expectation, as are pupils from a travelling background.
6. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well and many pupils are to take GCSE examinations up to two years earlier than is usual. However, too few teachers challenge these pupils in every lesson to raise their achievement even further.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in all years. Across the whole range of subjects inspectors reported that they were doing as well as other pupils. In particular, there were times when they were seen understanding basic ideas, even if their written work was not up to scratch. In other lessons, such as drama, it was simply not possible to see which pupils were listed as having special educational needs from the way that they behaved, or the way that they were able to mix in with other pupils and get on with their work.
8. Because the school works hard and successfully to get pupils to do well in GCSE and A-levels, it over-stretched itself in 2002 and 2003. As a result, pupils were not prepared well enough for national tests for 14 year-olds. Results were below average in 2002 and well below in 2003. When compared with similar schools they were well below average in 2002 and in the bottom five percent nationally in 2003. Achievement was very poor. Corroborated by inspection evidence, there is, however, some doubt about the accuracy of the base line of comparison. Other widely used assessments of standards showed general attainment to be significantly lower than that showed by national tests for 11 year-olds, from which comparisons are made.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (31.4)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	32.5 (31.8)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	31.5 (31.7)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 100 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

9. The school failed to meet its 2003 targets for national tests for 14 year-olds in 2003. A number of factors show why this is so. Staffing problems, perversely, the school's enterprising practice of early entry for GCSEs and absence from the tests themselves are main causes. Staffing problems affected English and science, especially. In 2003, all Year 9 pupils took GCSE in religious education and some were already launched on GCSE French and ICT courses for early entry in Year 10. There is evidence that this distracted some from the national tests, as they prepared their GCSE and concentrated on the other courses. Absence rates of up to ten percent from the tests, sometimes by higher, but mainly middle, attainers who saw priorities elsewhere, compounded the matter.

10. Importantly, the school is now making sure pupils perform to their potential and has taken steps that appear certain to avoid any repetition: these are evaluated later in this report. There is, however, a gap in the way senior managers hold heads of subject and their department colleagues to account: a key issue of this report.
11. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 was poor in English, mathematics and science up to 2003. It is now satisfactory, as the measures taken to improve things are clearly working (the best teaching and learning are now in Year 9). Pupils in these years have good speaking and listening skills and they have a good knowledge and understanding, not only in the 3 subjects that will be tested but also in all the others they study. The pupils' satisfactory skills let them use mathematical calculations in all subjects. However, at this stage, investigative work is not fostered enough in science and independent learning that helps raise standards in the nationally tested subjects is under-developed in ICT.
12. In Year 9, standards in other subjects are at least average, with good achievement registered in design and technology, art, history and geography. Achievement is excellent modern foreign languages because all pupils study and do well in up to three languages simultaneously.
13. The pupils who underachieved in 2002 and 2003 national tests are now doing well in Years 10 and 11. They are not yet operating at the above average standards of those of previous years. Based on their prior attainment, the school's realistic ambition is that Year 11 will do slightly less well than last year, but that good achievement will be maintained and results will beat GCSE targets by a substantial margin, just as they did in 2003 and the years before that.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in most subjects and very well in mathematics.
- Although entry numbers were small, all candidates passed A-level in 2003 with a high A/B grade rate in mathematics, physics, history, geography, food and design technology.
- Diffidence on the part of students undermines achievement in chemistry and oral work in French.

Commentary

14. Admission requirements to the sixth form are less rigid than is often the case. The school tries to accommodate all students who wish to continue their studies by finding suitable courses for them. Students' positive attitudes to their work and the good quality of teaching are major contributors to the about-average A-level results obtained. The results show good achievement and value added through the sixth form; most stay on to the end of chosen courses. Students are encouraged also to take a qualification in subjects where they may have a particular innate talent, so, for example, high grade A/S passes were obtained by individuals in Russian, German and Chinese, further evidence of the school's concern to do well by all.
15. The trend of results is upwards. Students do well across the board. A main reason for the improvements is the very close checking on students' performances throughout their time in the sixth form. As in the main school, but even more refined and checked by academic panel, the students' work is carefully marked and everything is set against examination requirements: this raises standards. In 2003, the A/S level pass rate increased and the students improved the rate of high-grade passes significantly, although they were below national figures.
16. A-level results were also up on the year before, with an even more impressive rise in the proportion of high-grade passes to almost half of all entries, well up to national averages. Boys do a bit better than do girls in the sixth form.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.0 (78.8)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	33.3 (15.4)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	221.4 (170.0)	253.1 (263.1)

There were 22 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

17. Students' study skills are good but, in chemistry, a lack of confidence undermines achievement and similarly in French, diffidence in oral work, a carry-over from the main school, takes the sheen off otherwise good achievement. Historical interpretation is not exploited fully, but teachers are insistent in history on the acquisition of detailed knowledge that produces pleasing results. Students' language, number and computer skills are sufficient to help them learn well in all courses. There is good evidence of personal research in English literature and psychology.

Sixth form (shared provision)

18. A-level results have varied considerably because the numbers taking individual subjects has been small. The overall average total points score was below the national average in 2003 and in 2002. Students did better than expected from their GCSE results in 2003. Average points gained by boys were higher than those for girls in both the City of Lincoln Community College and the Joseph Ruston Technology College. This is the reverse of the national picture. In St Peter and St Paul, girls did better than boys. In all three schools average points scores per candidate were below the national average, but less so in St Peter and St Paul. The inspection teams found achievement to be at least satisfactory and often good.
19. In 2003, in business studies and history, the candidates (three in each subject) achieved well in relation to their predicted grades. Average results were gained in German and chemistry. German results improved on those of 2002 and achievement was good. In chemistry achievement was satisfactory. In ICT, health and social care and psychology standards were below average in 2003, but achievement was satisfactory.
20. For current students on A-level and VCE courses, standards overall at the end of Year 13 are average. Of the subjects inspected in detail, standards are average in business studies, history and health and social care although in the latter subject, Year 12 standards are below average. They are below average in chemistry and ICT. Students' achievement varies from good in business studies, history, ICT and health and social care to satisfactory in chemistry. In most subjects, students achieve well because teaching is good and they have a positive approach to learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes to their learning. Behaviour is **satisfactory** and the pupils develop **very good** relationships with each other and with staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships in the school are very positive and supportive.
- Pupils enjoy belonging to the school and are proud of it.
- A very few pupils sometimes find it difficult to settle down to work and lack maturity.
- Within a strong Christian framework there is a high level of care that leads to very good personal development.

Commentary

21. A major factor why relationships are so very good is because the house system successfully promotes strong social values. In lessons, teachers have a good rapport with pupils and there is often shared humour and good nature. Staff take the time and trouble to get to know their pupils really well and this, too, leads to very good relationships. Behaviour is satisfactory; pupils know what is expected of them and they conduct themselves in a mature and sensible manner.
22. Part of the school's firm line on discipline is that it excludes pupils to show clearly the serious intent to uphold set standards. As a result, the number of temporary exclusions is high, but there are very few pupils for whom this sanction has been used more than once. Excluded pupils receive work to do at home. An instance of drug abuse was dealt with very strongly by exclusion in the first place. Pupils and staff are very clear about when exclusions are used; for example inappropriate language and lack of sportsmanship are unacceptable. Measures to help those returning from exclusion are sensitive yet strict with a view to setting the experience and its gravity within the school's social and moral background.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	531	108	2
White – Irish	16	1	0
White – any other White background	33	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Chinese	11	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

23. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. In nearly all lessons they work hard, want to do well and take their studies seriously. This is because the atmosphere in school is positive and supportive and staff encourage pupils to work hard. In a few lessons, pupils start chattering to each other and are easily side tracked. This invariably happens when the quality of teaching is

not high enough to maintain their interest. Difficulties in recruiting teachers mean that some pupils become restless because they cannot build up relationships with one particular teacher.

24. The Ofsted pupil questionnaire showed a significant number of negative replies about behaviour and bullying, warranting further investigation. In conversation, pupils agreed bullying does happen, but they were unanimous in agreeing that staff sort it out and they feel well supported. Inspectors agree with this view.
25. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes. Even pupils who had been identified because they were at risk of exclusion, because they found it hard to manage their own behaviour, were able to cope well with the demands made on them in the lessons that were observed. When they worked in the special inclusion unit-The Magdalene Centre-the very good relationships and the sensible way the adults dealt with them helped them to work well together and to get real pleasure from their work. This was the case even if relationships with other people had previously been the main cause of problems for them. One pupil, returning after a lengthy absence, visibly grew in confidence over the period of the inspection, progressing from working introspectively alone to moving from one room to another within the special educational needs department showing her work to adults because she was proud of what she had done. Others behaved well and concentrated well on their work both when they came out of lessons for extra help, and when they were working with support staff in their lessons, because there is no stigma attached to having extra help.
26. Pupils' spiritual development is very good, the school's Catholic beliefs permeate all that the school does, including assemblies, which develop a strong sense of community and art lessons in which pupils learn to appreciate the beauty of landscapes and the natural world. Spirituality also manifests itself in a commitment to charitable fundraising and in project work on commercial pressures that affect peoples' lives in the developing world.
27. Social and moral development is very good. In many lessons pupils co-operate very well, they listen carefully to each other and respect each other's views. In the expressive arts mutually supportive work is very strong. Studies of slavery, contemporary racism and the civil rights movement in history and justice from the point of view of a South American teenager in PSHE lessons ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of these issues.
28. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop culturally. They are justifiably proud of their study of three modern foreign languages; all enjoy them and learn about European cultures. During music lessons they encounter the music of other cultures such as African drumming and in art pupils learn about the cultures of a variety of artists so that cultural development is very good.

Attendance

Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Poor attendance is still affecting significantly the performance of a minority of mostly older pupils.
- The school is working very hard to improve pupils' attendance and rates are improving.
- Staff monitor attendance carefully and there is very good support for those whose attendance is low.

Commentary

29. The school is working very hard to improve attendance rates, with some success. The rate is now hovering just below the national average. Non-attendance is more of an issue in Years 10 and 11, where there are a number of pupils with severe attendance problems. Many are involved with a number of external agencies; this includes court prosecutions for some families. The school has recently detected an increasing trend for parents to take holidays during term time. The school is resisting this as much as possible.
30. The school has learnt important lessons, regarding the effect of pupils' poor attendance on the national tests for 14 year-olds results last year. They have put measures in place to ensure this is not repeated. Monitoring of pupils' attendance is carefully undertaken and support for those returning to school after absences is wide reaching. Pupils are skilfully eased back into lessons and receive very good support from the schools' pastoral system and Magdalene centre.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%): 2002/3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.7	School data	1.1
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Sixth form

The attitudes of the school's sixth form students are **very good**. Their behaviour is also **very good** and they readily accept positions of responsibility. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have very good attitudes to their work and are keen to do well.
- Attendance figures are well above the 90 per cent benchmark the school sets itself.
- Students are good role models for the rest of the school to follow.
- Students play an important part in helping younger pupils.

Commentary

31. Sixth formers are very good role models for younger pupils to aspire to. They convey a professional approach because they dress very smartly and conduct themselves in a manner befitting their status as the most senior students. They are immersed in school life, and help in many valuable ways, for example, helping out in reception, running extra-curricular clubs and, importantly, supporting younger pupils who need someone to talk to. Students are positive about their studies and work is neatly organised and well presented. The school has high expectations that students will attend for a minimum of 90 per cent of the time, and indeed, the attendance rate is good; it exceeds this.
32. Sixth form students participate well in lessons and are interested in learning new ideas, although there are a few exceptions. They behave well and attitudes are good. They enjoy being at school and appreciate the independence and trust given them. There are good relationships and an effective working atmosphere in classes. Most students believe that the school treats them as responsible young adults and appreciate the support they get from teachers and the friendly atmosphere of the sixth form. Students are encouraged to develop the self-discipline of independent learning and most rise to the challenge.

33. Punctuality is good. Despite problems of travel between sites and the varying times of the day in different schools students show a good commitment to their learning by their willingness to commute quickly. Many display a good social conscience and are actively involved in community work in and outside the school.
34. Students enjoy working with younger pupils and carrying out fund raising activities. A number, mainly girls, work in local primary schools as teacher assistants as well as in the attached pre-school nursery. Others work in the main school, in a local hospital and in the engineering department.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The pupils enjoy a good quality education. Pupils' good achievement and attitudes are very closely related to the good quality of teaching that helps them to learn well. Pupils benefit from a well-thought out curriculum and those with special educational needs enjoy very good provision. Care and guidance are also very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good**. The quality of learning is **good**. The assessment of pupils' work is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good, detailed assessments make the pupils well aware of how they are doing and how to improve.
- Training to improve the ways lessons are planned is paying off; pupils know what they are doing and why.
- Good specialist teaching, based on very clear information on pupils' special educational needs, helps these pupils to learn well and learning assistants make effective contributions; subject teachers do not follow this through.
- Class management is sometimes unsatisfactory in science, especially.
- Creative work that arouses pupils' interest is very well developed in design and technology and art where teaching and learning are very good.

Commentary

35. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Inspection evidence agrees with the nine out of every ten of the very many parents who responded to the governors' questionnaire who said that teaching and learning were good. Similarly, parents and pupils thought the school expected pupils to work hard and do their best: this is the case. Most teachers work very hard to make it so; it is no easy job, as the school has many pupils who need constant challenge, with which they can cope, to keep them learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 98 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0)	28 (28%)	38(38%)	28 (28%)	3(3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

36. The outcomes of a regular, rigorous quality checking programme, the effects of taking on national schemes to improve teaching and a very good assessment system have resulted in a clear improvement in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. There has been a large increase in the proportions of very good teaching, matching the rise in standards among 16 year-olds since then.
37. A clear indicator of the school's quick reaction to defined need is seen in Year 9. Because of last year's unsatisfactory national test results for 14 year-olds, strong teaching resources have been put to the job. As a result, teaching in that year is significantly better than in the earlier ones. Well over one-third is very good and almost three-quarters at least good, with none unsatisfactory: the best in the school, but only just.
38. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are slightly better than in Years 7 to 9, again showing how the school concentrates its resources well to raise pupils' chances of success. Above average GCSE results and good achievement show the effectiveness of this practice. Teaching and learning in Year 11 are good considering the more challenging, lower attainment profile of pupils in that year.
39. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and learn well. Specialist teachers make good use of the very clear information about the needs of each individual pupil, and about the best ways of helping them to overcome their problems. Support staff assess each situation to see how they can be most effective, and are careful to avoid working in ways that make children start to rely on extra support. As a result, pupils are able to take a full part in the lessons, and are able to develop skills, knowledge and understanding as well as could be expected. Support assistants adjust work well so that pupils with special educational needs can understand what to do, but too few subject teachers are taking this job on themselves, to make it possible for a wider range of pupils to cope without support. Also, whilst all teachers read the pupils' individual education plans, and are conscious of their general needs, too few are adapting these plans by adding specific targets for their own lessons, to make it easier for pupils to understand how to improve their work.
40. Very nearly all teachers have a very good grasp of what they teach, especially in Years 10 and 11. Some non-specialists or teachers with main interests in other subjects sometimes teach less well in science and English, mainly because they do not have such a strong command of the subject matter; this contributes to the lower performance of pupils in these subjects in national tests for 14 year-olds.
41. Newly set up, innovative methods of keeping pupils abreast of how they are doing are a central part of teaching that fosters self-assessment and independence in learning. Curriculum maps describe for the pupils' and parents' benefits the work being done. They show how homework fits in and let the pupils record how they think they have done. Completion still varies but it is a good means of getting pastoral staff to join in the push to raise standards, as they scrutinise what pupils do. The school has measures to check closely on progress. The maps complement other very good assessment procedures. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and five recorded pieces provide a good picture of how each has done over every unit of work. As a result, pupils and parents do know about achievement and what should be done to improve.
42. Teaching and learning quality is very good in design and technology and art and good in all other subjects, except English, science and ICT where, despite some weaknesses, it is satisfactory. The only reason it is not very good in modern foreign languages is because the teachers do not give the pupils enough chances to practise work orally.
43. Characteristics of the best teaching were rapid pace and high expectation. The pupils were made fully aware of what was to be studied and the teachers referred to progress regularly throughout the lessons. At the end, a detailed assessment of what had happened not only helped to fix learning in the pupils' minds but also told the teacher how effective the lesson had been. Very good examples of such teaching arose in mathematics with a Year 11 class, in

drama where important points of communication were brought home and in history where real challenge imposed strict time limits for the completion of work that met pupils' learning needs very well.

44. A comparative general weakness is the variable use of ICT to help pupils to learn: specific cases are reported under the subject headings of the report. The specialist college award has brought clear benefits to science and mathematics especially, but teachers have not yet mastered the new aids to teaching well enough. Sometimes the absence of time limits let the pace flag; as a result, the pupils' attention wandered and discipline started to break down. On other occasions, pupils were unmoved by interesting presentational styles that went on too long and didn't give them chances to do things for themselves. On the other hand, there was some really good planning and skilful questioning in science that produced very good learning, for instance about the difficult idea of forces in Year 7.

Sixth form

In the school, teaching is **good**. Learning is **good**. Assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships and commitment to hard work lead to good learning.
- The students' work is checked very thoroughly, so they are fully aware of how they are doing.
- Teachers are at pains to let students make up their own minds and find out for themselves.

Commentary

45. Lively presentation; good challenge, good, often very good; planning, a cordial atmosphere and high expectations with good use of drama to sharpen students' learning' are comments taken at random from reports on inspected lessons in a variety of subjects. They typify the good quality of teaching and learning found in the subjects taught in the school. A very good pace, high levels of discussion arising from the very good relationships between students and teachers, consistent reference to examination requirements, as work was consolidated, led, for example, to some excellent learning in mathematics.
46. The very good quality of assessment mirrors that described in paragraph forty-one and goes across all subjects. It is also based on standardisation of how files are organised to show progress. As well, regular consultations with students show where revision is needed. Thoroughly corrected work is very closely related to examination requirements.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons in the sixth form in the school.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	3	12	3	0	0	0

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

47. Sixth form English teaching is good. Seriousness and intensity on the part of teachers drives students to work hard, yet they remain relaxed, contributing readily to lessons. On occasion, the teacher's expectations are too high and some students struggle to keep up. Good planning, using varied activities and encouragement for more diffident students were part of some good sixth form sampled biology teaching. Some outstanding teaching in a sampled art lesson led to exceptional standards of original work; the contribution to students' spiritual and cultural development was very strong. Similarly, the French and German courses lend themselves very strongly to such development with moral issues also prominent and brought out well by the good teaching.

48. Very good challenge to students and studious avoidance of taking sides were appealing features of some very good teaching and learning in humanities subjects in which standards are, as a result, well up to expectation. Really high demands and consistent challenge in a tightly organised programme of study are major factors for very good teaching and learning quality in mathematics. Complicated ideas are taught in an enterprising way involving the students by challenging, focussed questions. There are close relationships between teacher and students and mutual support from the students.

Teaching and learning in shared sixth form subjects.

49. Most sixth form teachers have good expertise in their subjects, which they use to give clear explanations and prepare students well for examinations. Many teachers are skilful in asking questions and setting tasks that encourage students to think for themselves and develop their understanding. Lessons are often well planned, with activities that interest and challenge students. In business studies, health and social care and history, for example, they are encouraged to work independently and contribute to discussions. Expectations are high and lessons take place at a good pace. Students learn well from discussions led by teachers in ICT but there are too few opportunities for students to research information and make presentations to the class. Sometimes as in chemistry, teachers do not involve students sufficiently in lessons. While accurate information is provided, questioning does not allow students to contribute to the discussion.

50. A strong feature of teaching and learning in many subjects is the very good relationship between students and their teachers. Students find teachers helpful and approachable and there is good mutual respect. In chemistry, for example, supportive and encouraging attitudes boost students, confidence. Students on the whole have positive attitudes to learning, especially taking into account the difficulties they encounter as a result of travelling between schools.

51. Assessment is good. Most teachers mark work regularly and their comments provide good guidance, though in business studies, the comments are not always sufficiently helpful. In history, assessment is very good and students receive detailed feedback to help them improve their work. Detailed individual assessment in health and social care is excellent. Most subjects track students' progress carefully through half-termly assessments with grades circulated to all the schools.

Overall teaching grades in the 42 sixth form lessons seen across the sixth form (both shared and separate lessons are included) were as shown:

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	10 (24%)	22 (53%)	8 (19%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Senior managers keep the curriculum under constant review to ensure that it gives pupils the best possible opportunities.
- Lack of specialist staff is temporarily reducing the breadth of opportunities in English, science, music and humanities.
- Management of the curriculum is conscientious and pragmatic within the constraints imposed by a small school.
- Library provision is not sufficient to reinforce learning in all subjects.

Commentary

52. The curriculum for all pupils is developing continuously as managers work to adapt to new developments and natural changes within a smaller than average staff team. Over recent years the timetable has been adjusted from year to year to ensure that pupils have all the time that they are entitled to in each subject across the Years 7 to 9, and then across Years 10 and 11. On occasions, teachers leave and the school has to wait patiently until replacements of a good enough calibre come along. This year this sort of arrangement has meant that history and geography have been combined as humanities in Year 7 to 9, but there is a commitment to compensate for this next year, and a good track record of meeting such commitments. An amalgamation of the different parts of design and technology into art and graphics covers all legal requirements. The courses provide a good range of experiences in suitable resistant materials and give very good practical experiences, for example the whole of Year 8 spends days each year working on plastics and metal-based projects in a large local electronics firm.
53. At the same time as they have been balancing the conflicting demands, managers have continued to refine and develop what is available in Years 10 and 11. An imaginative approach to GCSE examinations capitalises on the enthusiasm of younger pupils, and sets them off early on the courses in a range of subjects. High levels of challenge have been introduced in modern languages where all pupils study two subjects, and have the chance to experience and choose from three. A similar challenge is available to mathematicians who can also study statistics.
54. As part of the school's very serious commitment to meet individual needs there has been good progress towards developing a range of alternatives for older pupils who are not motivated by traditional approaches. Both science and ICT offer GCSE courses which are rooted in the world of work, and plans are in place for individual students to spend one day per week on extended work experience because this is seen to be more likely to maintain their interest and their effort. A small group of older pupils is able to study for the very relevant Employment Graduation Award, which concentrates on the basic skills they will need to find work when they leave school. They clearly enjoy doing the course. Good careers education for all complements these initiatives.
55. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Practice is also very good. There is a comprehensive range of support that starts by going out to meet the needs of pupils who find it hard to come in to school, (numerous are from other schools in which they have failed to make it). Once in school pupils are helped to grow in confidence and to put some of their distracting problems to one side so that they can concentrate on learning. Then they are helped to cope in a gradually increasing range of lessons. Around 80 pupils who have problems with basic reading or number work get intensive support by coming out of lessons, and this is helping them to improve. In other cases, pupils with very individual problems are given carefully tailored practical and personal help. A good example of this working well is a girl in Year 9 who really could not read when she came to the school. With a carefully modified curriculum she is enjoying her classwork, and has just read her first novel for pleasure. Another innovative approach (part of the school's reasoned response to low results in national tests for 14 year-olds) is the foundation class in Year 7 that has a single teacher for much of

the week. Pupils in this group are able to progress well because they have more chance to adjust to the wider demands of secondary education, though in its early stages the curriculum offered to these pupils is balanced as carefully as the one offered to all the other pupils in Year 7.

56. Good links with partners outside school support these developments. The Connexions guidance service works intensively to help individuals to find the right way forward after Year 11, and large local employers provide realistic contexts for some units of work, as well as relevant work experience placements.
57. The school successfully gained Science College status in September 2003. Since then it has made good progress in improving its provision for science and mathematics and in other aspects of its work that were included in the bid, widening the range of resources available as well as supporting external partnerships. It is too early for these improvements to have raised standards and improved achievement.
58. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is very good. It contributes very significantly to the school's very good learning atmosphere and to the pupils' personal development. Wide-ranging activities meet the needs and interests of all pupils, and they are very well attended. Pupils can play a good range of competitive sports, or get help with homework. Gifted and talented pupils get extra help and challenge in after school clubs, but the most positive contribution to pupils all round development comes from a series of carefully planned enrichment days that provide further experiences for all pupils in a particular year group. A recent chocolate week focussed on the plight of developing nations who produce our luxuries; other initiatives have featured Bangladeshi cooking, Chinese New Year, and the plight of prisoners in Saudi Arabia.
59. Staffing is unsatisfactory, as there are too few specialists, leading, for example standards in English that are lower than they should be. Procedures to help staff to improve their professional competencies are very good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, though facilities for music and expressive arts are unsatisfactory, as, for example there is not enough room for suitable practice. Governors have managed a restricted site well to keep pace with developments in the curriculum.
60. The bid for Science College status is well integrated into the school improvement plan and has led to improvements in resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards in mathematics and science. These are not yet used satisfactorily enough invariably to interest pupils and make teaching and learning more effective. New accommodation, laptops and network links widen the variety of teaching methods used by mathematics teachers. A new GCSE course in applied science has been introduced in Year 10. The library is too small to provide a suitable back up to teaching and learning; it is comparatively under stocked and used; provision is unsatisfactory. Other resources are satisfactory and generally sufficient, although there are some text book shortages, for example in French and history.

Sixth form (general provision)

The curriculum in the sixth form is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets the students' aspirations well.
- The schools in the confederation do not make the best of the potential their partnership brings.

Commentary

61. In September 2001, the City of Lincoln Community College, St Peter and St Paul's RC School and Joseph Ruston Technology College started a shared sixth form provision. It is based on a confederation principle in which each school retains responsibility for its own students whilst providing teaching and learning resources for students in the three schools. The students have access to a wide range of GCE subjects at AS and A-levels, and to a suitable range of vocational courses. Each school's commitment to the arrangement is less than full. Some courses are replicated, for example psychology, with only small numbers of students; although this pleases parents and governors it does put extra burdens on staffing that is already stretched. Sixth form teachers are well qualified in their subjects.
62. The shared sixth form curriculum meets students' aspirations well and provides a much wider choice of subjects than could be provided in the individual sixth forms, which are very small by national standards. There is a wide range of A-level courses and advanced vocational courses in ICT and health and social care and this subject is also offered at intermediate level. Students take a course in personal, social and health education although general studies and key skills are currently not available.
63. As a direct consequence of the shared sixth form arrangements and travelling problems associated with the incongruous times of the school days shared extra-curricular activities are currently unsatisfactory. This also limits tutor time and the possibilities for assembling together and both have a negative effect on the social cohesion of the sixth form.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of pastoral support and guidance in the school is **very good**. Monitoring of pupils' personal and academic development is also **very good**. The school seeks pupils' views and acts upon them **satisfactorily**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring place where pupils are very well looked after.
- The strong house system supports pupils' personal development very well.
- Pupils are provided with very good support and guidance to help improve their work.
- Settling-in arrangements are good: Year 7 pupils quickly feel comfortable in this new school.
- The school takes pupils' views seriously and responds satisfactorily to them.
- Pupils' involvement in organising and running the school council is limited.

Commentary

64. The school provides pupils with a very good level of care within a strong Christian framework. Staff take the trouble to get to know their pupils well and the house system provides a firm sense of belonging. Relationships are friendly and supportive and pupils are secure in the knowledge that staff listen to them if they have a concern. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good through careful attention paid by form tutors, heads of house and the head of pastoral development. There is scope for closer checking of pupils' academic progress by form tutors. There are appropriate health and safety procedures in place.
65. Pupils are provided with very good levels of support and guidance that help them improve their work. Systems are generally more robust in Years 10 and 11 than they are for younger pupils. Pupils have a very good understanding of how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve. Curriculum maps give pupils a clear understanding of what they are learning, how they can learn for themselves, how homework fits in, and how they are progressing. As with most new systems, some subjects are using curriculum maps better than are others.

66. Care of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and support staff all know these pupils and their requirements very well, and are very careful to ensure that they are safe and are able to learn well: they achieve well as a result.
67. Arrangements to ensure new pupils settle in well are good. New Year 7s arrive a day before everyone else, so they can get to know the school's layout and procedures in relative calm. Sixth form students are used effectively to support those Year 7 pupils who find the move to secondary school more difficult to cope with. This is good practice, as it helps the personal development of the new pupils and sixth formers, too.
68. The established school council is well organised by staff and governors. Pupils' views are listened to and taken seriously. For example, their request for more drinking fountains and healthier snacks are being acted upon. Pupils' involvement in organising and running the council is unsatisfactory; despite their having the ability to do this for themselves, a governor plays too prominent a part.

Sixth form

The advice, support and guidance for sixth form students in the school are **very good**. The involvement of students, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receive very good advice, support and guidance about their work.
- Subjects provide clear, unambiguous guidance about how work is to be organised.
- The head of sixth form is taking appropriate steps to improve the work ethos.

Commentary

69. Students have well informed personal support and guidance from subject teachers, tutors and the busy head of sixth form who is keenly ambitious for sixth formers. An academic panel of senior staff provides another strand to the very good levels of guidance. Here, staff, parents and students meet to discuss problem areas and set targets for improvement. Special school folders and very good systems for monitoring students' work ensure progress is kept under close scrutiny.
70. Induction to the sixth form is well organised through, for example, joint evenings to promote opportunities available in the shared sixth form among Year 11 pupils. The role of tutors is currently restricted to registration and their participation in guiding and mentoring the students in their care is not large enough. Students find the head of sixth and subject teachers approachable for extra help and the part played by the headteacher in assisting students is exemplary: they turn very readily to him.
71. Appropriate systems are in place to record and monitor each student's progress. Regular half-termly grades are received from subject teachers across the shared sixth form. The only problem is that there is not always time for students moving between school to meet with individual subject teachers not based in their own school. The setting of sharp targets for both Years 12 and 13 is under-developed: plans to carry this out are well in hand. Students believe that they are treated fairly and with respect. They are satisfied with the careers and higher education advice they receive. Most students enjoy life in the sixth form and recommend it to others.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** working relationship with parents and community links are **good**. Relationships with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a popular choice and there are many more parents wanting to get their child in than there are places.
- The school plays an enlightened role in the wider community and welcomes all pupils regardless of Faith or background.
- Some parents are not supporting the school by ensuring their child attends regularly, despite staff trying hard to work and engage with them.
- The school works well with parents and communication is good.
- The school is well respected locally and has some strong, developing links with city employers.

Commentary

72. The school has a good reputation in the community and is oversubscribed. Parents are very pleased with the school and supportive of its work. St Peter and St Paul willingly embraces all sections of the community, regardless of differences in Faith or background. Relationships with Our Lady of Lincoln and St Hugh's parish permeate many aspects of school life, greatly enhancing pupils' personal and spiritual development.
73. The schools works well with parents and lines of communication are good. There is often individual contact with parents, especially if the school has a concern, and the house system is strong in this, and other, respects. The school realises that working with parents is very important and has organised a new Year 7 to 9 parents' information evening (in addition to the GCSE evening they already hold), as part of its drive to improve its results. A particularly good example of the school working well with parents exists in food technology. Here, pupils are given the option of cooking at home, parents sign to confirm this has been done and the school awards pupils a certificate of 'basic skills and knowledge' in recognition. There are also very good links with parents and other agencies to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
74. A small yet significant minority of parents finds it difficult to get their children to attend school, especially in Years 10 and 11. A range of social factors outside the school's control affects parents' ability and willingness to co-operate. The school is working hard to build relationships with parents whose children are not good attenders. This initiative is new and signs so far are encouraging.
75. Good community links are set to expand further once the specialist science college work gets fully underway. There are already established links with three large companies, bringing benefits such as pupils' involvement in, for example, 'National Construction Week,' sponsored by a major building company and in practical aspects of design and technology.
76. Specialist college provision has enabled the school to set up links with a local industry for work placements for pupils; opportunities for training for the staff are being discussed. For Years 8 and 9 there are enrichment courses in science and mathematics. Effective use is made of visits to local universities. A foundation course for low achievers receives support from industry and after the tests pupils in Year 9 will follow a mathematics for science course in which information from data-loggers and other sources will be used.
77. There are good, strong family ties with the two main Roman Catholic primary schools. Links with the mathematics and English department are developing and Year 6 and 7; pupils are currently involved in a joint art and dance project. Teachers who taught in one primary last year, to help out with a staffing shortage greatly valued the insight gained, as it helped them make significant changes to the way Year 7 pupils are now taught. Links with higher education

are very good, but those with partner secondary schools are not developed enough to fulfil their real potential.

Sixth form

The information for parents is **very good**. Management arrangements for the shared sixth form are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good amount of information for parents about students' progress.
- The shared sixth form arrangements with two other local schools are not working as well as they should.

Commentary

78. There are very good links with parents. This is because the school keeps them regularly informed about students' progress through monthly updates and there is a generous number of chances for parents to meet with teachers.
79. Because courses are duplicated unnecessarily at the two other schools, the links with partner sixth forms are inefficient.
80. The shared provision with the other two schools has widened academic and social opportunities for students. Effective and profitable links have been developed with partner primary schools, the local college, universities and with a small number of businesses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **very good**. Leadership is **very good**. Management is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership is principled, self-critical and innovative; it is at the heart of a school in which pupils and students achieve well.
- Strategic planning is very good; governors and senior leaders work very well together.
- The school does not paper over cracks; it treats weaknesses very seriously and overcomes them.
- The school provides successfully for pupils who do not respond readily to school or who have learning difficulties through a very well led and managed social inclusion department.
- There is a gap in the way senior management holds departments to account.
- Governors hold the school very well to account.

Commentary

81. Inspection evidence supports strongly the views of parents, pupils and friends of the school that very good leadership sets a highly confident, distinctive tone to this school, which has liberal Catholic values at its heart. Leadership's clear purpose is, within the constraints of a small school, to raise standards in a learning atmosphere that produces thoughtful, reliable, self-confident young persons who care for others. It is successful in doing so.
82. Very good governance holds the school closely to account and the governors play prominent parts in school life. Their committees check very closely on both the education provided and the spending to achieve it. They are active in, for example, helping in meetings to win parents'

backing for initiatives. Their partnership with the headteacher and rest of the school is strong, although on the odd occasion, such as in the conduct of the school council, they take too active parts, forgetting in their enthusiasm that it is the pupils who should be running it with governor advice, if needed. The governors' keen participation in the inspection showed clearly how much they cherish what the school does and how well they find it meets their own aspirations.

83. Appointed some time after the previous inspection, the headteacher's very good leadership sustains the school's high popularity. The whole school community holds leadership in high regard. Leadership knows the needs of youth and acts very effectively in response. In conversation, sixth formers were unanimous in their applause of leadership's approachability and the great confidence they had in it. Inspirational aspects of leadership have, for example, generated a forward looking school with opportunities for pupils to take examinations when they are ready and the very good assessment regime that requires teachers to select pieces of marked work for records that show progress clearly, without excessive testing. Leadership celebrates success widely and denounces strongly when required, for instance in reacting to drug abuse. It is, however, humane in its steps to re-integrate offenders: this school does its very best to cater for all. Leadership makes sure the school analyses its performance very closely. Measures to avoid repetition of very low test marks for 14 year-olds are thorough; they are working, although there is a small risk to the balance of Year 9 pupils' education, as they concentrate on work in English, mathematics and science to the possible detriment of other subjects. Very good planning for improvement is succinct, relevant to need and forms a suitable basis for progress. It is coherent across the school, except in English where planning does not concentrate strongly enough on how to improve learning, for example by collaboration with special educational needs.
84. Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The Head of social inclusion has a very clear understanding of how all the different strands of support should work together. She has made sure that improvement since the previous inspection has already been very good, and has a clear plan of how to improve on that over the coming months. Legal requirements are met properly, and administration is effective and efficient.
85. Management is satisfactory. Its sole purpose is to raise standards. A strong feature of the school is teamwork: governors are a good example. Also, imaginative management structures have unlocked real talent in teachers who had been in the school for lengthy periods. The setting up of a quite large very well managed senior team has brought these together and provided the school with clear, often impressive practices designed to raise standards. A weakness of the system is the absence of lines of direct responsibility and accountability to other middle managers; some, for instance English and science, are struggling a bit to keep their team pulling together. Performance management is fully in place and the school's procedures for checking how it does go well beyond the basic scheme. Teaching and learning are checked and evaluated frequently and staff training is matched closely to results. Target setting is commonplace and effective. Management meetings of the specialist science college group are well organised and productive.

Barriers to learning

86. Over-stretched staffing and too frequent absences by some pupils are main barriers to learning. Some aspects of accommodation, mentioned earlier in this report, also militate against standards. The school insists on appointing only suitable teachers to fill vacancies. It is finding it hard to do so in English and science especially. Taking the opportunity to train graduates on the job is only partially successful. As a result, standards in English and science are lower than they should be and the teaching quality does not match that of the rest of the school.

Financial information

87. Finances are managed very well. A big investment in extra, very effective administrative staff, such as attendance and examinations and assessment officers, to let teachers concentrate on teaching is having early positive effects in, for example, the big increase in the amount of very good teaching since the previous inspection. A finance officer, the headteacher and governors watch the budget very closely. Considering the above average income per pupil and the good quality of education provided, the school provides satisfactory value for money. The sixth form is cost effective against the school's budget.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,304,433
Total expenditure	2,181,054
Expenditure per pupil	3,558

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to the next	123,379

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership fights very strongly to raise standards and to broaden provision.
- Sixth formers are very appreciative of the way the school runs.

Commentary

88. The sixth form is well led. There is a well-considered improvement plan for further development. The head of sixth form, in common with all other leaders, works very closely with and through the headteacher. Strengths lie in ambition, consultation with sixth formers, for instance in their production of a sixth form brochure, and with parents; these make up a strong team. The responses of sixth formers were overwhelmingly supportive of the way the school runs.
89. The sixth form runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and management is good. Procedures and policies are clear.
90. Relationships are very good and there is a high level of mutual respect between the students and the head of sixth form who responds very rapidly to suggestions. The sixth form questionnaire identified a lack of enrichment activity; this was found to be health related pastimes, so partnerships with local clubs were straightway identified as a step to take.
91. Leadership has developed a very good system to check on progress that involves an academic panel in working with students to judge progress through common files of work.
92. In spite of shared provision, leadership manages to keep the sixth form very closely involved with the rest of the school, to the benefit of all. The students in this school have very strong links with the wider community and with higher education, for example, producing a radio programme for a local university media department and attending relevant functions on several campuses.

Shared sixth form provision

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of the shared sixth form is inefficient: there is not a full-enough commitment to make the arrangement work really well.

Commentary

93. While the sixth form co-ordinators in all three schools are effective, strategic planning for the shared provision lacks rigour and has led to inefficiency in its organisation and cost effectiveness. There is no overall leadership, and hence no clear structure for planning for the future or monitoring current provision.
94. The significant difference in times of the school day between City of Lincoln Community College and the other two schools creates problems for teachers and students and reduces the efficiency of the shared provision.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not perform well enough in national tests at the end of Year 9.
- Insufficient good teaching means that pupils learn less well in several Year 7 to 9 classes.
- Pupils preparing GCSE build well on attainment levels from when they entered the school because teaching is good in Years 10 and 11.
- The proportion of pupils obtaining the top, A*/A, grades in the 2003 GCSE English literature examinations was well above the national average.

Commentary

95. Although pupils now join the school with average levels of attainment, those in Year 9 upwards arrived with below average standards in English. This means that pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach below, but close to average, standards of work by Year 9. The 2003 results in national tests at the end of Year 9 produced well below average results that do not reflect current standards of work. Rather they indicate unsatisfactory preparation for the tests and poor achievement in them. Absences on the part of some higher and, more often, middle attainers taking or preparing other GCSE courses for early entry, also lowered the overall results. Boys attained less well than girls against national gender figures. In English, recent results show a downward trend.
96. GCSE results for 2003 in English were close to the national average and those for English literature were above. Pupils achieve well to reach these overall average standards by the end of Year 11. The performance of the highest and lowest attaining pupils is notably above expectations, particularly in English literature.
97. Staffing problems have led to an under strength provision of qualified specialist teachers. Achievement, especially for some in Years 7 to 9, has consequently been held back. Good management and flexible approaches by other teachers have tempered some of the adverse effects, but preparation for national tests has clearly been weakened.
98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils enjoy their English work. Teachers plan lessons carefully so that all pupils are directly involved in learning through work in pairs and small groups. As a result of frequent oral work, both in English and drama lessons, most pupils in all years are confident speakers. They read aloud clearly and show sound performance skills, as seen when Year 8 pupils improvised good television news items based on their reading of a short novel. Pupils are usually attentive listeners.
99. Where teachers manage their classes less well the quality of discussion suffers. A few pupils shout out and fail to pay attention to the comments of others.
100. In Years 7 to 9 pupils present their written work well with average levels of accuracy in spelling and punctuation. They write engagingly about literature and show sound understanding of what

they read. Their range of writing is narrower than usual, for example in media based work. Pupils only occasionally use ICT to prepare or present their work.

101. By Years 10 and 11 pupils make full use of re-drafting techniques. They organise written work well and frequently word process final drafts. They write effectively as characters from plays and novels. Analytical essays on poetry show a good grasp of meaning and some awareness of writers' techniques. The work of lower-attaining pupils is often impressive, as seen in a very good Year 9 lesson in which pupils considered how Macbeth might be effectively staged and then gave sensitive readings of a key scene. The high expectations of the teacher and her very good planning ensured that all pupils made very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported and make equally good progress in lessons.
102. Good planning characterises much of the teaching in the department. Schemes of work have been revised to ensure that all pupils follow balanced and interesting programmes of study. All teachers are regularly observed teaching and offered help. Management of the department is satisfactory, but there are too few opportunities seized to further enrich learning through close links with special educational needs and expressive arts specialist teachers, and through a wider range of activities outside the classroom.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

103. Standards of literacy are average. Pupils from all years usually speak competently and communicate well. They read effectively so as to cope with the demands in all areas of the curriculum. Private reading is a regular activity in English lessons and during morning registration. English lessons in the library have recently begun to make an impact upon pupils' standards of reading but more can be done. The library is small with a limited number of books and only four computers available for pupils' use so that its impact upon standards of literacy is modest. Good support for pupils' reading and writing is evident in modern foreign languages, art and design, ICT and design and technology. In these subjects good focus on important words helps pupils to build up their vocabulary. Writing is developed through the use of outline frames to help pupils organise their paragraphs well. There is emphasis upon accuracy in spelling and punctuation and upon the importance of appropriate language to fit the task. In modern foreign languages pupils are encouraged to use dictionaries. In most subjects key words are displayed in teaching areas and sometimes referred to in lessons. Marking is not focused uniformly enough on helping pupils to improve the way they write. Opportunities for pupils to read aloud are too few. The school has made progress in its strategy for raising literacy levels but recent efforts have waned. This is now an important area for further development, especially in Years 7 to 9.

Modern Foreign Languages

Provision in modern foreign languages - **French, German and Spanish** - is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is outstanding in Years 8 and 9 because all pupils take three languages with some degree of success; it is good in Year 11.
- Standards are above average.
- Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to practise speaking.
- Spiritual moral social and cultural development is very good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

104. Spanish has been introduced this year, with the result that there are beginners in all three Years 7, 8 and 9. All are making good progress on one lesson a week, taken from French in Year 7 and from German in Years 8 and 9. All pupils begin German in addition to French in Year 8. Achievement in French is good, notably because special needs teaching is good and there is no underachievement. High attainers in Year 9 are taking a full GCSE course in French at higher level and achieving very well. Achievement in German is very good because pupils reach similar standards to those in French. Average pupils can handle past and future tenses in both languages by Year 9.
105. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good because nearly all pupils cope with GCSE in two languages. Some pupils in a basic literacy class made clear their enthusiasm for French. Well-above average standards at GCSE in 2003 are reflected in present Year 11. There is little difference between the standards of girls and those of boys. German was and is nearer to the average, which is higher in percentage terms than French.
106. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their work well and help pupils to learn effectively on their own. Teachers have entered fully into the spirit of overall curriculum mapping (see paragraph 41) used in the school. This leads to a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills in both English and French. Very good use of assessment ensures that they know where they are and what they have to do to succeed. However, pupils lack confidence in speaking the language from not practising often enough. Teachers encourage pupils to learn independently, but not all have textbooks to support this, nor is ICT used fully enough. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. Spiritual development is strong both in Christian terms and in secular terms of self-confidence through response to challenge.
107. The recent appointment of an acting head of modern languages has brought in fresh ideas. Her predecessor remains on the staff in a senior role, and they work well together. The department has provided more opportunities than is often the case for pupils to visit France and Germany, and an exchange link with a German school has considerable further promise. Since the previous inspection high standards have been maintained.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 7 to 11 is good with standards at the end of Year 11 above national averages.
- The results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were too low.
- Very strong leadership and management provide the structure for success and the teachers respond with dedicated hard work.
- Very good assessment procedures in Years 10 and 11 inform teachers about pupils' progress and them help set realistic but challenging targets.
- ICT is under-used.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.

Commentary

108. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were an improvement on the year before, but were well below the national average with no difference in the results of boys and girls. Results are also well below average based on performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6. The work in Year 9 seen during the inspection week is of a higher standard and Years 7 and 8 are at the national level. An unusually high absence, including some high and

middle attainers who had pre-occupations with other subjects to be taken as GCSEs in Years 9 and 10, contributed to the poor performance; the school has taken relevant steps to stop any recurrence. The appointment of an extra teacher is already improving standards. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, including pupils with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

109. Results of the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above the national average and continue the rising trend over the last few years. The standard of work seen in both Years 10 and 11 is above and for very high attainers well above national standards. Achievement therefore is good with no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs or pupils for whom English is an additional language.
110. Teaching is good overall with teaching in Years 10 and 11 better than in Years 7 to 9 where the pace of a few lessons was too slow and the challenge too low. The older pupils are more actively engaged and have a greater motivation to achieve well. Good lessons had challenging work, were structured effectively, and delivered with interest at a suitable pace to involve pupils at every stage. Assessment procedures identify underachievement and indicate realistic targets. However, some pupils have not yet learned the value of curriculum maps intended to help them check how they are doing. All lessons have clearly defined stages, but there is room for a more imaginative approach in the starter activity and the plenary does not always assess the effectiveness of the learning. Small classes with effective support enable pupils with special educational needs to achieve well. The ways ICT and computer-attached white boards are used are too narrow; teachers fail to exploit their potential as learning aids.
111. The department is led and managed very well. Strong vision is aimed at raising attainment and the status of and interest in mathematics. The GCSE statistics course provides very high attaining pupils with further challenge and is a good example of how the school caters so well for individual need. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been rewritten and contain links to ICT but they do not identify curricular opportunities to allow mathematics to contribute more fully to the pupils' personal development.
112. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Although national test results at the end of Year 9 are low inspection evidence suggests the improvement last year goes on. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are better and the provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

113. The national numeracy strategy is fully in place. There is a policy for co-ordinating numeracy across all areas of learning. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed in many subjects with display and analysis of data particularly strong in most areas. Pupils have the mathematical techniques to undertake calculations successfully.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results in Year 9 are below average.
- The demanding and well-planned nature of the best teaching leads to very good achievement.
- Some unsatisfactory teaching leads to unsatisfactory achievement and lack of interest in learning science.
- Assessment is well organised but self-assessment by the pupils is inconsistent.
- In spite of training, teaching has not improved enough.
- Science College status has improved resources for practical work and ICT.

Commentary

114. Results in National Tests for Year 9 have declined since 2001; in 2003 they were below average for both boys and girls and achievement overall was poor because too many pupils, including high and middle achievers, missed the test, failing to appreciate its importance. GCSE examination results in 2003 improved on those of 2002, they were very close to the national average and they were about average when compared with what pupils did in the Year 9 tests. Overall achievement between Years 7 and 11 is satisfactory because pupils' standards at the start of their Year 7 course have been below average. However pupils, particularly boys, do less well in science than in other subjects.
115. In lessons, standards are below average. In Year 7 pupils' understanding of forces varies, some understand the difference between mass and weight whilst others are uncertain about this difficult idea. Practical skills also vary but overall are below average. In Year 10 high attaining pupils' understanding of hydrocarbons is appropriate for high grades but in Year 11 work with graphs is below average. Literacy and numeracy skills in pupils' coursework are about average: they do not hinder performance.
116. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but they vary because the effectiveness of teaching varies. In Year 9, standards are better than those achieved in previous national tests because the school has concentrated on making sure the pupils are better prepared and aware of the need to do well. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, but teaching is inconsistent. In very good lessons demanding ideas, for instance about floating and gravity, combined with an insistence on meeting deadlines, produces very good achievement. Pupils learn very well because good planning provides a variety of opportunities to learn, these include clear instructions and skilfully used demonstrations of chemical reactions to make sure pupils understand. In many lessons relationships are very good, teachers regularly encourage pupils who then work hard and confidently. Pupils from ethnic minorities learn as well as others and the achievements of boys and girls are the same.
117. Some teaching is unsatisfactory because planning and preparation are not done and pupils learn very little. In these unsatisfactorily taught lessons slow, undemanding teaching fails to encourage pupils; as a result, they lack interest in science lessons. Explanations are unclear and deadlines for completion of practical work are not set, so pupils learn slowly. Behaviour, particularly by boys deteriorates. Too much talk by the teacher means that pupils do not adopt a critical attitude to work and they learn less.
118. Frequent staffing and leadership changes have reduced the effectiveness of the school's policies to raise standards. The situation is now stable and leadership and management are both satisfactory, with leadership having many good features. The school has gained science college status and extra equipment is being used to introduce more practical activities to improve achievement especially for boys. Very recently laptops and data-loggers have arrived. New interactive whiteboards are used very skilfully by some teachers to generate interest and increase the pace of lessons so that achievement is very good. These developments are clearly designed to raise achievement, but are too recent to have been effective.
119. Many science teachers have other responsibilities; this reduces the effectiveness of teamwork and of policies to improve teaching. The Key Stage 3 Strategy and investigative work particularly are inconsistently applied. Records of pupils' achievement are thorough and are used well to analyse the department's performance. The new and imaginative curriculum map system allows pupils to evaluate their own work but, again, it is not used consistently. Improvement since the previous inspection has, nonetheless, been good. Examination results have improved, resources especially for ICT are much better but there is still some unsatisfactory teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communications technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and behaviour is well managed.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- More competent students are not consistently challenged to improve the standard of their work.

Commentary

120. Standards of work seen by the end of Year 9 are average. Almost two-thirds of pupils choose to start their GCSE course a year early in Year 9. These pupils develop a wider knowledge of the way that ICT is used than is usual by that age. However, there is insufficient emphasis throughout Years 7 to 9 on evaluating how well the use of ICT is suited to its audience or its purpose. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, though the most competent pupils are not consistently challenged to build on their existing standards.
121. The first group of pupils will complete their GCSE courses in ICT in 2004. In previous years there have been different courses available, each containing elements of ICT, but entries have been low and standards below average.
122. Work seen during the inspection showed that standards by the end of Year 11 are below average, and achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Lower attaining pupils have to work hard in GCSE lessons to record all that they have learned about the way ICT is used in industrial and commercial settings. Higher attainers spend too little time thinking critically about their own use of the technology, though design and technology provides such opportunities effectively.
123. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned thoroughly, and are often imaginative. Behaviour is well managed and the good relationships mean that pupils enjoy their lessons, and those with special educational needs are supported to learn well. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently, and too little evaluation of the way ICT is used. Planning gives insufficient emphasis to identifying what each pupil is expected to learn within each lesson, so marking, though careful and regular, is less effective than it should be. It does not clearly identify whether pupils have learned as well as they should have done, or what they need to do next if they are to improve the standard of their work.
124. Learning is satisfactory. Pupils are interested and stay on task throughout the lessons. Too often this is because they are kept busy with a series of tasks which demand concentration but relatively low levels of thought or skill, rather than being stimulated by the level of challenge.
125. Leadership is satisfactory, though some basic principles from the recently introduced Key Stage 3 Strategy have not been applied as effectively as they should. Management is satisfactory, and the good technician support minimises interruptions to learning, as well as supporting development in local primary schools. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. There has been substantial and well planned investment in equipment to give pupils good access to ICT across the full range of subjects, especially in design and technology.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

126. Provision for pupils to develop and use their ICT skills is good. Recent investment has enabled most subjects to give whole classes the chance to use computers to research or present their work and some teachers are beginning to use computerised presentations to enliven their lessons and illustrate important ideas very effectively. In design and technology in particular

there is a very carefully planned series of experiences that make a very strong contribution to the standards in the subject.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was not inspected.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned lessons, which include a variety of tasks and activities, keep pupils learning.
- Good opportunities to use ICT help pupils' learning well.
- A few pupils' short concentration span undermines their achievement.
- Constructive marking and regular assessments enable pupils to chart their progress and to set targets for improvement well.

Commentary

127. Entering Year 7 with below average skills and knowledge, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 9 are reaching standards that are still below, but close to, those expected. Achievement is good. By then, pupils understand how geography helps them to form opinions about sustainable development; they can, for example, empathise well with people whose lives are devastated by volcanoes and earthquakes.
128. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress, aided by the school's setting policy and, in other classes, teachers provide good guidance for writing.
129. There has been a significant improvement in GCSE results since the previous inspection when they were well below average. In 2003 results were just above average, and standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are average. Achievement is good in these years. All pupils build up very detailed case study material because they are encouraged to make the best use of all information sources. Where they are given the opportunity to do so, higher attainers use this material very well to illustrate their arguments. Average and lower attainers are not so adept at selecting and ordering their material and written answers to examination questions, are often too brief.
130. The quality of teaching and of learning is good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is satisfactory overall but with significant strengths. These are; good starter activities which focus pupils' attention on what is to be learned in the lesson; carefully selected photograph and video material which enhance pupils' understanding of weather, climate and tectonic features; and tasks which actively involve pupils in their learning. However, when the activities were not linked closely to the lesson's purposes, or when tasks were unclear, pupils became distracted and this impeded their progress. Good teaching ensured that pupils in Years 10 and 11 made good progress. Higher and lower attainers for example responded very well to the challenge of presenting their findings to the rest of the class.
131. Leadership and management are good. Led by a historian, the humanities faculty encompasses geography, history and sixth form government and politics. Recent staffing difficulties have placed the responsibility for geography in the hands of a newly qualified teacher who, ably supported by the head of faculty, has taken on the job with enthusiasm and

commitment. New curriculum maps have been written. They are in effective use by teachers and pupils and the department is beginning to address the need to improve assessment tasks.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and assessment lead to good learning and achievement by pupils.
- Good curriculum provision promotes pupils' wider personal development.
- Effective leadership and management lead to above average standards.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways are missed.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and relationships are very good.

Commentary

132. Teaching and learning by Year 9 and by Year 11 are both good. Teachers have a good command of the subject and they present their material well, so pupils are interested and well motivated. Teachers regularly challenge pupils to think for themselves and they have high expectations, so pupils work hard. Teachers manage pupils well; they are positive and encouraging and behaviour in lessons is good. Lessons are well planned to ensure that good progress is made. The department prepares pupils well for examination requirements and supports the development of pupils' literacy by teaching historical vocabulary very systematically. The pace of lessons is brisk and productive. Pupils of all abilities make a good effort to complete and present their work, though pupils occasionally lose concentration towards the end of lessons. Work is well matched to the needs of pupils, though, in occasional lessons, there is scope for further variation of tasks for pupils of different abilities, as in a Year 7 lesson on the Black Death. Collaborative work is under-used. There are limited opportunities in lessons for pupils to exercise choice over different ways of learning. ICT is used regularly for homework assignments but there are not many opportunities for pupils to make use of this in lessons.
133. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work very regularly and thoroughly. Pupils receive good feedback on their work, so they understand clearly how well they are doing and how to improve. Pupils are also asked to assess their own progress through the use of curriculum maps, but this new means of self-assessment is not yet fully established and carried out consistently.
134. The quality of assessment is good. It leads to good achievement by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able. Standards by Year 9 are average and achievement is good. By Year 9, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied and they can use historical sources effectively, though their skills of evaluating these sources are less well developed. Standards by Year 11 are in line with national standards and again pupils' achievement compared to their prior attainment is good. Most pupils do better than might be expected in their longer pieces of writing. Recent GCSE examination results were well above average. The difference between the standard of present work seen and that in recent examinations is because the present cohort of pupils is larger and of lower prior attainment than that which took GCSE last year. There is no consistent difference between the achievement of boys and girls, and boys do slightly better than nationally.
135. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' wider development, reinforcing values of the whole school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is regularly emphasised in lessons. Although not explicit, the subject also makes a very valuable contribution to the

citizenship curriculum. There is also a good programme of historical visits. These are supplemented by school based activities such as the First World War day for Year 9, which help motivate and interest pupils.

136. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is a good role model for staff and pupils and provides effective leadership. The department conducts rigorous self-evaluation. There are secure systems for monitoring performance, identifying any under-achievement and taking appropriate action to address it. The department has good schemes of work that make strong cross-curricular contributions. Improvement planning does not concentrate enough on the intended results.
137. Pupils' attitudes are good. Pupils think highly of their teachers. Relationships are very productive and pupils work well together. This positive atmosphere for learning helps to promote good achievement.
138. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Examination results have risen steadily in recent years. Achievement has improved for pupils of average and below average ability. Teaching overall has improved from satisfactory to good and the subject has increased in popularity.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good, innovative and high calibre specialist teaching.
- Teachers plan creative and imaginative projects which pupils find both interesting and relevant.
- High quality assessment activities help pupils to understand their learning and progress and know how to improve.
- The effective use of ICT by both pupils and teachers raises standards.
- Standards achieved are consistently above national expectations and averages for all ages of pupils.

Commentary

139. Pupils have generally low technology skills when they enter the school. They achieve well so that, by the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments show they have attained above the national expectation: this was confirmed by looking at their work during the inspection. The teachers have high expectations, set and plan challenging projects and make sure activities are worthwhile and interesting. Both designing and making skills are taught thoroughly. Levels of expectation are built into lesson plans, which are in turn shared with pupils. Those with special needs achieve as well as others because they get very good quality help and guidance. Higher attaining pupils are provided with extension activities and begin GCSE graphics work early.
140. 2003 GCSE graphics and food technology results were above the national average. There is good achievement overall. Pupils' presentation and research skills are particularly well developed. They research projects, making good use of computers to enhance and present their work to a high standard and then complete thorough testing and evaluation of their products. High quality support materials, individual teacher guidance and very effective assessment systems all contribute to this success.

141. The quality of teaching is very good for all age groups, which results in pupils becoming confident independent learners who take great pride in their work. Conscientious teachers set high expectations for all, supporting learning very well through the production of quality displays, support booklets and the use of an electronic white board. Teachers track pupils' progress very well, through regular checks and frequent comments on how to do better. Pupils experience motivating projects, like chocolate week, simultaneously making links with other subjects, developing team working and raising funds for charity. Teachers make sure pupils are motivated through choosing relevant projects, and using ICT throughout their work. Planning is detailed to ensure that projects are set at increasing levels of challenge, and includes a good grounding in all skills and knowledge required by the National Curriculum. The painstaking way in which experience of working with relevant resistant materials is woven into the design and art syllabuses is a good example of how the school thinks about and devises a stimulating curriculum for all. Practical work in industry by Year 8 reinforces learning through experiences of working with metal and plastics in the field of electronics very effectively.
142. The department is very well led and managed. A shared passion for quality in pupils' learning drives this small but select teaching team. No one stands still. Technician help makes a significant contribution to the team. High levels of monitoring and constant reviews keep the department moving forward. Teaching methods are discussed and practice is constantly shared. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above the national average, particularly in grades A*/A.
- Achievement is good by the end of Year 9 and very good by the end of Year 11.
- Very good teaching gives rise to the pupils' positive attitudes and a very good learning partnership that makes standards rise.
- The management of the department is very good, promoting high expectations.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not experience enough three-dimensional projects to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

143. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average because the teachers provide a very good basic skills programme, they promote and expect high standards. The pupils enjoy the lessons. Pupils have access to a range of materials and experiences, they respond well; therefore achievement for all is good.
144. Results are well above the national average in GCSE examinations, particularly in the highest, A*/A, grades. A significant number of pupils produce impressive results. In all lessons there exists a very good learning partnership between the teachers and the pupils and therefore achievement is very good. In all year groups pupils demonstrate pride in their achievements. Standards are well above average in Years 10 and 11.
145. The quality of teaching is very good overall; it is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good indeed in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Lesson planning is very effective because it gives all pupils very good learning opportunities. Lessons are challenging and all pupils respond well. The high level of enjoyment is a significant factor in lessons. The personal development of all pupils is improving because they are encouraged to

develop opinions through discussion, solve their own problems and they are also closely involved in the assessment of their own standards, strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge instills confidence in most pupils and therefore aids achievement. Language skills are improving because key words are introduced into all lessons as part of the school literacy policy. Opportunities for the promotion of numeracy are limited but concepts of scale, proportion, symmetry, perspective, area and volume are introduced practically, as design is an important part of the art curriculum. Regular references are made in lessons to the work of significant artists and cultures in order raise creative and visual appreciation. Assessment is excellent. Pupils are aware of their progress and how they might improve. Assessment is also used to influence change in the programmes of study.

146. The very good management is based upon high standards, clear vision and hard work. Well developed, comprehensive documentation is used very effectively. A very good range of extra activities is improving pupils' knowledge and understanding. The classrooms and surrounding areas contain very good displays of work promoting high standards and interest. Visiting artists and external visits are bringing further benefits to pupils' understanding and interest.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Very good extra-curricular activity has a very good effect on pupils' personal development.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation restricts pupils' learning.
- There is too little time for music in Year 9.

Commentary

147. Music standards overall are below average. The proportion of Year 9 pupils reaching or exceeding expectation in music by teacher assessment has fallen over three years from above to below average, as music now includes drama and dance that require broader skills: the department is now known as expressive arts. However, the number of boys reaching the expected standard has increased significantly at the same time. Pupils have too few music lessons to develop their knowledge, understanding and skill to an average level overall. Most sing well and many can improvise expressive music to poems or imagined film scenes. Achievement is unsatisfactory, as composition, the use of notation and efficient uses of keyboards are not developed enough. Of those pupils who reach Level 5 or above, many benefit from subsidised instrumental lessons. There are a few talented pupils across the school. In 2002 all pupils who took GCSE music succeeded with A-C grades. In 2003 all candidates took the examination one year early, with extra lessons after school, and obtained A* and A grades: these are high standards. There are no GCSE classes now though drama and expressive arts have recruited well.
148. Pupils achieve very well through the many opportunities to prepare and perform in public. Regular performances of a good standard in school, in church and elsewhere raise self-esteem. But too little time and a very noisy environment prevent pupils from doing their best in class music.
149. Teaching overall is good, sometimes very good. Because of some very good teaching pupils become confident performers and develop a good knowledge of the context of music in different cultures. They write imaginatively in role as cotton pickers when studying the blues and represent South African culture in movement and drumming. Very good relationships with students are sustained by effective use of praise to encourage all to try their best. Management

of pupils is good in difficult physical circumstances so students behave well. Good timing of lessons allows pupils to reflect on their learning and to demonstrate their achievement. Assessment is secure and helps learning well. Teaching of keyboard playing is insufficiently detailed and regular. Not enough time is given to listening and personal response. Teachers do not make sure pupils use headphones with keyboards and computers so that they can hear their own work more clearly and then improve it.

150. Within what is possible, leadership is good. Management of the whole area of expressive arts is satisfactory. Managers recognise that accommodation is unsatisfactory, as it has serious effects on achievement and standards. Resources do not match the increasing number of pupils. Day-to-day management, including the organising of visiting instrumental teachers and extra-curricular activity, is good. There are good links with partner schools. Staffing difficulties and curriculum time triggered the decision to subsume music into expressive arts in Year 9 and beyond. Staff coverage currently is dependent on some classes being taught by unqualified and inexperienced teaching assistants. Intrusion of sound between rooms throughout the area frustrates teachers and students and prevents the development of sensitivity to sound. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in the range of cultures in schemes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils who sit GCSE reach very high standards and get well above average results.
- Very good curriculum planning provides a very clear and progressive curriculum.
- Good assessment and recording strategies raise standards.
- Good use of ICT improves learning.
- There are not enough chances for pupils to be involved in their own assessment.
- The curriculum is a bit 'games heavy'.
- Assessment for the end of Year 9 lacks accuracy.

Commentary

151. The standard of attainment is broadly in line with national levels of expectation in the core curriculum. In the non-examination lessons, pupils are able to sustain their efforts well; enabling them to create extended sequences in their gymnastics activities. In football they are able to apply individual skills well into team and group situations. The department does not consider carefully enough the differences in attainment between girls and boys to ensure equal access and provision in all aspects of the curriculum, so the work lacks some balance, with, for instance, too many games activities. During their time at school, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs, on the whole, learn and achieve well and individual programmes are carefully designed to ensure all pupils achieve their full potential. Pupils achieve very well in GCSE courses. By the time they reach the end of Year 11 the number of pupils who attain grades A*-C in GCSE physical education is well above the national average. In their theory lessons, pupils achieve well producing in particular, good levels of extended writing.
152. Teaching and learning are good. Numerous, varied activities promote independent learning well, although sometimes the range of strategies to improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is not broad enough. The purposes of lessons are very clearly shared with the pupils and teachers make very effective use of stimulating questioning techniques. Similarly, good opportunities exist for the observation and evaluation of other pupils' performances, but

sometimes these are not followed through thoroughly enough. ICT is often used very effectively to raise pupils' awareness of the quality of their own and others' performances.

153. Leadership and management are good. They promote high standards in examination classes; curriculum planning and procedures for recording the outcomes of assessments carried out on pupils are very thorough. Checking on the quality of lessons, organising staff training and departmental meetings are all good. The process of involving pupils in their own assessment and the setting of personal targets is under-developed, as it is not general practice. However, the targets set for pupils with special educational needs are very clearly set and checked upon. Considering the need in the whole school, literacy and numeracy are not taken sufficiently into account by the department.
154. Since the previous inspection the indoor accommodation and learning resources have improved significantly. These two factors combined with the resolution of the staffing difficulties have contributed to a positive trend and significant improvement in the curriculum provision and examination results.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

No subject was inspected in this area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The promotion of good citizenship is central to the school's values and ethos.
- There are many good opportunities for pupils to engage in active citizenship.
- There is no single scheme of work drawing together the school's complex arrangements for the subject.
- Citizenship is not yet assessed and reported separately.
- The school council's potential for involving pupils in active citizenship is not fully exploited.

Commentary

155. There is a very strong commitment from the school leadership to citizenship in the curriculum and to its central place in the school's ethos and values. Pupils demonstrate the qualities of good citizenship throughout their life in school and the school is clearly successful in helping them to develop into responsible citizens. However, pupils' awareness of the term citizenship is weak; they do not understand their own progress and the coherence of their experience across the various parts of the citizenship curriculum.
156. Citizenship is taught in Years 7 to 9 through PSHE and other subjects, principally religious education (not inspected) and history. In the single citizenship lesson observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Good citizenship content was also seen, for example, when Year 7 pupils studied Magna Carta and for homework produced a set of rules for their own school. In Year 9, pupils studying the First World War gained a good understanding of the idea of censorship and they made some comparison of censorship then with that of today.
157. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to make secure judgements on standards and achievement in citizenship in Years 10 and 11.
158. The twenty-minute allocation for PSHE/citizenship lessons in Years 7 to 9 fails to give enough time for pupils to discuss the topics studied and to develop and apply their skills. Lesson time for other parts of the course is not enough.
159. Other specific events focus well on relevant matters. Whole years engage in active citizenship through, for example, a Year 8 cross-curricular chocolate week and a Year 7 Justice and Peace day. The school has a very strong record of charity involvement, large numbers take part in Amnesty campaigning and Year 10 foundation groups have relevant environmental and community challenges.
160. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The quality of lessons is checked well. Planning for citizenship is satisfactory but there is no scheme of work drawing together the school's complex arrangements.
161. Citizenship is assessed and reported to parents through PSHE in Years 7 to 9 and through religious education in Years 10 and 11, but not separately to raise pupils' and parents' awareness of the subject.
162. The house and school council systems provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and participate in decision making. However, these opportunities are not fully exploited, for example, by allowing pupils to take the leading council roles and by using council elections as a vehicle for citizenship education.
163. Citizenship was not a requirement at the previous inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, **nine** subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the schools. The report indicates clearly where subjects are taught in collaboration with other schools. Currently, this school's students may not be represented on some of the courses but reports have been included to give a fuller picture.

Basic skills

There are no separate lessons in basic skills in any of the three sixth forms. Students from the other two schools start their sixth form studies with generally lower than average literacy skills, though there are exceptions. This hampers their ability to communicate what they know and understand in some subjects. In terms of ICT and mathematical skills, students gain the levels needed through the study of other subjects and reach levels required for those courses.

Students in this school have average skills in language and mathematics that serve them satisfactorily in all their work. They use ICT well to find things out and to present their work.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in **2003**, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses: St Peter and St Paul RC School

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		College	England	College	England	College	England
English	10	40	99.5	30	46.5	82	86.5
Mathematics	2	100	96.7	100	55.6	110	88.8
Biology	7	100	96.4	42.9	39.2	71.4	78.6
Chemistry	2	100	97.6	0	49	70	84.9
Physics	1	100	96.7	100	44.6	120	81.7
History	1	100	99	100	44.6	100	84.6
Geography	2	100	98.7	100	44.5	100	84
German	2	100	98.4	50	47.9	90	84.8
French	3	100	98.8	0	51.5	66.7	87.6
Physical Education	4	100	98	50	30.9	80	75.2
VCE ICT	2	100	87.2	0	27.9	70	67.5
Design and technology	1	100	97.8	100	35	100	77.9
Other technology	4	100		100		105	
Psychology	8	87.5	95.8	25	39.1	62.5	77.7

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

English literature

Overall provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The proportion of students gaining higher grades in examinations is at national average levels.
- Teaching is so good that students work hard and enjoy their lessons.
- Good leadership ensures that all students are clear about their progress and receive good support.

Commentary

164. Attainment is at national average levels. English literature is a popular choice for students of a wide range of attainment levels. Results in GCE AS level examinations also tend, therefore, to be widely spread. The 2003 examination was no exception with a similar proportion of students obtaining A grades as was unclassified. Results in GCE A2 examinations have usually been at or above national average levels in recent years. Students again achieved national averages in the 2003 GCE A2 examinations. The proportion of students obtaining either grade A or grade B was in line with the national picture. Work seen during the inspection is also at average levels. Comparing students' A2 level grades with their GCSE results in Year 11 shows that most achieve at least the levels expected of them. Overall achievement is good.
165. Students work well in lessons. They enjoy working independently, in pairs or small groups and, as a result, make good progress. Folders are detailed and usually very well presented so as to provide a valuable revision source. Higher attaining students achieve a very high standard of work. Their control of language in essays is impressive. Background notes show detailed research of texts such as Shakespeare's 'Antony and Cleopatra' and Keats' selected poems. In comparative studies such those on Jane Austen's novels, 'Emma' and 'Pride and Prejudice', students show a good overview. Although their work lacks the same depth, the writing of lower attaining students is well organised. They quickly develop confidence as the course progresses. All students participate well in oral work, as seen when Year 13 students gave confident and detailed presentations on characters from Jane Austen's novels.
166. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons skilfully so as to challenge students of all attainment levels. They have high expectations to which students respond well. Very few students fail to complete either Year 12 or Year 13, even though a few students struggle to cope fully with the demands of the courses. Teachers know their students well and offer them valuable extra help when needed. Marking is detailed and helpful: all students are made clearly aware of the standards of their work and what they have to do to improve. There are occasional visits to performances of plays and to other events.
167. Good leadership helps to give coherence to the English literature programme so that teachers and students alike have a clear overview that helps them to move forward confidently. Students benefit from the different approaches of teachers but would occasionally like the pace of lessons to be brisker. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because good standards of work have been maintained.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

168. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are average. Students cope well with the language demands in all subjects. They talk readily to teachers and work comfortably with fellow students in small groups. They understand what they read and generally write accurately in well-organised notes and essays. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are at average levels. In most subjects teachers offer support for students through focus on technical terms and vocabulary and through helpful, though not always detailed, marking. Only small numbers of students make regular use of the school library, which is small and has very limited resources for supporting sixth form study.

French (a shared subject)

French was the focus of the inspection, but one lesson of German was sampled in Year 13. In it, teaching and learning were very good, as were opportunities for the four students to work independently. Spiritual and cultural development of students was strong. Standards were above average and the students were achieving very well.

Overall provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good professional skills for work at this level.
- Very good accommodation enhances learning and provides easy access to the Internet.
- Some groups are too small for optimum learning conditions.
- Sharing arrangements work very well with one other school.

Commentary

169. This is a school which admits students to A-level courses in modern languages with GCSE results below those deemed necessary in other schools. The department's analysis of the students' results shows that almost all have performed as expected over the recent past.
170. There are at present eight students in Year 12 including two from another local school, which shares the teaching. Standards on entry to the sixth form were below average and standards observed are not yet up to the expected level. Many students continue to lack confidence in speaking French, though they were however at ease with formal study of subjunctive verbs. Standards in Year 13, where there are two candidates, are average, but these students speak more confidently and could demonstrate this in formal presentations and follow-up discussion on subjects as diverse as a visit to Paris and Louis XIV. They are achieving well, because teaching is good overall.
171. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory given the difficulties in running shared provision across three schools. When groups are down to two students, learning is not as good as it could be. Within the school, leadership and management are good, reflecting the school's values.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results have been consistently high.
- Teaching is very good; consequently learning is very good.
- The teacher and students have developed very good relationships showing mutual respect and a shared desire to succeed.
- Small group numbers in the last few years limit interaction.

Commentary

172. The subject is very well led and managed. Results have been consistently high for many years. Standards seen during the inspection are also well above average. Achievement is therefore very good.
173. Students have curriculum maps (see paragraph 41) that, along with assessment packs help them to improve the ways they learn independent of the teacher. This is good practice that raises standards. Group sizes are surprisingly small, affecting adversely the students' opportunities to spark off each other in discussions. As the subject is replicated in each of the sharing schools, this is a further example of the participants not subscribing wholeheartedly enough to the arrangements.
174. High quality teaching and a tightly organised programme of study are major factors in this success. Thorough preparation for the examinations is a strong feature. Complex ideas are taught in an enterprising way by challenge and closely focussed questions. For example, in a Year 13 class that had recently completed a series of lessons on co-ordinate geometry, the students had to apply ideas to more difficult situations, including past A-level examination questions. The teacher not only showed a thorough understanding of the subject, but also demonstrated the power of mathematics to describe two-dimensional graphical shapes. She did this by challenging the students to name the graphs and match their shape to two different equations, followed by discussion on how to interchange the two. The teacher continued to engage the students in their own learning by briskly, but thoroughly taking the students through the stages to answer examination questions effectively. The mature, constructive relationship between the teacher and students was an essential feature of the lesson that arose from the teacher's enthusiasm for mathematics that stimulated the students' interest in the subject very effectively.

Mathematics across the curriculum

175. Students show a satisfactory level of basic skills in mathematics and collect, display and analyse data effectively.

SCIENCE

Chemistry was the focus of the inspection. One lesson of Year 13 physics was sampled in which standards were average and teaching and learning were good. Students achieved well. Two biology lessons were also sampled. Results in A-level biology examinations were below the national average in 2003 but students gained their predicted grades. Despite very regular encouragement and good, interesting teaching too many students were so hesitant that it hindered their achievement.

Chemistry (a shared subject)

Main strengths and weaknesses

Overall the quality of provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good command of the subject and support students' learning well.
- Standards are not high enough.
- Students' positive attitudes to work are in response to supportive teacher-student relationships.
- Expectation and challenge to students to question, to actively discuss and develop their own learning are not high enough.

Commentary

176. Very small numbers of students have entered the AS and A-level examinations in the last few years, so it is difficult to compare their results with national statistics. There was some underachievement as results were lower than those expected from students' GCSE performance.
177. Standards of work seen during the inspection are below average. However, students' achievement is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning.
178. In the more effective lessons teachers clearly focus students' learning on the lesson's purposes and how they fit in with previous and future work. The integration of practical work and theory helps students' understanding. In a Year 12 lesson students were investigating the thermal decomposition of calcium carbonate. They tackled the practical work confidently and sensibly. Then the mechanism was discussed using modelling. Some students were able to use this to predict the trends in thermal decomposition of other carbonates.
179. Teachers' very good subject knowledge allows them to clearly explain new topics to develop students' understanding. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Some students struggle with the mathematical side of chemistry and lack the self-motivation to persevere when they meet difficulties. Teachers' encouraging and supportive attitudes boost students' confidence and build on their previous knowledge so that they are able to make satisfactory progress. Homework reinforces learning well, giving students practice in applying what they have learnt in class. Students are provided with curriculum maps and assessment packs, which help them to develop independent working skills.
180. Sometimes, teachers do not involve the students enough during the lessons; they provide them with the required knowledge and skills but questioning does not allow students to contribute to the development of the lesson. In these lessons higher-attaining students are not sufficiently challenged. Some marking does not give students an indication of the standard of their work. There are no comments showing where more depth or detail is required to increase students' knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. Learning objectives are shared with students but do not feature strongly when learning and achievement are being evaluated. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow and the teaching lacks rigour.
181. Teachers work well together and students are positive about the shared provision in the sixth form. There is satisfactory co-ordination of the subject between the three schools. However, the lack of management structure in the shared sixth form means that there is no one to lead the development of strategies to improve standards. Analysis of performance data is insufficient to detect underachievement at an early stage.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT (a shared subject) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Very good leadership has provided excellent resources for learning.
- There is a need for more opportunities for independent research.
- Students enjoy ICT and work hard.

Commentary

182. Standards in the 2003 GCE A-level were below the national average points score. They were similar in 2002. In both years all students achieved their expected grades and a few students exceeded them. Students gain higher marks in course work than in written examinations.
183. Current students' standards are below average in both Years 12 and 13. Students' knowledge and use of databases are above average, as is their understanding of hardware and networking. Standards in web site design are also high and work shows advanced features such as interactive order forms linked to databases. Spreadsheet skills are also below average. Students' written plans and reports are well constructed but evaluations are less detailed. Written work is hampered for some by poor literacy skills.
184. Achievement is good. The open access policy has enabled many students with no formal qualifications, or low GCSE grades to achieve satisfactorily and pass AS and A-level.
185. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge really inspires students. Students enjoy a good level of challenge and expectations of both quality and quantity of work are high. Students get very good personal help in the practical work, which is carefully planned to meet their particular interest. Students learn well from teacher-led class discussions. Often the teacher makes very good use of artefacts and examples, which makes learning very interesting. However, there are too few opportunities for students to research information and make presentations to the class in groups.
186. Leadership and management are good. Inspired leadership has resulted in rapid growth of numbers of students studying ICT in the sixth form. Teachers make satisfactory use of assessment to track students' progress. Students know their target grades but written comments on marked work lack detail as to how students can improve their work.
187. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good because viable sixth form courses have been established and very good resources provided.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

188. Students use ICT well for research and for word processing course work. Some specialist software is used in A-level science lessons. Students have very good access to computers outside lessons for research and private study, a facility they greatly appreciate. The school is to offer a formal computer skill qualification for sixth form students.

HUMANITIES

History and psychology were the focus of the inspection. A Year 13 class in government and politics was also sampled. In it, very good teaching led to very good learning. Standards were above average and students were achieving very well.

History (a shared subject)

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and very good assessment lead to good learning and achievement by students.
- Students have very positive attitudes to the subject and very good relationships are conducive to success.
- There are insufficient books to support students' independent work.
- Recent examination results are above average.

Commentary

189. The quality of both teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good command of the subject and they present it well, so students are interested and engaged. Expectations are high and students are regularly challenged to think for themselves. Students are encouraged to develop their skills of independent research and teaching rightly stresses the importance of the detailed knowledge essential to examination success. In a good Year 13 lesson, students worked well in small groups to present arguments for and against the Act of Union with Ireland. Syllabus requirements are taught systematically. In lessons, teachers use effective questioning to check knowledge and understanding: in a good lesson on Parnell and the Irish question, the teacher insisted on high quality responses. However, teachers do not always push students into developing higher level thinking skills and the use of historical interpretations. Students are committed to learning and they take their work seriously: they have good study skills.
190. Assessment is very good. Students' work is assessed regularly and thoroughly: they receive detailed individual feedback and have a very clear understanding of how to improve their work. Assessment is used effectively to inform planning and teaching.
191. Students' attitudes to the subject are very positive and the subject is popular. Relationships between staff and students are also very positive and students work well, both individually and collaboratively. Retention is good: almost all students complete their course.
192. Overall standards are average, though standards in the current Year 12 are higher. Achievement in relation to prior attainment is good. Students' knowledge and understanding are above average. Most students can write effectively in analytical form, though some revert to descriptive writing when unsure. Able students show very good understanding of different historical interpretations but most students do not make sufficient reference to historical interpretations throughout their work.
193. There are good ICT resources to help students' independent study. Resources are well deployed in lessons and students are given good reading lists for each section of the syllabus. However, there are not enough books for students to keep for wider reading, reference and revision; the school library does not compensate for this lack of books in the department. Leadership and management are good. The head of department provides a good role model of professional practice, which commands respect. There are secure systems for monitoring and evaluating performance and taking action to address any weaknesses. Leadership of the curriculum is good and is responsive to students' needs.

194. Standards in recent AS examinations were above average; numbers at A-level last year were too small to make national comparisons. The subject was not inspected in detail at the previous inspection but examination results have improved and the subject has increased in popularity.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Experienced and knowledgeable teaching leads to very good learning.
- Assessment and self-evaluation are linked clearly to the students' learning needs.
- Students' positive attitudes contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

Commentary

195. Results in 2003 were an improvement on 2002: this represented very good achievement. Present standards in Year 13 are above average. Achievement is very good: individual study topics are original and interesting, indicating students have read and researched quite widely, using several sources. They are able to identify and apply different psychological perspectives to individual case studies showing they have understood well. Standards in Year 12 are about average, with students coming to terms with the methodology and terminology of psychology in their written work. Lower attaining students are sometimes short on evidence in their essays to support their investigations but receive very helpful advice that leads to much improved writing.
196. Teaching and learning are both very good. The students benefit greatly from their teacher's subject knowledge and careful examination preparation. Discussion and self-evaluation in lessons helps them understand difficult ideas. Students make good intellectual effort and rise to the teacher's high expectations. On occasion, absence and lack of effort militate against good grades and achievement. Assessment is very good because it addresses each student's learning needs, not only in helpful diagnostic marking, but also in monitoring their progress and adapting teaching styles accordingly. Very effective use is made of students' own assessment at the end of every lesson, because their very honest appraisal identifies areas of misunderstanding, which can be quickly rectified.
197. Leadership and management of this subject are very good, with vision and commitment to the highest standards, as well as very good organisation and careful planning. The advantages of ICT are fully embraced and its use encourages and supports independent learning. The subject makes a good contribution to the personal development of the students. There is no judgement on improvement since the previous inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

No subjects were inspected in this area, but one lesson of design and technology was sampled in Year 12. Standards were above average and very good teaching led to students achieving very well.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

No subject was inspected in this area, but music, art and design and performing arts were sampled.

198. In the sampled **music** lesson, standards were average. The student made very good progress in the development of listening skills and understanding the particular techniques of setting words to music. Teaching was highly proficient and thorough. Achievement was good.
199. In the sampled **performing arts** lesson, two Year 12 students were seen rehearsing a scene from a Godber play with the teacher. Teaching and learning were good because teacher and students interacted very well, questioning and commenting on possible meanings and how to convey these to audiences. Scrutinised written work shows these students work well independently. They have suitably mature attitudes to their study and good achievement.
200. In the sampled **art and design** lesson, very good originality in the students' work produced well above average standards. Excellent teaching challenged the students' thinking and got them to work very hard; this led to very good achievement.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

No subject was inspected or sampled in this domain.

BUSINESS

Business (a shared subject)

Provision in business is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- There is good use of simulated and real business case studies and up to the moment information is provided for students.
- Students are mostly given the opportunity to learn independently, but there is a small amount of over direction by the teacher.
- Further development of links with firms would raise students' awareness of business and enable them to relate theory to practice.
- Leadership and management in the two separate departments are good but more liaison between school would improve the provision.

Commentary

201. A-level results in 2003 were above the national average. Similar results were obtained in 2002. In both years small numbers of candidates took the course.
202. In the current Year 13, standards are average. Students are achieving well in relation to their performance at AS. Students are developing satisfactory independent thinking and research skills. In a lesson on business mergers and take-overs, for example, students used the Internet to find up-to-date information and used it well to determine the major factors and methods which lead to business integration. They also displayed satisfactory understanding of the potential impacts of the adoption of the Euro on British business. In Year 12, standards overall are also in line with the national average. A relatively high incidence of absence on the part of some students in the autumn term restricted progress but attendance has now improved significantly. Overall achievement is satisfactory with more able students making good

progress. Students have a satisfactory understanding of leadership styles and the theoretical models of motivation. Skills of analysing data and drawing conclusions are underdeveloped for some students in both years. This is recognised and is being given appropriate priority in lessons.

203. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge of the subject and lessons are planned well with appropriate tasks and resources. Very good use is made of up-to-date business situations and information as well as simulated and real business case studies. In some lessons there is a degree of over direction by the teacher to the detriment of independent learning. Expectations are high and most lessons take place at a good pace. Marking is carried out regularly but helpful comments and sharp targets are too few to help students raise the standard of their work. Students are beginning to be encouraged to develop their ability to think and learn independently. Students are mainly positive but absences undermine achievement.
204. Within the two separate schools the subject is well led and managed. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for the heads of subject to meet to discuss delivery of the subject, the progress of students and to share good practice. Leadership and management of the shared provision are, therefore, only satisfactory. Opportunities to visit and meet people from business are too few to help students to raise their awareness of the real day-to-day-world of business. In neither school does the accommodation used for business provide students with immediate access to computers. Business was not reported in the previous inspection.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Health and social care (shared subjects)

The curriculum includes a GNVQ full intermediate course and an AVCE course. Both courses provide very good continuity and progression into higher education and the caring professions. The focus of the inspection was on the advanced work. It was not possible to sample the GNVQ course.

In 2003, the GNVQ results were average. All but two of the 15 students passed the course, one gaining a distinction and two each obtaining a merit. Given their very modest GCSE attainment, these results represent very good achievement. Work placements are a very good feature of the course providing valuable work experience and opportunities to gather data for coursework. Staff at a local primary school described students as 'very good ambassadors for the sixth form.'

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is excellent and is directly related to examination standards.
- Teachers' subject expertise ensures that students understand their work.
- Teaching has a very good focus on the development of key skills.
- Students' attitudes are very good.
- The number of students taking the full award is too small.
- Students gain experience of practical learning on work placements of good quality.
- The day-to-day organisation of courses across three sites is not good enough.

Commentary

205. Results in 2003 were below average. Numbers taking full advanced courses have been very small and results have fluctuated in the last two years from above to below average. All students passed the examination and are now on university courses related to the caring professions. The results in the single award in 2003 were disappointing as only one out of the four students completed the course.
206. Standards of work in Year 13 are average and they represent good achievement. Students learn well because teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They explain units clearly to develop students' understanding of the work. Students benefit from individual teaching, frequently in the form of tutorials, and use very good resources to enrich their learning. They appreciate the extra distance that teachers go to support them and their very good response underpins their good learning. However, work investigating how services for two client groups are planned and implemented is not analytical and detailed enough to gain higher marks.
207. Standards at the halfway point in Year 12 are below average overall, but represent good achievement in relation to students' GCSE performance. In recently assessed work on the physical aspects of health, higher attaining students have researched, presented and evaluated data accurately producing coursework that is well above average. Middle and lower attainers' work is below average because it has omissions and it lacks detail on how, for example, body systems recover after exercise. Exceptionally detailed individual assessment is directly related to examination requirements, so students know exactly what to do to improve their portfolios.
208. Teaching and learning are good. Very good personal development arises from independent learning. Students use computers very effectively to research and present their work. Teaching has a very good focus on communication and number skills to produce well-written reports that use a variety of graphs to present and interpret data. All students use work placements well to gather data for their studies. Teachers offer very good personal advice, for example to a student regarding her application for a place on a nursing degree course. This extended to practical help learning interview techniques.
209. Leadership is very good. There is a very clear vision and determination to improve results and raise standards further by sharing good practice across the three sixth forms. Management is good. Different units are shared amongst staff carefully to ensure that teachers teach their specialist areas and to reflect the time allocated for teaching at the two centres. At the present time prior attainment information is not co-ordinated and shared between all staff. Attendance problems are not always resolved quickly and effectively.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

No subject was inspected or sampled in this domain.

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 previous inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	4
Overall standards achieved		3
Pupils' achievement	3	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	3	5
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	2	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	5	4
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	4

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

