

INSPECTION REPORT

HERSCHEL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 110103

Headteacher: Mr Julian King-Harris

Lead inspector: Dr David Benstock

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 27th February 2004

Inspection number: 262881

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar (selective)
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	856
School address:	Northampton Avenue Slough Berkshire SL1 3BW
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Probert
Date of previous inspection:	24 th January 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Herschel Grammar School is an 11 - 18 mixed selective grammar school, and is of below average size. The number on roll is about 850 of which 250 are in the Sixth Form. It has recently formed a Sixth Form consortium with two other schools, but very few pupils are currently involved. It is situated in Slough in Berkshire, and the school draws pupils who have passed the 11+ test, and live mainly on the west and south sides of the town. The socio-economic background of pupils reflects a mixed range of family circumstances. The number of families having experience of higher education is about average but also there is some social deprivation in terms of overcrowded living conditions. Very few pupils leave or join the school at other than the usual time. The school has increased in popularity and is now oversubscribed. Approximately 35 per cent of pupils have white British heritage, 56 per cent are of Asian heritage, and the remainder have a range different backgrounds. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also well below the national average. Only one pupil currently has a statement of need and this relates to physical disability. Standards on entry to the school are wide for a grammar school. In the core subjects of mathematics, science and English in Year 7, they are very high. Overall across all subjects, however, standards on entry are judged to be above average. Entry to the Sixth Form, where about half of the pupils come from local secondary schools, is broadly average. The school has the status of being a Specialist Technology College. It is a 'Leading Edge school', has two awards for achievement, 'Investors in People' status, Artsmark Award, Sportsmark Award, and is involved in many local and national initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9189	John Horwood	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18261	Tony Hill	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and Design; Special Educational Needs.
18638	Christopher Shaw	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and Communication Technology.
19043	David Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and Technology; Physics (Sixth Form).
12336	Malcolm Overend	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.
15485	Roger Butler	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious Education.
15971	Michael Pye	<i>Team inspector</i>	History.
4720	Graham Carter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Chemistry (Sixth Form).
4426	Terry Fitchett	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern Foreign Languages.
31705	John Mason	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music; Citizenship.
18950	Carmen Rodney	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Drama; English as an Additional Language.
7926	James Bowden	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical Education; Sociology (Sixth Form).
3643	Derek Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.
13122	Stephanie Matthews	<i>Team inspector</i>	Business Studies; Government and Politics (Sixth Form).
3258	David Bain	<i>Team inspector</i>	Psychology (Sixth Form).
10060	David Gutmann	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Business Studies (Sixth Form).
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with a very good Sixth Form. It gives very good value for money. Standards overall are well above average and very high in mathematics. The most recent GCSE results, in 2003, were very high, and GCE A Level results in Year 13 of the Sixth Form were broadly average. Standards of work seen in the current year are well above average in Years 7 to 11, and above average in the Sixth Form. **Achievement overall is very good, and good in the Sixth Form.** Teaching and learning are very good and there is a very supportive climate for study, together with very good support and guidance for pupils. Leadership and management overall are very good; governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Leadership of the school overall is very good and that of the headteacher is excellent, resulting in strong commitment from all staff to raising the quality of education.
- Achievement overall is very good, and excellent in the core subjects of mathematics and English.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall, and excellent in mathematics, leading to the very good achievement of all pupils including those with special educational needs (SEN) or English as an additional language.
- The high level of care, support and guidance results in very good attitudes and behaviour overall; good overall provision for personal development contributes to the very good relationships and harmonious community in the school.
- The use and analysis of assessment data in departments is inconsistent and assessment in citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities taken to support the learning using information and communication technology (ICT) are not sufficiently regular in art and design, modern languages, physical education and science. Opportunities are missed in English to use ICT to develop literacy.
- Extra-curricular opportunities and enrichment of the curriculum are very good.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards in examinations have risen at a rate above the national trend. Issues from the previous inspection have been well addressed. Curriculum arrangements for modern languages have been improved. Governors ensure financial management and records meet requirements. Provision for SEN is very good and much improved. New accommodation has been provided for drama, music and physical education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Based on average point score per pupil. Sixth Form represents Year 13 results only.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A*	A	D
Year 13	A/AS Level and VCE examinations	N/A	C	C	

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

Standards in Year 9 are very high in mathematics and well above average in English. They are above average in science and most other subjects. Achievement in Year 7 to 9 is very good overall. In Years 10 and 11, high standards are maintained and achievement remains very good. There is some variation in achievement of boys and girls in a minority of subjects, for example

French, but in general differences are insignificant. All pupils, including those with SEN and those in different ethnic groups achieve equally well for their ability. Sixth Form standards seen are above average and achievement is very good. Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour in school are very good. Attendance is high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning overall are very good. They are excellent in mathematics, and satisfactory in ICT. Assessment is good but not enough use is made of examination and performance data in departments. Teachers' expectations are high. ICT is not consistently used in lessons to enhance learning. The curriculum provided meets the needs of pupils well, but the time allocated for religious education is not sufficient in the Sixth Form. Enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities are very good. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The school provides a very good level of care, support and guidance for pupils. Links with other schools are very good and efforts to maintain strong partnerships with parents and the community are extensive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school overall are very good and the excellent leadership qualities of the headteacher have had great impact on raising standards and overall improvement. Management is effective and the degree of teamwork and commitment to include all pupils has motivated and supported them. Governors support the school, discuss issues and are keen to hear of progress. The chair of governors takes a very active part in development. Overall governors' involvement in school and especially strategic developmental planning is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They particularly feel that teachers have high expectations. Pupils are very pleased to be at the school and have high regard for the quality of teaching and level of support.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the consistency of analysis of assessment data by heads of department.
- Ensure assessment in citizenship fulfils National Curriculum requirements.
- Increase the extent to which ICT is used to enhance teaching.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide religious education in the sixth form to meet requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Ensure that the governors' annual report contains information on progress of pupils with SEN and information on parent governor elections.

THE SIXTH FORM AT HERSCHEL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Sixth Form is very good and it is cost effective. Numbers in the Sixth Form are very high as a result of the school's policy of taking pupils from other schools. A Sixth Form consortium has been established under the umbrella of Herschel Grammar School to allow courses to be delivered at the three main sites but giving all pupils the status of studying at Herschel. The courses at each site are, in general, aimed at their own pupils and delivered by staff from that site – the courses are open to all pupils giving them a wide choice of courses. Whilst results in the Sixth Form have not reached the high levels seen in the main school, this reflects the wider ability intake of pupils.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good teaching which means pupils achieve well whatever their initial attainment.
- The very good and often excellent attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, which result in a harmonious community where they can learn well.
- The increasing opportunities being provided through the consortium arrangements and other partnerships.
- Standards achieved in examinations in some subjects, which are low as a result of limited subject knowledge when they started the course.

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 pupils achieve. Not all subjects in the Sixth Form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Excellent in English. Pupils achieve highly in the A2 examination because of the very high expectations, good relations and effective teaching. Very good in German. Pupils are very well taught and achieve standards that are well above average.
Mathematics	Excellent in mathematics. Standards are very high. Teaching and learning are excellent, so pupils' achievement is excellent. Excellent leadership and management has resulted in excellent improvement since the last inspection,
Science	Very good in physics. Standards are above average and improving, reflecting very good achievement. Teaching is very good, and the department is very well led and managed. Very Good in chemistry. Results are above average and very good teaching and learning helps pupils to achieve well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used effectively to improve pupils' performance further.
Information and Communications Technology	Good in ICT. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching in a well-managed department. Pupils can be passive in lessons because they are not always challenged to speak for themselves.
Humanities	Good in history. Consistently good teaching results in good achievement with improving standards. Good in geography. Pupils achieve very well; though attainment is not as high as in other subjects the value added is very high. Very good in sociology. Pupils achieve very well as a result of very good teaching. Satisfactory in psychology. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Whilst pupils experience a range of activities, insufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' capacity to work both independently and collaboratively. Good in government and politics. Standards are at the national average and the subject is increasingly popular with pupils. Teaching promotes good achievement but there was insufficient independent learning in the lessons observed.

Business	Very good in business studies. Pupils' examination results overall are above average due to very good teaching, and they achieve well.
Visual and performing arts and media	Good in theatre studies. Although previous results were below average the new department structure and good teaching is resulting in good achievement for current pupils. Other subjects in the school were sampled including biology, design technology, physical education and personal, social, and health education (PSHE). Teaching and learning in all these lessons was at least good.

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.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school gives very good support and guidance to pupils in the Sixth Form. Pupils receive well-informed support and guidance from teachers on their progress and how to fulfil their aspirations. There is very good provision for PSHE, which consolidates the pastoral initiatives of the school. A good range of work-related activities help pupils to develop balanced views of work prospects and higher education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. Management of the consortium arrangements, although at an early stage, is very good. Strategic planning for the Sixth Form is very well carried out within the main school organisation and the head of Sixth Form ensures very good management on a day-to-day basis. Pupils are very well supported and the very good communications and procedures ensure that their well-being and their progress are well monitored. Finances, including the arrangements for the consortium as it develops, are very well managed and, as a result, the Sixth Form is cost effective.

PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Pupils are very appreciative of all academic aspects of the Sixth Form, especially the quality of the teaching and the support given them by the staff. They are glad they joined the Sixth Form, which they find stimulating and enjoyable. Whilst the guidance provided by the school is very good and improving, they identified some problems with independent careers advice. They would like more enrichment opportunities and improvements to 'social' opportunities that would allow the large number of pupils who join the Sixth Form from other schools to get to know both other pupils and the staff at the start of Year 12.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, standards are well above average in the school as a whole and above average in the Sixth Form. Achievement throughout the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement overall in the school is very good; in mathematics and English it is excellent. It is good in the Sixth Form.
- Achievement of pupils with SEN is very good.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 9 in the core subjects of English and mathematics in 2003, results were very high in comparison with the national average. They were well above the national average in science. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment in the core subjects and achievement in 2003 from Year 7 to Year 9 was very good. The performance of both boys and girls was very high overall in comparison with the national averages.

2. Overall results were well below the average compared with schools designated as having a similarly high range of attainment on entry. However, the school is at the lowest end of this top band, which distorts the comparison against similar schools. Results in English in 2003 were in line with the average in similar schools; in mathematics they were below average, and in science well below average. The upward trend in the results for Year 9 over the past three years has been above that found nationally and overall results have remained very high.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	40.4 (38.4)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	45.0 (45.5)	35.4 (34.7)
science	39.5 (30.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 115 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. GCSE results in 2003 were very high overall. Both the average point score per pupil and the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A* - C were within the top five per cent of all schools. The average point score was broadly in line with that found in schools with a similar range of prior attainment at the end of Year 9. The statutory targets set by governors were exceeded. The 'value added measure', which is an indicator of progress, was well above the average in schools nationally.

4. The pattern of attainment at GCSE in 2003 was similar to that in 2002 but there has been a continual improvement in the results over the past few years, with the trend above the national trend, as it is in Years 7 to 9. There was very little variation in overall performance of boys and girls in 2003. Results were highest in English, mathematics, separate sciences and design and technology. Lower performance was found in drama, French, geography and history.

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	96 (99)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	99 (100)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	50.0 (49.7)	49.8 (34.7)

There were 87 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. In Years 7 to 9, standards seen in lessons and pupils' work are high. They are highest in mathematics and well above average in English, German and design and technology. They are above average in science and most other subjects apart from physical education and art and design, where they are broadly average for the age of the pupils. Achievement of pupils from entry in Year 7 until the end of Year 9 is very good overall. It is excellent in English and mathematics, and satisfactory in ICT.

6. In Years 10 and 11, standards remain well above average overall, and are very high in mathematics. They are well above average in English and above average in science. Overall, achievement of pupils is very good, and excellent in mathematics. Achievement is lowest in ICT.

7. The achievement of pupils with SEN is as high as that of others in their classes. The very good teaching and excellent support they receive, along with the appropriately high expectations that staff have of them, have enabled those with SEN to achieve their potential. In two recent instances, pupils with SEN who are also on the register of gifted and talented have secured excellent grades in GCSE examinations and are currently taking A Level courses to prepare them for university placement.

8. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve very well. Pupils enter the school having achieved a high level of academic and language proficiency. Assessment data on entry confirm that verbal reasoning is lower than numeracy skills. However, the emphasis on academic achievement and the high level of support result in pupils from all groups achieving well above average results in most subjects by the end of Years 9 and 11. In the National Curriculum tests, Indian pupils attain a slightly higher percentage of the higher levels. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, the results confirm a trend of high achievement for all ethnic groups in the percentage of pupils gaining 5 A*-C. Predicted grades for the next two years indicate that pupils are on target to achieve in line with expectations. The school is aware that white UK and Pakistani pupils occasionally achieve slightly lower scores than pupils of Indian descent. The numbers from other ethnic groups are too small to make any meaningful comparison; however, all groups achieve very well.

Sixth Form

9. In 2002, results at A Level were quite variable and reflect the broad range of pupils that enter the Sixth Form with modest GCSE results. Approximately 40 per cent of pupils join the Sixth Form from other schools and take time to adjust to the rigours of the grammar school. The overall point score in 2003 was above the national average. The highest results were in the sciences and English. Results were below average in drama (as they were also in 2002), history and design and technology.

10. Standards seen in the work of the Sixth Form pupils are above average. They reflect however, good or even very good achievement. In 13 subjects inspected in full in the Sixth Form, standards seen overall were above average. They are high in mathematics and well above average in physics and sociology. Standards are also high in German, which is studied at present only in Year 12. Standards are lower in theatre studies and computing.

11. Achievement is good overall as a result of very good teaching and positive attitudes of pupils. Pupils achieve very well in geography, German, sociology, business studies and physics. Achievement is excellent in Year 13 in mathematics, but only satisfactory in Year 12. The reason is that the level of challenge in mathematics is more appropriate to those who choose to continue the subject to full A Level. In the other subjects looked at in detail achievement was good.

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	95 (98)	89 (93)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	29 (32)	33 (35)
Average point score per pupil	222.9	204.5

There were 114 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is very good in both the main school and the Sixth Form. Pupils’ personal development overall is very good. Spiritual and cultural development is good whilst moral and social development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are happy and secure at the school and are enthusiastic about learning.
- Within lessons the very positive attitudes and high levels of good behaviour allow all pupils to achieve very well.
- The maturity of pupils and very good relationships within the very inclusive school result in a very good learning environment.
- Some pupils who join the Sixth Form from other schools do not always feel part of the school.

12. Pupils’ attendance at school is very high. There is a very welcoming environment and they like coming to school. Punctuality throughout the day is very good, limited only by the time taken to move along congested corridors and stairways. The school has very good procedures and rewards systems to encourage and monitor high levels of attendance. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are keen to work and participate fully in lessons, and to benefit from the high quality teaching.

13. Within lessons pupils co-operate well, are well motivated and show a high level of concentration. Behaviour is generally very good and often excellent in the highly stimulating lessons; in a few less well-taught lessons a small number of pupils have negative attitudes and lose concentration. The level of exclusions is relatively low for this type of school and location – the commitment to being inclusive means that pupils who would not normally be given a second chance at a grammar school are often given one here. No bullying or racial abuse was seen during the inspection and pupils say it is very rare and would be dealt with very quickly and well by the school. The high expectations of behaviour are well known by pupils and the behaviour management is firm but fair.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	1.1

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

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	285	23	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	10	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	15	1	0
Mixed – Any other mixed background	6	4	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	255	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	195	4	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	29	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	11	0	0
Black or Black British – African	16	0	0
Black or Black British – any other background	1	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	9	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	3	0	0
Information not obtained	1	0	0

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

14. The school is committed to developing all pupils' qualities. The very good relationships and support systems result in pupils becoming mature and confident. There are good opportunities for them to take on responsibilities within class and to be involved in the running of the school through the school council. The very short lunch break, however, does limit the opportunities for pupils to be enterprising.

15. There are good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development in a range of subjects and within the very good and well-supported extra-curricular activities. These are particularly strong in religious education, where pupils look at a number of social issues from the perspective of the different moral stances of various faith communities and learn to distinguish between rational argument and opinions that rest on religious commitment. They are also given every chance to reflect on a range of belief systems and develop their own beliefs in the light of their study. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for each other's well-being and a good example of this happening is in the 'buddy' initiative, where pupils in Year 13 spend time talking with and offering guidance to Year 7 pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development would be enhanced by a school policy that clarifies the school's expectations of teachers in this area, and by the provision of training to help teachers identify opportunities for such development and to exploit such opportunities fully.

16. Social development is very good. Pupils respond very well to the numerous opportunities they have for working co-operatively in subjects such as art and mathematics and in PSHE. They feel safe and unafraid to offer opinions for discussion. The school is to be commended for establishing a very positive and harmonious environment where respect is shown for people from different ethnic backgrounds. Their contributions are not always recorded in their school log-books and consequently there is insufficient tracking of pupils' social accomplishments.

17. Cultural development is good. Pupils have a very good appreciation of their own and others' cultures and faiths. In English, pupils are made aware of their own native literature. In food and textiles lessons they design products with a specific cultural emphasis. In history they learn about multi-cultural issues such as the life of 'Black Peoples in America', and religious education plays a good role in the consideration of faiths. In some other subjects the provision is not as developed. There are no visits in art in Years 7 to 9, and opportunities are missed to access fully the rich multi-

cultural heritage of the ethnic groups within the school. The school offers pupils the chance to participate in a good range of activities such as the European Youth Parliament, work experience and trips abroad. Displays outside classrooms insufficiently challenge pupils to reflect on different faiths and cultures.

Sixth Form

18. Pupils in the Sixth Form participate fully in the lessons and adapt very quickly to the learning methods. Attitudes and behaviour are extremely good in most lessons and only in one lesson seen was there any evidence of non-co-operation. Approximately half the pupils join the Sixth Form from other schools. Although they are well introduced to the school through the induction process many feel that they do not have sufficient opportunities to get to know the staff and other pupils at an early stage.

19. Pupils' personal development is excellent and they are mature and sensible. The Sixth Form pupils run the school council and participate in such things as running the common room. There is not, however, a Sixth Form council. Prefects are elected by the pupils and make a significant contribution to the running of the school. The election system is fair and democratic but all the prefects are pupils who have moved into the Sixth Form from the main school and are better known by their peers. The school is currently reviewing opportunities to ensure 'newer' pupils have similar experiences. Sixth Form pupils are involved during the school day supporting pupils in the lower part of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum serves the needs of pupils well. The provision for care, support and guidance of pupils is very good and strong links are formed with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are **very good**. Procedures and use of assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching and learning are excellent in mathematics and very good in English. Teaching is consistently good or very good across most other subjects.
- Teachers have a high level of expertise so that pupils are challenged well.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used enough to enhance the learning in art and design, modern languages, physical education and science; opportunities to use ICT to develop literacy in English are missed.
- Excellent use is made of resources in design and technology.
- Assessment in citizenship is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

20. The quality of learning is good or very good in virtually all subjects. It is excellent in mathematics and satisfactory in ICT, and in citizenship in Years 10 and 11. In ICT, planning is not sufficiently clear and teaching methods lack clarity and inspiration. In citizenship, assessment is not used to support the teaching, planning is not clearly developed, and teachers are not consistent in using their own knowledge to teach the programmes.

21. During the inspection over 140 lessons were observed, work of many pupils analysed and groups of pupils interviewed about the quality of teaching. More than 80 percent of the lessons were at least good, and nearly half were very good or excellent. Pupils valued the quality of the teaching highly.

22. In nearly all subjects planning is thorough. Good provision is made for pupils' individual needs. Very good relationships are established. The level of challenge is generally high. Homework is used well by most departments.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 132 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
11 (8%)	46 (35 %)	56 (42%)	17 (14%)	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.

23. Pupils who have SEN are known well to all teaching staff, from information provided in individual education plans (IEPs) by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). They are generally taught very well and achieve as well as others in their lessons. Strategies for responding to those needs are given in the IEPs. Subject link teachers liaise between departments and the SENCO to ensure that appropriate provision is made and that progress against IEP targets is monitored. Subject departments vary in their response to the provision for pupils with SEN; the mathematics department responds in an exemplary way to ensure that any barriers to learning that those with SEN experience do not disadvantage them. Very good provision is made in English, mathematics, science, citizenship, religious education and design and technology. Other departments work well to enable pupils to be fully included in the learning process. The specialist teacher from the local authority special needs advisory support team is very experienced and knowledgeable in her field. Records show that the pupils she works with do very well in overcoming the difficulties they face. There is no evidence to indicate that additional support is needed for any ethnic groups or those with English as an additional language to develop language skills any more than for other pupils.

24. Teachers are well aware of pupils identified as being gifted and talented and teach them very well. The English and mathematics departments make excellent provision for them to ensure that they are stretched to their full potential. A Year 8 pupil is currently studying A Level mathematics and the additional GCSE in statistics is taught to the gifted mathematics pupils. A gifted pupil on the register of SEN is given excellent support to enable him to overcome the barriers to his learning and make up for time lost whilst in hospital. This has involved several members of staff in home visits.

25. The assessment of pupils' work is good overall. In mathematics it is excellent and in English, science, design and technology and religious education it is very good. In all other subjects it is good and in music, physical education, geography and ICT it is satisfactory. In most subjects pupils' work is marked well, with informative comments and meaningful grades, which help pupils to improve further. In mathematics this aspect is excellent and in English, science and design and technology it is very good. Assessment grades are used well in most subjects to adapt and inform teachers' planning and to tell pupils how well they are progressing. In English, science and design and technology this is a strong feature and in mathematics it is excellent. In music and ICT systems are not yet in place to track pupils' progress in this way, or to help pupils to improve sufficiently. In physical education, assessment procedures are firmly established but information is not yet used to set targets for pupils to improve. The school's computerised assessment database gives all teachers good access to information, such as pupils' target grades and prior attainment.

Sixth Form

26. The assessment of pupils' work is very good overall. In mathematics it is excellent and in several other subjects it is very good. In ICT, psychology, theatre studies and government and politics, assessment is good. Marking is mainly of a high quality and teachers usually provide very good feedback to pupils on homework and formally assessed assignments. This gives pupils good strategies for improvement and is highly valued by them. In English the quality of written and oral feedback, which contributes to such improvements, is of excellent quality.

The Curriculum

Overall, provision for the curriculum is good but statutory requirements are not met for religious education in the Sixth Form.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils in both the main school and Sixth Form.
- Opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, are very good throughout the school; however, there is no monitoring of the numbers of pupils who attend these activities.
- Overall, resources are good and support pupils' learning well throughout the school, but accommodation has some unsatisfactory features.
- Provision for pupils identified as having SEN is very good.
- The quality of support and guidance that pupils receive to prepare them for later stages of education or employment is good.
- The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good and contributes very well to very good teaching and learning.
- Statutory requirements are not met for provision of religious education in the Sixth Form.
- The requirements for a daily collective act of worship are not fully met.

Commentary

27. The overall quality of curriculum provision is good. The key issue as regards the provision of modern foreign languages raised at the previous inspection has been addressed. The provision for a daily collective act of worship is not fully met; the major reason for this is the lack of suitable accommodation. The school has a 'thought for the week' that is meant to be considered during tutor periods but the practice is variable. The newly introduced citizenship curriculum has been successfully implemented as part of the PSHE programme as well as being taught across the range of National Curriculum subjects. Statutory requirements for the provision of citizenship are therefore met very well. Curriculum provision is particularly strong in English and excellent in design and technology. Provision is good in mathematics, geography, history, music, citizenship, modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9, and business education in Years 10 and 11.

28. Provision in the curriculum for Years 9 to 11 matches needs of pupils well. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow a programme of core subjects, a technology course and other option choices. An enrichment programme provides further opportunities for pupils to receive extra support in English or mathematics and options in media studies, statistics or ICT. Pupils can also opt to take business education, drama and theatre arts and triple science. Plans to improve and extend vocational education are well in hand and will include a course in vocational ICT.

29. The provision for pupils with SEN has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now very good. The number of pupils on the SEN database is well below national averages, and they are well known to all staff. Their needs are met very well, being both socially and educationally included in all the schools activities. Individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up for the few

pupils with SEN in the school and subject departments are expected to address the planned targets within their curriculum area. A subject link teacher maintains liaison with the SENCO to ensure that staff retain their focus on pupils with SEN, ensuring that they make the same progress as others in lessons and enjoy all the activities that the school has to offer.

30. Those with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, benefit from the provision of a local authority specialist teacher who offers one-to-one tutoring over an extended afternoon each week. The local authority educational psychologist is committed to work with pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, giving personal time to them out of school hours. A qualified local drama therapist also works with these pupils. Although the school is not fully accessible to those with wheelchairs, it makes every effort to ensure that physical disabilities do not impede access to the school curriculum. An occupational therapist and a physiotherapist have given support with access and mobility around the school. The outstanding GCSE examination performance of two disabled pupils is a testament to the efforts made by the school to fully include them.

31. Those with physical impairments, such as hearing loss, are given the required support to enable them to make the same progress in learning as their peers. The progress of pupils with SEN is effectively monitored through twice yearly reviews of IEPs and the statutory annual review of the occasional pupil or pupil who has a statement of special educational needs.

32. The school identifies pupils with particular gifts and talents from information gained in Year 6 of the primary feeder schools. Subject departments are invited to further identify any pupil who has a particular subject talent that reveals itself in the first few weeks after entry to the school. There are link teachers in subject departments, who liaise with the co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils. These ensure that those pupils are carefully monitored and their achievements recorded. The co-ordinator is piloting IEPs, which ensures that staff are fully aware of this special group and are able to plan extension activities that challenge their skills and knowledge. The school offers a range of special activities, from 'aspiration days' and Education Action Zone (EAZ) master classes to accelerated learning programmes and three day student workshops at Oxford University. The Sutton Trust summer schools for academic pupils from non-privileged backgrounds are particularly successful and well attended. A chartered librarian is on hand to oversee and guide the research and problem solving activities that the gifted and talented pupils undertake.

33. There is a well-organised programme for careers guidance and support that prepares pupils well for further stages of education or work. Pupils appreciate the quality of this provision. All Year 11 pupils go on work placement for one week.

34. Opportunities for enrichment activities are very good. The school has a very wide extra-curricular programme. In the field of creative arts there are many events to encourage pupils' involvement in music and drama. Instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities contribute to music provision and to the school's record of participation in the arts. The Royal Opera House project involving the music, art and drama departments includes many pupils. In addition, subject provision, particularly in science, design and technology, history, English, art and modern languages, is enhanced through after-school clubs, master classes, revision sessions, and outside visits. The annual residential outdoor pursuits programme for Year 7 pupils and the Activities Week in the Summer Term serve to broaden pupils' wider social experiences. There is, however, insufficient monitoring of the levels of participation in extra-curricular activities to ensure that all groups of pupils are fairly represented. There is a broad range of activities throughout the school year including opportunities for participation in a wide number of sporting activities, and outdoor and adventurous visits for Year 7 pupils. However, there are no records of participation of pupils in sport other than those who represent the school in inter-school competitive fixtures but it was noted during inspection that girls participate in sport markedly less than boys.

35. Teaching staff are well qualified to teach the subjects of the curriculum. Annual recruitment problems have been resolved. As a result, the quality and levels of current staffing promote high standards of attainment and at least good achievement across the curriculum. Support staff are adequate in number, often well qualified and provide good support for teaching.

36. Accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. Accommodation for teaching the curriculum in school is generally satisfactory though in parts it is good. Pupils learn in an environment that is usually bright and pleasantly furnished; good displays are a feature of many subject areas of the school. Some areas have been recently refurbished. These are generally of good quality, though it is a pity that the new music studio does not have more effective sound-proofing. There are very good areas in both science and design and technology, and a major building project, currently in progress, should greatly improve the accommodation for physical education. However, specialist areas are often inadequate for the number of pupils. Science lessons sometimes have to be taught in ordinary classrooms, which inhibit the range of activities that pupils can undertake. Corridors and stairways are inadequate for the flow of traffic between lessons.

37. Learning resources overall are good. In English, mathematics and design technology they are very good. These resources are well used throughout the school to stimulate pupils' interest and enhance learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are plentiful but not used as much as they might be by some departments. In design technology, pupils are able to program robots and computer controlled machines which help them to learn about manufacturing processes and to design objects in resistant materials and textiles. In mathematics all pupils have textbooks to use at home and ICT is used extremely effectively to teach a range of concepts. Religious education benefits from a good range of artefacts and books for research, and teachers use video well as a teaching tool. There is a need for more visual aids around the school to promote cultural awareness relevant to different ethnic groups.

38. The library is well stocked and the librarian plays an important part in supplying the needs of all departments as well as teaching pupils how to use the library and work independently. The library resources include a selection of non-fiction and fiction texts from different literary heritages. The number of computers and other electronic aids are about average for a school of this size, and the software is wide ranging. Exciting developments are taking place in on-line learning with a local authority network providing access both at school and at home to work and homework done in an increasing number of subjects. Resources have improved since the previous inspection, especially the access to computers.

Sixth Form

39. Curricular provision in the Sixth Form is good. Opportunities to study a wide range of AS, A Level and AVCE courses are broadened by the Herschel Sixth Form consortium arrangements. Pupils from other schools in the consortium join the Herschel Sixth Form and pupils from Herschel have the opportunity to attend other schools to follow courses not offered at Herschel. The statutory requirement for the provision of religious education in the Sixth Form at Herschel is not met. Traditional academic courses continue to feature highly but there are also some vocational courses, for example, AVCE business courses that are very popular with pupils at Herschel. Where courses are not available at Herschel, pupils attend other schools in the consortium so that the whole range of needs is met. There is no provision for general studies examination courses.

40. In the Sixth Form the curriculum is considerably enriched through conferences, overseas visits and a study skills programme, as well as through opportunities to sample what is available in higher education in university taster courses, visits from university ambassadors, and participation in the Oxford Access and Sutton Trust Summer School schemes. Very good enrichment opportunities extend pupils' learning, including work experience opportunities where appropriate. Careers advice, guidance and support for pupils' further education or work are very good. In addition pupils are encouraged to experience the world of work through the Young Enterprise scheme, general work experience and voluntary work in a local primary school, as well as to broaden their political awareness through participation in the European Youth Parliament.

41. There are satisfactory areas for private study but not for socialising. There is a large communal sitting area with chairs and a television, but few other facilities. The Sixth Form have an additional study area, with computers, adjacent to the library. This area is well equipped with chairs and tables, but younger pupils use it during break and lunch times, which limits its usefulness to the Sixth Form. The new sports hall will release an additional area for the Sixth Form as well as making way for much needed additional classroom space in the main school.

42. Resources for learning in the Sixth Form are good. Resources in mathematics and design technology are very good. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources are well used and enhance learning in most subjects.

43. In design and technology, pupils are able to program computer-controlled machines and have access to other machinery; this helps to produce a high standard of products. In mathematics all pupils have textbooks to use at home and ICT is used extremely effectively to teach a range of concepts. Sixth Formers have access to their own computer suite during the day, although this has to be shared with others at break and lunchtime. The provision for staffing in the Sixth Form is very good. Teachers are highly qualified and expert in their subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. Systems to involve pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Excellent induction arrangements for pupils joining the school ensure a smooth transition.
- Care of pupils is very good. There are excellent procedures to confirm the well-being of pupils on the first day of absence.
- Formal health and safety audits should be regular and involve governors.

44. Health and safety procedures are very good. All safety checks are carried out and issues are reported to the governing body. Inspections are carried out within the school but they need to be regular with formal records kept, and governors should be actively involved. Risk assessments are carried out for all trips and activities but governors need to ensure that a whole school risk assessment is in place to allow annual inspections to be more meaningful. Child protection systems are in place and the school has very good systems to support 'looked after' children.

45. Welfare systems are very good with a medical room and qualified first aid staff supported as required by external agencies. The pastoral system is very well structured. Staff are caring, know the pupils well, and have built up very good relationships with them. Tutors stay with the pupils throughout the school except for the head of Year 7 who stays with Year 7 to build up a strong partnership with the primary schools.

46. An excellent induction programme ensures pupils' interests and aspirations are expressed and respected from the moment they are accepted for the school. The staggered start to the school year enables Year 7 pupils to settle in and resolve problems before other pupils join them. As the head of Year 7 is the same person year on year, this teacher has very good relations with primary schools and is experienced in coping with pupils' needs. Further support is available to Year 7 pupils through the effective 'buddy' system, the support of form tutors, and confidential counselling. Homework for Year 7 is posted on the school website, which helps parents and carers to give support to the pupils. An annual Year 7 outward-bound trip does much for bonding the pupils socially. At other critical stages similar care is shown; there are, for example, induction days for pupils entering Years 10 and 12. Lessons for pupils with disabilities are all scheduled to lower floors for ease of access. Individual monitoring supports the few pupils with attendance problems. Relationships between teachers and pupils are professional and friendly. Teachers and the counsellor are always at hand if pupils have concerns. These can also be expressed through the school council. Bullying is very rare and dealt with promptly. The school fosters harmonious racial integration and carefully monitors

and supports vulnerable pupils, while promoting the skills of the more able through a wide and much appreciated range of extra-curricular activities. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) provides a clear framework to help pupils understand issues surrounding their personal development.

47. Good careers guidance starts in Year 9 in parallel with guidance for GCSE options. Pupils view work experience and careers guidance in Years 10 and 11 very positively.

48. The school values pupils' views and the school council is an effective vehicle for them to express their views and to discuss issues. The school also makes very good use of pupil questionnaires to get a very good overview of their feelings about the school. The very good relationships within the school also allow for more informal discussions.

Sixth Form

49. The school gives very good support and guidance to pupils in the Sixth Form. Pupils receive very good feedback on their work and know how to improve. Arrangements for care and welfare are the same as in the main school although the lower numbers in each group enable more individual support to be given. Formal systems to involve pupils by seeking their views are at present the same as in the main school but these should be extended, for example by a Sixth Form council, to give pupils a much greater 'ownership' of the Sixth Form.

50. Monitoring of work and progress are very good. Predicted and target grades are regularly reviewed. The school clearly explains options for the Sixth Form in Year 11. Option choices are reviewed in Year 12, taking account of aptitude and achievement, to evaluate progress and quickly identify any early problems. Initiatives such as the Oxford Access Scheme help pupils to see the relevance of developing independent learning skills in preparation for higher education. A running programme of fairs and visiting speakers heightens guidance in this field. While the school no longer runs key skills courses, support for ICT is giving through the European Computer Driving Licence scheme.

51. The very good PSHE and citizenship education provides a strong framework for the support and guidance of pupils. Some highly enterprising extension projects, such as the European Youth Parliament, give extension opportunities to the more enterprising. Active participation in the community is encouraged through Sixth Formers providing reading support in a local primary school and through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The policy of mixing Year 12 and Year 13 pupils in tutor groups is successful, involving Year 13 pupils in the guidance of Year 12 pupils in such issues as university applications and helping Year 13 pupils to reflect on the progress they are making.

52. Pupils value the careers advice given by the school when external agencies have been unreliable. Proceeding from Year 11 work experience, the popular and successful Young Enterprise activities, voluntary work in primary schools and links through the AVCE courses keep pupils in touch with vocational options. Both careers and higher education guidance has been enhanced through a qualified permanent advisor in the library and the presence of advisers at parents evenings.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents, the community and other educational establishments.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school plays a leading role in partnerships with other schools.
- Information provided for parents is of high quality and uses a range of media.
- Very good links with local organisations benefit pupils' learning.
- The involvement of parents in their children's education has a high priority in the school.
- The governors' annual report to parents does not fully meet requirements.

53. Parents are very supportive of the school with only a few areas in which there is limited concern. There is a high level of agreement about the strengths of the management and teaching within the school. Parents agree that the children have to work hard but are treated fairly. Some parents would like more information on progress and better consultation. Several parents did not agree with the comprehensive approach to the Sixth Form. The concerns raised by parents, both individual and from the questionnaires, were considered during the inspection and contribute to the findings in the report. The inspection confirmed the very positive views of the parents.

54. Parents receive information on progress through an excellent report each year supported by a parents' evening. They also receive a good quality prospectus and governors' annual report for the school together with informative well-produced newsletters. Within the governors' annual report there are minor omissions such as information on parent governor elections as well as unsatisfactory reporting of progress made by pupils with SEN. This was an issue at the last inspection. Attendance at parents' evenings is very good and attendance at the governors' annual meeting is good compared to other secondary schools. Parents also have the opportunity for individual interviews when their child joins the school and in Year 9 to discuss course options. The school uses a planner for pupils so that parents can monitor the work and communicate with the school, and these are well used. The school does not have a parent teacher association but does get good support when it needs help. The school has an open door policy for consultation and the head teacher is available outside school in the afternoons for informal contact.

55. Very good links are maintained with the parents of pupils with SEN. They are well informed about the progress of their children and are appreciative of the open access policy that the school offers to parents.

56. The school has established very effective procedures for maintaining contact with parents, including those from minority ethnic groups, and involving them in their child's learning. The headteacher routinely meets with each parent at the start of Year 7 to explain expectations of work and how parents can work with teachers. Very good arrangements are in place for a senior member of staff to meet with parents who do not understand the education system.

57. Pupils join the school from five main feeder primary schools and about forty others, and the school works well with these schools. Support to other schools, which are experiencing difficulties, is provided by supplying staff or by taking in pupils. The school also supports primary schools by providing mathematics master classes, helping with science and providing technical support. Other links exist as a result of the school's status as a specialist technology college and a 'Leading Edge' school. As well as helping other schools these links bring wider opportunities for the pupils at Herschel.

58. Many local organisations and services support the school by providing speakers and welcoming pupils on visits. Local industry has been very supportive of the school and made a major contribution to its effectiveness. The major sponsor of the school makes a significant

contribution not only financially but also by providing a very able and involved chair of governors. Many local businesses are involved through providing work experience opportunities for pupils or supporting the curriculum at various times. The school is well used by the community and the commitment to the community is shown by the planned shared use of the new sports hall.

Sixth Form

59. The consortium of three schools is at the early stages of developing but is already benefiting pupils with an increased range of courses available. Unlike in many consortia pupils will always have a main base and travelling will be minimised for pupils and unusual for staff. All three schools are clearly working together to ensure maximum benefit is provided to all pupils within the consortium.

60. Pupils have benefited directly from local industry through support with project work as well as through the Young Enterprise scheme. Pupils on the AVCE Business Studies course also join local industries on work placement and many Sixth Formers also go into the local primary schools to provide support.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and that of other key staff is very good. Good overall management has resulted in good improvement. Management of the Sixth Form is very good. Governors, led by a committed and effective chair, provide satisfactory support to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and has been a major factor in the advancement of the school.
- Provision for SEN is managed very well.
- Very effective induction programmes are in place for new staff.
- Financial management is very good.
- Governors carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily but are not involved enough to support the school in strategic planning.
- Use of assessment to influence departmental planning and to monitor pupils' achievement against national standards is inconsistent.

Commentary

61. The leadership of the school has been very effective in raising standards over the past few years. The headteacher has shown excellent sense of purpose in making decisions to achieve the aims and objectives set out clearly in development plans. His personal leadership is recognised by colleagues and has been a very significant factor in the continued good improvements since the last inspection.

62. Senior colleagues provide very good leadership in their own areas of responsibility. They work extremely well as a team and provide very good role models for the staff. The leadership team are totally committed to the inclusive nature of the school, where all pupils and staff are respected and valued. This has a marked effect on pupils' motivation and achievement.

63. Key staff, including heads of department, have clear delegated responsibilities and undertake these with strong shared commitment. Very good teams are working to achieve common goals. The overall management by senior and middle managers is effective. Teaching and learning are monitored and considerable thought is given to different styles of learning. Opportunities are taken frequently to share expertise. Departmental leadership is excellent in mathematics, very good in English, science, design and technology, history, and religious education. It is satisfactory in ICT

but otherwise good. The effectiveness of management is excellent in mathematics, very good in science, design and technology, history, sociology, business studies and religious education. It is good in other subjects except for ICT, citizenship, music and psychology where it is satisfactory.

64. Governors provide satisfactory support for the school but their involvement in strategic planning is limited by the time that they can spare. They carry out their responsibilities and attend meetings regularly. Opportunities to gain further understanding of the strengths and weaknesses are not exploited. The Chair and Vice Chair of governors spend a great deal of time and effort in planning and supporting the initiatives that are promoted by senior staff.

65. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met. The governors are seeking advice on alternatives for a multi-ethnic school in fulfilling the legal requirements. Time for religious education is not sufficient for all pupils in the Sixth Form.

66. Assessment data is analysed well to identify any weaknesses in the curriculum and set targets for pupils. There is rigorous analysis of assessment data on the achievement of boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic groups. The systematic tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress in all subjects enables the school to identify trends and potential underachievement and take immediate action. However, the use of data by departments is inconsistent. More consistency is needed in the first hand use of performance data by heads of department to evaluate the curriculum and to compare pupils' targets and achievement with national expectations.

67. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) leads and manages the school's provision for SEN very well. He is an excellent role model for other teachers, being wholly committed to his work, well informed, and enthusiastic in his day-to-day dealings with pupils, staff and external agencies. He monitors the progress of pupils very effectively and maintains detailed records of their achievements. He benefits from the sensitive support of a SEN governor. Under his leadership the provision for SEN has made a very good improvement since the previous inspection.

68. The co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils is a very well informed and enthusiastic member of the senior management team. She is keen to ensure that pupils with special gifts and talents are given every opportunity to explore them and are able to reach their very high potential. She is a very good leader who is working hard to bring all subject departments into the provision made for those who are gifted and talented. Not all staff are fully aware of their role in providing for them, but the IEPs currently being piloted in the school are proving a useful tool for raising awareness of the needs of this special group of pupils.

69. The management of teaching and support staff is very good. Very good systems of performance management are firmly established and professional development that matches school and personal needs is readily available for all staff. This includes a residential conference and appropriate in-school training days. Very effective induction programmes are in place for all new staff, and newly qualified teachers receive effective continued support throughout their first year. Despite current national staffing difficulties the school has successfully recruited staff to meet the needs and demands of its curriculum.

70. Very good financial procedures are in operation within the school. The accounts are managed very well. Approaches to financial management support educational priorities very well because the chair of the governing body, the headteacher and the business manager work well together in drawing up budget proposals linked appropriately to the school's development plan. The finance committee ensures monies are spent wisely. Independent audits are carried out annually. Both revenue and capital accounts are monitored very well. For example funds are in place for a new sports hall, which is nearing completion. The principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of resources. The school provides very good value for money because pupils' achievement is very good and costs are average.

71. The Sixth Form is cost effective. Techniques to compare costs more effectively with those of the main school would provide management with better information in their developmental work for the Sixth Form.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,896,848.00
Total expenditure	2,879,882.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,388.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	209,708.00
Balance carried forward to the next	226,674.00

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 and modern languages were inspected in full. Media studies was sampled.

Media Studies

72. Media studies is taught within the English curriculum as an enrichment course to the highest attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. The first cohort achieved very well in the 2003 examination with virtually all pupils gaining GCSE grades A or B. There was only one grade C. Given that the subject is taught for one lesson each week, pupils make very rapid progress. Evidence from folders and exercise books show a clear development of media techniques and terminology and criticism. Pupils achieve very well because of the lively and energetic teaching, which enthuses them to develop their thinking and response. Discussion and a range of visual materials are used very well to develop pupils' knowledge of the subject. The excellent relationship between the teacher and pupils brings the best out of them. The scholarly teaching leads to pupils developing a capacity for working at a high level because of the demand made on them. The subject broadens pupils' knowledge ideally but the allocated time for a full GCSE course is too brief.

English

Provision in English is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Results were very high in the most recent national test and GCSE examinations.
- Teaching is very good and teachers challenge pupils to achieve high standards.
- Opportunities for pupils to analyse and evaluate their work are very good and are a key factor in sustaining performance.
- The head of department has clear aspirations for the department.

Commentary

73. Standards in English are very high in relation to all schools by the end of Years 9 and 11. Results have exceeded the national average for a number of years since the last inspection. In 2003 performance in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests was average compared with schools where the attainment on entry is similar. Test results are rising at a faster rate than the national trend and in 2003 they improved further. There is no significant difference in the performance of minority ethnic pupils and pupils with SEN when performance is compared with their peers. Standards have been sustained with a rising trend in performance. A very high proportion of pupils achieved the highest GCSE grades A* and A, particularly in English literature. The gap between boys and girls is now narrower, though girls achieve slightly more of the highest grades.

74. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are being sustained and pupils achieve highly in all areas of the English curriculum because of the consistently very high expectations. Pupils are precise in their pronouncements and reach very good standards in speaking and listening by the end of Years 9 and 11. They listen attentively and respond spontaneously with coherent and well-developed answers. Their comprehension and reading skills are very well developed and they understand implicit meanings. Pupils read perceptively and understand the power of the written word. They are secure in their analysis of a range of texts and understand how figurative language conveys meanings.

75. Gifted and talented pupils excel in their analysis and exploration of texts. Standards of writing are above average but gifted pupils reach very high standards. These pupils are never at a loss for words. Their artistic and analytic flair when responding to the written word shows mastery. Some of the most talented pupils are from African and Indian descent. Overall, all pupils structure their work very well, vocabulary is usually sophisticated, and technical terms are used accurately. Writing is coherent and cohesive. However, there are careless errors in punctuation and basic grammar, which affect the quality of their work.

76. The quality of teaching overall is very good with excellent features. Pupils learn very well because teachers have very high expectations and use the three-part lesson well to consolidate previous learning and fire their imagination. Careful organisation of pupils into groups or pairs, differentiated work and the consistent use of assessment objectives contribute to stretching pupils. There is strong emphasis on building on learning, and so activities are varied and timed. Textual analysis and language skills are very well taught and every opportunity is used to improve all areas of communication skills in English. Teachers use humour, praise, modelling, and exemplification of high standards to raise attainment further. The very good relationships, co-operation, extensive diagnostic marking and self-assessment motivate pupils to improve their work.

77. The new head of department leads and manages the department well and has high aspirations for sustaining and improving further the already high standards, which she inherited. The development plan is precise, as are the approaches for enhancing the curriculum and supporting pupils. There is, however, scope for making more effective use of assessment data. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. The department has a highly professional team of teachers and is well poised to improve the already high level of results.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

78. The school has been ahead of changes and has invested and pioneered much work in developing literacy across the curriculum. Pupils' verbal reasoning skills on entry to the school are weaker than numeracy skills. The school has taken swift action to support pupils likely to experience some difficulties in expressing their ideas clearly by giving extra curriculum time to English and providing extra support for a small group in Years 10 and 11. The librarian works closely with departments, particularly with English, to support study and reading skills in Years 7 and 8. The library is well organised and though the stock is lower than expected, the range of books is sufficient to provide for the needs of pupils. It is well used throughout the day and after school.

79. There is excellent provision within English to develop pupils' literacy. At whole school level, staff training, together with support and advice from the local education authority literacy co-ordinator, has led to departments including elements of the Key Stage 3 Strategy in schemes of work. Pupils have opportunities to use these skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils speak confidently and articulate their views very well in presentations, discussion and debate in drama, religious education, physical education, history, geography, and ICT. Every department promotes technical vocabulary well but too little attention is given to this in ICT. Pupils use text highlighting in English and history, and question the meaning of texts well in religious education. Pupils' extended writing skills are good and the quality of annotation and note taking is often very good. Writing work is superb in design and technology, and in modern foreign languages and English the whiteboards are used well for writing. There is, however, a tendency in geography for teachers to do too much for pupils. Overall, pupils use the writing process well to achieve high standards in their work.

Modern Foreign Languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching of German, and of French in Years 7 to 9, is very good.
- Standards in French, particularly of boys, in Years 10 and 11 are not high enough.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve very good comprehension skills and grasp of grammar.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to language learning.
- There is insufficient regular use of ICT in the teaching.

Commentary

80. Standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 9 are well above average in both French and German. Pupils have a very good grasp of grammar and vocabulary. Listening and reading comprehension skills are well developed and pronunciation is very good. Higher attaining pupils are able to use extended language with ease. Standards at end of Year 11 show variability between French and German. Recent GCSE German results compare well with those for similar schools but results in French are weaker. This is reflected in the achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11. In German they speak with confidence and write accurately, whilst in French they are reluctant to initiate the language unprompted and boys, in particular, lack oral confidence.

81. Teaching is always good and often very good. German is especially well taught. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use the foreign language consistently for classroom communication. Lessons are well structured to capture pupils' interest. In the best lessons teachers' enthusiasm, sense of humour and very good use of time engage pupils, and they use a wide range of resources to illustrate new material and stimulate learning. There is, however, not enough regular use of ICT. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils in most lessons and challenge them through frequent questioning and review. Pupils usually have a very positive attitude to work, collaborate well in group activities and behave very well. Where pupils in Years 10 and 11 show reluctance this is because they tend to rely too heavily on the teacher and need to be given more responsibility for their own learning.

82. The department is well managed by the head of department, who leads a strong and coherent team amongst whom there is frequent informal contact and shared planning. Recent training on the Key Stage 3 strategy has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, resulting in the very good achievement evident in pupils' work in Years 7 to 9. The head of department is a strong role model to his colleagues, but to fulfil his monitoring role he should undertake more formal lesson observation.

83. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The quality of teaching has much improved. Standards have shown a marked improvement in German overall and in French in Years 7 to 9, but only very gradual improvement in GCSE French results, where they are still below those for similar schools. Whereas there has been some improvement in the curriculum for Years 7 to 9, the access for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to study of two languages and the allocation of lesson time are still inadequate and likely to have a harmful effect on future Post 16 provision.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are very high.
- Teaching and learning are excellent, so pupils' achievement is excellent.
- Leadership and management have established an excellent team of teachers.

Commentary

84. Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were very high compared to all schools nationally. All pupils reached a level above that expected for their age. Standards have been very high for the last four years. In 2003 performance in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests were below average compared with schools where the attainment on entry is similar. However this is the highest group used for comparison. The difference in performance between boys and girls has reduced significantly, with boys now only slightly ahead of girls. Standards at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were also very high. Mathematics is one of the best performing subjects in the school.

85. Standards seen in the inspection are very high, reflecting recent examination results. These very high standards are being maintained by excellent teaching and the excellent attitudes of pupils to their work, and represent excellent achievement by pupils. Excellent assessment techniques within the classroom enable pupils to see their strengths and weaknesses and what they have to do to improve. Assessment also encourages independent study, good in Year 9 and very good in Year 11. This is because, in the best lessons, pupils receive marked work with helpful written comments together with the teacher's own extended written solutions to encourage further work from the textbook. Pupils do this. They work hard. All the different ethnic groups of pupils in the school, and those with SEN, achieve equally well. Standards of literacy and ICT are well above average, as seen in the very high standard of coursework.

86. Teaching and learning are excellent. The strength of the teaching lies in the subject expertise of the teachers and the development of very good teaching methods. The challenge to pupils' thinking skills throughout lessons is excellent, providing a very good mix between learning through doing and through pupils' discussions. Pupils understand what they do. A notable feature of the excellent teaching is the requirement for pupils to write two or three sentences describing their problem solving strategy, in the factorisation of quadratic expressions, for example. Low attaining pupils achieve as well as other pupils because the teaching groups are smaller, which enables their needs to be met. A few high attaining pupils in Year 7 find some of their work easy, but teachers maintain further work for them and employ group work to very good effect. Resources are used very well in the teaching: in slide presentations for a greater pace of working, and in interactive techniques with computers in geometry to improve understanding.

87. Leadership and management are excellent. Since the last inspection improvement has been excellent. Standards have improved, achievement has improved and teaching has improved significantly. Leadership has established an excellent team of teachers, all of whom are enthusiastic, stimulating and continually challenging, stemming from their excellent subject expertise and their understanding of how to teach and how pupils learn. Difficult ideas are taught in a highly effective way.

Mathematics across the curriculum

88. Standards in mathematics across subjects are well above average. Science uses tabulated data and algebraic formulae very well. In design and technology mathematics is used very well whenever it occurs, in measuring, control technology and electronics. Statistical analysis is well above average in sociology. Standards are above average in business studies as pupils use exchange rates accurately and know the effect of a strong or weak pound. In modern foreign languages pupils use sophisticated language very well in the calculation of calories in menus. Standards are above average in ICT and average in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well above the national average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent features.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough and data is well used to inform planning and improve learning.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good.
- There is insufficient planned use of ICT by pupils.

Commentary

89. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 9, results were well above average compared to all schools. In 2003 performance in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests were well below average compared with schools where the attainment on entry is similar. However this is the highest group used for comparison. During the past four years the results have steadily improved, particularly the proportion of higher grades. In the 2003 GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils attaining A*-C grades was high compared to the national average. There were no significant differences between the results of girls and boys or between those of pupils from different ethnic heritage.

90. The standards of work seen reflect test and examination results. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a very good understanding of the digestive system and the characteristics of different energy forms. By the end of Year 11 many pupils have a very good grasp of radioactive decay and can balance symbol chemical equations accurately.

91. By Year 9 all pupils, including those with SEN, the gifted and talented, and those of different ethnic heritage, achieve well across all attainment targets. By Year 11 pupils continue to achieve well, and are on course to achieve well above average results in the 2004 GCSE examinations. Most pupils respond very well to discussions and show very good attitudes and behaviour, which contribute to high achievement.

92. The overall quality of teaching is good and almost half is very good or excellent. Most of the highest quality lessons were seen in Years 10 and 11. These were characterised by very good planning, very good use of challenging questioning, which made pupils think hard, and very good use of time and resources to maintain the level of challenge for pupils. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Teachers usually plan very well for the needs of all pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with SEN. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve. In many lessons, teachers use computer-linked projectors skilfully, as, for example, in one excellent Year 11 lesson on satellite technology. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use data logging and simulation software.

93. Most pupils are well challenged in lessons and through additional lessons in Years 9, 10 and 11 where appropriate. However, in a very small minority of lessons the match of work to the needs of the lowest attaining pupils studying the dual award course in Year 11 is unsatisfactory and achievement, as a result, is no more than satisfactory. In some Year 7 and 8 classes higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged during whole class discussions. Teachers mark books thoroughly and pupils receive very good feedback which helps them to improve. The department has very good assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and uses data well to plan and review the curriculum. Good extra-curricular opportunities exist, including a Science Club.

94. The head of department provides very good leadership and management. Well supported by two heads of subject, she provides a very good teaching role model and a strong support for less experienced teachers. Since the time of the last inspection, despite many staffing changes, standards have continued to rise along with the quality of teaching, leading to good improvement. A good start has been made on laboratory refurbishment; the overall number of appropriately equipped laboratories is at present just adequate.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is widely used to support learning across the curriculum.
- Assessment does not support learning satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9.
- Aspects of teaching mean some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- The resources are good and help to enhance learning.

Commentary

95. Standards are above average at the end of Year 9. Pupils enter the school with average knowledge and skills in the use of ICT. Achievement is good because pupils' learning is enhanced by opportunities and good applications in other subjects. The enthusiasm and commitment of many pupils enable them to become independent users of ICT, selecting tools with which they are familiar as well as exploring new ones. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds do equally well.

96. The school will enter one group of pupils for the first time in GCSE ICT this year. Here standards are average. The achievement of these pupils is satisfactory. They have been able to make up for deficiencies, for example in their knowledge and use of data-handling. Achievement is also satisfactory for other pupils who have been able to continue to develop ICT skills on other GCSE courses. Overall competence in ICT is above average and the majority of pupils make good use of 'office' software to further their studies. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good. Pupils are given opportunities and expert support to develop multi-media programming and website design.

97. Teaching is good overall. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are usually well prepared and planned so that pupils have good opportunities to learn and reinforce new skills. Teachers provide good opportunities for discussion and encourage pupils to explain what they have learned. Pupils enjoy a good range of resources and all the materials that teachers produce are available online to pupils for revision in school and at home. Teaching is weaker, particularly for Years 10 and 11, when the teacher does not take enough care to provide work for the slower pupils. Learning is also limited when teachers do not make enough allowance for the unsatisfactory acoustics and layout of the computer rooms; pupils often cannot hear or understand. Pupils are well supported in their GCSE coursework with sound analysis of their progress. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not well supported by assessment. The ICT department uses tests to measure standards but does not use these effectively to plan lessons or individual targets.

Marking is inconsistent and does not give pupils enough information on the level at which they are working and how to improve.

98. Curriculum leadership in ICT is satisfactory. The school has experienced difficulties in the recruitment and retention of teachers and this has meant that improvement since the previous inspection has been slow. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the appointment of a new head of department. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is now satisfactory but for many pupils in Years 9 to 11 progress has been patchy with a lack of continuity in learning. The school has a good vision for the future and investment in new technology will enable pupils to continue learning at home through a wide area network.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

99. Pupils' competence in ICT is above average. Opportunities to use these skills are good in most areas of the National Curriculum and GCSE classes. In mathematics they are very good. Pupils explore number patterns and complex functions using spreadsheets and graphing programs. In design and technology, pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn to program microchips that control robots or produce printed circuits. In all subjects, pupils use the Internet for research and desk-top publishing or word-processing for reports. In art and design, modern languages, physical education and science opportunities to use ICT to support learning are not sufficiently regular or extensive. Too little use is made of ICT in English to develop literacy.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education were inspected in full.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Levels of attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11 are above national averages.
- Good teaching promotes above average achievement and effective learning.
- The small numbers and the lower prior attainment of pupils opting to take geography in Years 10 and 11 are a concern.

Commentary

100. The majority of pupils entering the school in Year 7 have geographical skills and knowledge that are below average. By the time they reach the end of Year 9 these are significantly improved and levels of attainment in national teacher assessments are above average. By the end of Year 11 attainment in GCSE examinations is well above average overall though the performance of girls is better than that of boys. Over the past three years results in these examinations has been rising at the same rate as that nationally.

101. Levels of achievement are very good and pupils make considerable progress as they move through the year groups. This is particularly the case in Years 10 and 11 because the pupils opting to study geography often have lower levels of prior attainment than average for the school. Pupils of all ethnic groups make similar progress and those with SEN achieve at the same rate as others.

102. Achievement is very good and levels of attainment are above average because teaching is good and the quality of learning is high. Lessons are very well planned, the pace is brisk and time is used well. Learning is supported by effective use of ICT and a variety of good quality home - produced resources. Teachers know their subject very well and use computer technology to good effect. Lesson aims are made clear and work is regularly marked. Learning is effective because pupils concentrate well; they listen attentively and give good support to each other when asked to work in pairs or groups. Commendable displays in geography rooms create a very good environment for learning, helping to motivate pupils and widen their knowledge of current geographical events and their understanding of geographical vocabulary. In particular, models of coastal and other topographical features made by pupils add to an increasing interest in the subject.

103. Leadership and management of the department are good and have effectively overcome setbacks recently experienced through staffing difficulties. Development planning is appropriate but the departmental handbook requires review. Teamwork between staff is good; the newly qualified teacher has received very good support. Monitoring and assessment are sound and help pupils to progress, but require further development. Schemes of work also need development to provide more specific geographical support to pupils and to highlight the contribution made to cross-curricular aspects of the department's work.

104. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained, assessment is more regular and appropriate, and resources have improved. However, the number of pupils opting for geography in Years 10 and 11 remains disappointing.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very effective leadership and management have led to high standards of teaching and learning.
- Very good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes have resulted in high levels of achievement and GCSE results that are well above average.
- Lesson objectives in Years 7 to 9 are insufficiently focused, resulting in teachers attempting too much in lessons.
- Summary sessions at the end of lessons are not consistently effective in reinforcing pupils' learning.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons.

Commentary

105. Achievement is very good. GCSE results in 2003 for A* to C grades were well above average. This reflects the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils as well as high quality teaching.

106. By the end of Year 9 pupils are reaching above average standards, with a significant minority achieving standards that are well above. This constitutes very good achievement for all pupils, including those with SEN. All pupils gain good understanding and knowledge of history. They react well to the good opportunities for discussion, and draft and redraft their work so as to improve their extended writing. Pupils learn well when using a good range of written and pictorial sources, for example to identify attitudes towards evacuee children during the Second World War. Higher attaining pupils compare the sources very well and the standard of their best work is of a very high standard.

107. Current standards in Year 11 are good overall, and very good for a significant number of pupils. Pupils have developed considerable strengths in evaluating evidence to understand, for example, the different contributions of people such as Fleming to the discovery of penicillin. Pupils in Year 10 use a variety of sources to consider the reliability of accounts of the gunfight at the OK Corral. Higher attaining pupils critically analyse the sources well, but there are not always opportunities for all pupils to raise questions themselves on the work presented to them. On occasions lower attaining pupils find difficulty in writing analytically and revert to description or simple comparisons of sources. Pupils complete detailed and accurate coursework and consequently gain high grades in their examinations.

108. Teaching and learning are very good overall. They are consistently better in Years 10 and 11 because teachers have a close focus in lessons on examination requirements. In other years some learning objectives are too general, and consequently teachers attempt too much. This leads to pressure on time and results in ineffective summary sessions at the end of lessons. In the most effective lessons teachers' very good subject knowledge is used to plan a good range of challenging activities and resources. Teachers' planning of work for pupils of different abilities, and the exam skills strategies they employ, also help to explain the high levels of achievement.

109. Leadership and management are very good. Thorough monitoring and a clear commitment to review and evaluation help to maintain standards. Assessment data is well analysed to highlight possible improvements in practice. Increasing amounts of data are available and further training is necessary to maximise its use. Programmes of work require further development so as to identify more precise learning objectives and where the subject best delivers aspects such as citizenship and ICT. The use of computers in lessons is unsatisfactory, resulting partly from the lack of an interactive board in the classrooms. All teachers support the strong commitment to high standards. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Religious Education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good teaching results in very good learning and achievement.
- Religious education makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

110. Most pupils arrive at Herschel Grammar School with standards of attainment in religious education roughly in line with the expectations of the Slough Agreed Syllabus. However, as a result of very good teaching the majority of pupils are well above expected standards by the end of Year 9. Very high standards are maintained throughout Years 10 and 11 so that, by the end of Year 11, pupils exceed considerably the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus, with most doing very well in the GCSE examination. As well as acquiring knowledge and understanding of religious traditions, pupils develop a range of skills and attitudes that contribute considerably to their personal development. They undertake writing assignments that require them to write in the first person from the point of view of different religious believers. Such tasks develop a capacity to see things from different points of view. Preparation for the GCSE examination equips pupils to structure arguments and to justify personal opinions.

111. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, which is unusual as typically girls significantly out-perform boys in this subject. It is likely that the effort the department makes to provide for pupils' individual learning styles accounts for much of this success in boosting the performance of boys.

112. Overall teaching and learning are consistently very good. Teachers plan thoroughly. Lessons are made interesting with a range of different activities that engage pupils. In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were given opportunities to collaborate in pairs and in groups of four, video clips were well used, and teaching was careful to relate religious teaching to contemporary situations, thereby maintaining pupils' interest. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about religious education although there are a small number of pupils in Year 11 who fail to see the relevance of the subject to them, and a few others who feel that the short GCSE course is insufficiently challenging.

113. Assessment of pupils' achievements is thorough and regular. In Years 7 to 9 the school assesses pupils' work using levels similar to those used in national curriculum subjects. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are assessed against the criteria of the GCSE examination. All pupils know the levels they are working at and receive regular and accurate information about how they can improve their work.

114. Leadership and management of religious education are very good. The head of department, in spite of a range of other responsibilities and not being a subject specialist, provides very good leadership for the subject. Her documentation is of high quality and offers very clear support for the non-specialist teachers who contribute to teaching the subject. The analysis and use of data is exemplary and allows the department to be very clear about the progress being made by individuals and groups of pupils.

115. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection report. The few concerns raised by that report have all been successfully addressed.

TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The best work is outstanding.
- Achievement is very good overall, and high for many.
- Teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- Challenging projects fire pupils' imagination.
- The use of assessment data by heads of department is insufficient.

Commentary

116. Attainment on entry is below average. Teacher assessments show that standards in Year 9 are well above average. Pupils continue to do well in Years 10 and 11 so that GCSE results overall are well above average. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grade in 2003, for example, was five times the national figure. Few pupils gain grades outside the range A* to C. Work in the classroom is just as good. Many pupils' folders are of outstanding quality, showing that their authors have grasped how innovative design can be original yet functional, and how to present their designs for maximum impact. They undertake sharp evaluation, based on explicit criteria. Pupils are often successful in national competitions. Overall, very good work indicates very good achievement throughout the main school.

117. Teaching and learning are very good. In a textiles lesson, for example, Year 8 boys became enthusiastically involved in designing a promotional soft toy for a fast food restaurant. They were not afraid to propose unusual designs, because they were confident that their ideas would be taken seriously. The teacher promoted these positive attitudes most effectively by treating her pupils with respect, and carrying their understanding forward in good one-to-one discussions. Learning in this lesson was very good, and pupils of relatively modest attainment achieved well. In a very good food technology lesson, pupils showed an appreciation of cultural diversity by making a variety of

types of bread associated with different parts of the world. Similar high quality work was seen in resistant materials lessons in which Year 11 pupils were building paper towers to help them to learn about structures, and in a systems and control lesson on jitter-bugs. Pupils make excellent use of computers in their work, both for design and in manufacture.

118. Very good leadership and management promote very high standards and a common sense of purpose in all areas of the subject. Data is analysed carefully, but it could be used to raise attainment still more. Resources are especially well managed. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design, drama and music were inspected in full.

Art and design

The provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to very good achievement and high attainment in GCSE examinations.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour in lessons contribute well to the very good achievement.
- Observational drawing is not taught with sufficient rigour in Years 7 to 9 and progress is not as good as it should be in these years, given the average level of skills on entry.
- The head of department works hard to maintain standards and is a very good role model for pupils and colleagues.
- Computers are not used effectively to enable pupils to explore the innovative field of digital art.

Commentary

119. In recent years very small numbers have entered for the GCSE examination, although attainment has been very high. The trend in results has been rising and current numbers in Years 10 and 11 show an encouraging improvement over past years. The small GCSE cohorts have tended not to include the best performers in the subject, but the very good teaching in these years has ensured that their achievement in lessons is very good. Pupils display very positive attitudes to work and their behaviour in lessons is always very good and sometimes excellent.

120. There are similarly high expectations of pupils in Years 7 to 9, but the lack of rigour in introducing and developing basic art skills from Year 7, in particular the skills that relate to observational drawing, leads to achievement that is not as good as it should be. Fine art is well taught and pupils throughout the school learn to research and take notes on well-known artists. The literacy skills of pupils are effectively challenged by the demands for annotation in sketchbooks.

121. The use of computers in art is less than satisfactory overall. Good use is made of them for research and word processing, but the exciting, innovative field of digital art is largely missing from the curriculum. The recent introduction of a local group of community artists is effectively broadening the curriculum and providing a valuable opportunity for pupils to work alongside professional artists.

122. The head of department has worked hard to maintain standards, managing a curriculum that requires a broad range of expertise. She is a very good role model for colleagues and pupils, ensuring that pupils are fully included and engaged in lessons. She uses very good relationships and her enthusiasm for the subject to ensure that lessons are informative, interesting and enjoyable. Under her leadership the school has gained Artsmark status and has made a good improvement since the previous inspection.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teachers have very good subject expertise and use stimulating materials.
- Pupils are creative in using the skills they are taught.
- GCSE results are well below average; however, the recent stability in staffing is a contributory factor in re-establishing the department.
- Well-established links with a local theatre group are helping pupils to experiment with ideas and gain experience as they work with professional role models.

Commentary

123. Results in drama, a once successful department, have been well below average since 2000 because of instability in staffing. There is now stability and an enterprising approach has led to improvements. Despite recent difficulties the subject is popular and pupils see it as a stepping stone to advanced theatre studies.

124. Current standards in Year 11 are average and represent good achievement for pupils. In contrast, Year 10 pupils are achieving very well because there has been greater consistency in specialist teaching and guidance on the GCSE course work. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 enjoy the subject and achieve well in using a range of dramatic techniques to devise drama. They respond very well to practical performance or when critically appraising their work. Pupils with SEN take a full part in all aspects of the subject and achieve well. Extended writing is good, but evaluation is too descriptive, particularly in Year 11, where standards have been affected because of previous problems with staffing.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers know their subject very well and have high expectations of work and behaviour. They plan their lessons well and use stimulating materials to enthuse and develop pupils' grasp of drama techniques. Teachers effectively use a range of activities to improve pupils' concentration and drama skills. These activities help pupils to visualise and work on their use of gesture, movement and voice. The department is well led and forward planning is re-establishing the subject. The very good links with a local theatre group are heightening pupils' awareness of performing skills and providing direct contact with professional actors as role models.

126. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory. The accommodation has improved with an ICT station, there are well-established links with other departments, and production work is being developed.

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' grasp of concepts and key vocabulary is inconsistent.
- Extra-curricular provision for music is growing.
- Good teaching is leading to good achievement.
- New accommodation enhances the learning environment for music but pupils' learning suffers from other problems caused by other limitations.

Commentary

127. Pupils achieve well to reach standards which are above average by the end of Year 9. This is due to good teaching, which is well planned and relates practical and listening activities to each other constructively. Good subject skills, warm relationships with pupils, constructive marking and a good understanding of pupils' individual needs encourage pupils to do well and show commitment in their work. They have good attitudes and, with few exceptions, behaviour is good. Interest in GCSE is increasing and numbers in Year 10 are now above the national average. Impressive GCSE results in 2003 cannot be compared with other schools, as few pupils took the examination. Standards in Year 11 are above average: pupils continue to achieve well. The one gifted and talented pupil achieves very well, owing to well-tailored individual support and stimulating initiatives in composition through the EAZ. Pupils with SEN and from ethnic minorities also achieve well overall, although some Muslim girls do not achieve so well in practical activities.

128. Pupils do not grasp key musical concepts and vocabulary consistently, as key word posters, board usage, articulation of musical perception through gesture, and listening strategies are under-developed. The lack of use of musical notation limits performance skills. It also adversely affects standards in listening and appraisal in Years 10 and 11. The management of the department is satisfactory. Good formal assessment has been established, but so recently that pupils cannot yet say confidently how well they are progressing. Although schemes of work promote continuity in pupils' learning, school-wide initiatives, such as citizenship, literacy, numeracy, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, are not highlighted. However, the department is well led. Re-organised instrumental teaching enables an above average proportion of pupils to learn instruments and a range of extra-curricular opportunities extends pupils' learning. Good liaison with external agencies has established exciting and popular initiatives, such as writing an opera and developing rock music.

129. Since the previous inspection the subject has made satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has remained good. New accommodation has been built, but high volume levels, resulting from poor sound-proofing, and pupils passing through the main teaching room to instrumental lessons frequently impair pupils' concentration. There are now good, up-to-date keyboards, but not enough computers to develop GCSE compositions. There are not enough classroom percussion instruments, which limits activities for younger pupils, and the out-dated library stock limits research on GCSE topics.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The great majority of pupils achieve well in the compulsory course in Years 7 to 11.
- Good teaching and learning across all years result in good achievement for all groups of pupils.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the common course.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result in a very positive atmosphere in lessons.
- Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are not fully effective.

Commentary

130. Standards in Year 9 are average. Most pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities and generally below average standards on entry. In basketball, girls have secure individual skills and techniques. The more capable apply these well in small-sided games whereas the weaker players are still relying too much on passing rather than using dribbling to drive for the basket. The use of blocking and defensive marking is developing well. In association football, boys are developing their tactical awareness of switching attacking play and drawing out defenders. However, movement off the ball and communication could be used to better effect by more pupils.

131. Standards in the Year 11 compulsory course are average. Most pupils achieve well and have continued to build on the skills and techniques learned in Years 7 to 9. In association football, most boys apply their individual skills well in the full games they organise themselves. In health related fitness lessons, girls have a secure understanding of the effects of exercise on the body but lack experience in developing their own exercises for specific types of fitness. Those girls who have opted to take part in the self-defence course in Year 11 are not only improving their levels of fitness but are also growing in confidence and becoming aware of their own capabilities should they find themselves in difficulty. Across all years pupils have developed well their understanding of the principles and procedures for warm up and cool down.

132. In 2003, seven of the nine pupils entered attained A* to C grade passes in the GCSE course, though none attained A* or A grades. Numbers taking the course are increasing. Current standards in Year 11 are above average; pupils are achieving very well. In their theory lessons they are developing well their knowledge and understanding of aspects of the social development of sport, and in practical lessons their ability to teach and coach specific skills.

133. Teaching and learning are good across all years and result in good progress. Teachers have a very good command of the activities being taught and have a very consistent approach as regards behaviour and discipline. Lessons are well structured and purposeful and provide progression and challenge. In Year 7 dance and gymnastics lessons, for example, well planned and structured activities ensured pupils were all actively involved and improving their skills and techniques well. Learning objectives are made clear at the start of lessons. Attitudes and behaviour are very good and pupils work very well together in mixed capability and ethnic groups. They clearly respect the ethos within which the subject is taught, which enhances the quality of learning and promotes a very good atmosphere in lessons. Teachers circulate very well in lessons and their effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils well aware of their capabilities. There are, however, occasions when there could be more pupil evaluation of their peers; this would help them refine and develop their own practice and deepen their knowledge and understanding even further. There is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the compulsory course.

134. New leadership and management are good. There is a sense of purpose and a focus on improving standards. Good quality schemes of work, for example, help teachers plan their lessons well. New assessment arrangements have been introduced for the compulsory course in Years 7 to 9, but they are not effectively moderated. Leadership and management now need to focus clearly on

planning and preparedness for the opening of the new sports hall and other facilities. Extra-curricular provision is sound but more opportunities are planned for boys. As a result of the commitment of teachers, ten pupils have attained representative honours at district level and eleven at county level in a variety of sports. Year 7 and Year 8 squads are local and district athletics champions. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Comment on general sporting provision in the school

135. Sporting provision is good overall and has been recognised by the school's 'Sportsmark' award. All pupils have two hours of formal timetabled provision per week. Further opportunities are provided by extra-curricular provision throughout the year. Effective links with sporting organisations in the local community provide further opportunities for pupils. The physical education department benefits from local council funding for out of hours learning activities.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards were well above the national average in 2003 and pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good and resources are used well, although pupils are not sufficiently independent in their learning.
- The department is led and managed very effectively and has a clear focus on developing business links.

Commentary

136. GCSE results in 2003 were well above the national average. The trend is for standards to be well above those found nationally and standards in the present Year 11 are well above average. This represents very good achievement as the subject attracts pupils from a wide range of attainment. Pupils with SEN are achieving equally well as a result of the quality of available support. Only 23 pupils were entered from the school in 2003 but there are now far more pupils taking the subject as the department has worked hard to raise its profile in the school.

137. Standards are high because pupils work hard in lessons and benefit from the well structured and varied tasks provided by their teachers. Pupils have good ICT skills and use their skills in producing high quality course work. However, in some lessons teaching and learning are affected by the lack of computer resources. Pupils' work illustrates the wide range of exciting and challenging classroom activities, but in lessons higher attaining pupils were not always working to capacity and all pupils would have benefited from more opportunity to learn independently.

138. Motivational theory is clearly taught very well and pupils' written work shows very good understanding of human resource management and marketing. Pupils in Year 11 understand the importance of currency fluctuations because the numeracy element was illustrated and taught very well. Similarly Year 10 pupils made good gains in understanding break-even because learning was reinforced in a case study set for homework.

139. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the experience in business that adds an extra dimension to teaching about the business world. Assessment is very thorough and a good use is made of available data including information about pupils with SEN.

140. The high quality of teaching and learning are a result of the very good leadership and management of the head of department. Newly qualified and trainee teachers are supported well and the department works very effectively as a team. The introduction of a new and more challenging GCSE course has been planned very effectively, as have links with local business and industry that provide a valuable resource for learning. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship was inspected in full. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) was sampled.

Personal, Social and Health Education

141. The school has a good programme for PSHE. It is delivered in separate topics in a modular structure, partly by teams of teachers with specialist knowledge and partly by form tutors. The course content is very good with well-planned units, such as on sex and relationships education and health and drugs education, taught by specialists. Because of the concurrent timetabling with citizenship, only two lessons in Year 7 could be sampled. Good, well-planned teaching helps pupils to express what they believe to be important and to appreciate feelings of others. Many PSHE themes are followed up in the wider provision of the school, such as the school's commitment to healthy eating, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and very effective careers guidance and work experience. The school's very strong commitment to caring for its pupils sets the tone for the very good attitudes of pupils in PSHE lessons. Pupils in Year 9 reported that PSHE 'helps them grow up'. The very good provision noted at the last inspection has been well maintained and enriched with the effective introduction of citizenship.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum is well-designed and balanced and is reviewed regularly.
- Where teachers have specialist knowledge, pupils' attitudes are good and their achievement is good.
- Some very good extension initiatives encourage pupils to involve themselves actively in citizenship issues.
- Monitoring of pupils' work is ineffective, resulting in underdeveloped assessment procedures.
- Despite some very good practice, provision in subjects is inconsistent.

Commentary

142. An interesting and essentially effective curriculum is in place. Within PSHE provision, citizenship is taught by specialist teachers in monthly modules, interspersed with shorter modules taught by form tutors. Materials for form tutors rely strongly on worksheets and lack the range of media otherwise used. Consequently, pupils' motivation and achievement are better in modules taught by specialists. Where non-specialists teach topics, pupils' attitudes are less constructive, as seen in the 'government and politics' lessons in Year 11, where some boys were apathetic and some pupils were overwhelmed by complex political vocabulary which was not adequately explained.

143. Provision is supplemented by citizenship taught in other subjects, assemblies and specific extension activities. In subject areas provision is inconsistent. It is very good in modern languages, with a distinct module raising European awareness, supported by 'taster' courses in Dutch, Italian and Portuguese. In mathematics, issues of social deprivation are raised through statistics and tax through arithmetic. Provision is unsatisfactory in music, where citizenship is neither built into the

scheme of work, nor highlighted when relevant issues are incidentally raised in lessons. Citizenship is only occasionally made explicit in subject lessons. Standards in both Year 9 and Year 11 are above the expected level. Overall, good achievement in Years 7 to 9 results from good, well-planned teaching; satisfactory achievement in Years 10 and 11 results from satisfactory teaching.

144. Impressive initiatives link information on citizenship to skills of enquiry, communication and responsible action. Pupils speak positively of the Year 9 modules in which all pupils prepare a simulation exercise on the United Nations, with gifted and talented pupils travelling to a conference with other schools. A Year 8 citizenship day gives profile to the subject, inviting visiting speakers and challenging pupils' thinking. The school council is an effective democratic channel for bringing about change in the school.

145. Management of citizenship is satisfactory. Although pupils review their progress periodically through self-evaluation exercises and these contribute to their reports, few pupils log their citizenship work in their planners. Recording of pupils' citizenship experiences and collation of written work is unsatisfactory. Lack of formal assessment means pupils do not know how they are progressing or how they can improve, except by informal feedback, often given well in the modular lessons. The school is aware of this and has plans to resolve the issue through initiatives of the EAZ. Training of staff is needed to consolidate provision. As citizenship has been introduced since the previous inspection it is not possible to make comparisons with the last inspection in 2000.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

146. In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

147. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

Level 3 GCE AS Level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	11	100	65.2	27.3	11.1	37.3	20.6
Business Studies	6	50.0	76.4	0.0	16.3	18.3	26.2
Chemistry	8	87.5	72.7	0.0	13.9	22.5	24.1
Drama	4	100	86.5	25.0	19.6	37.5	30.6
English Literature	9	88.9	85.9	22.2	19.1	34.4	30.2
Design and Technology	2	100	74.9	0.0	15.1	35.0	25.3
Geography	2	100	74.3	0.0	19.8	35.0	26.5
History	1	100	80.7	0.0	19.5	30.0	28.6
Information Technology	5	40.0	67.0	0.0	10.9	12.0	21.4
Mathematics	11	54.5	61.9	9.1	17.1	16.4	22.1
Other Social Studies	9	77.8	69.7	22.2	16.7	33.3	24.1
Physics	5	80.0	68.6	20.0	14.4	26.0	22.7
Sociology	7	100	71.8	14.3	18.4	34.3	25.4

Level 3 GCE A Level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	16	100	96.4	25.0	39.2	72.5	78.6
Business Studies	21	100	98.7	47.6	36.8	91.4	80.1
Chemistry	15	100	97.6	26.7	49.0	77.3	84.9
Drama	6	100	99.5	50.0	40.1	86.7	83.6
English literature	24	100	99.5	62.5	46.5	96.7	86.5
Design and Technology	10	100	97.8	0	35.0	68.0	77.9
Geography	6	100	98.7	83.3	44.5	96.7	84.0
History	10	100	99.0	0.0	44.6	68.0	84.6
Information Technology	10	100	95.6	20.0	24.6	76.0	69.5
Mathematics	19	100	96.7	52.6	55.6	90.5	88.8
Other Languages	3	100	96.9	0.0	64.5	80.0	93.8
Other Social Studies	45	100	97.4	35.6	42.7	80.4	81.8
Physics	9	100	96.7	22.2	44.6	64.4	81.7
Sociology	10	100	98.2	60.0	44.3	98.0	83.6
Business VCE	52	100	88.6	17.3	20.6	73.5	60.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subjects were English Literature and German.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards have been maintained with significant rises each year.
- High quality teaching contributes to pupils exceeding their target grade.
- The quality of assessment is very thorough and critical and equips pupils with evaluative skills to improve their work.
- Pupils achieve very well in textual analysis because of the emphasis on wide reading to develop their thinking and evaluative skills.
- The quality of leadership and management and teamwork is very good and is helping to drive up standards.

Commentary

148. Results in the GCE A Level English literature examination were well above the national average in 2003 with almost two thirds of all candidates achieving the highest grades. Most pupils exceeded their target grade. Standards have improved year on year. There is a high take-up rate for AS Level English literature and the retention rates are very good. Results are above the national average.

149. Standards of work seen in lessons and in pupils' folders indicate very good progress, particularly for pupils joining the Sixth Form without the 'Herschel experience' in English. In discussion, both AS and A2 pupils noted the relevance and importance of the quality of teaching and the induction programme in preparing them for the transition to A Level work. More girls than boys opt for the subject and there is no difference in the performance between them or in the results of the different ethnic groups. Pupils achieve very well in lessons regardless of their cultural heritage because of the very good support and guidance they receive.

150. In lessons seen in Years 12 and 13, standards were above average. Pupils reach good standards in speaking and listening, discussion, reporting, structuring and communicating their ideas. At the start of Year 12 the emphasis placed on textual analysis enables pupils to handle literary criticism confidently and well. Higher attaining pupils show a high level of independence as readers, but middle attaining pupils do not always develop their argument. However, by Year 13 there is greater maturity in reading and response with pupils managing text transformation, drawing on critical perspectives and exploring how language is used to shape meanings. Pupils reach good standards in structured extended writing. Minor flaws in grammatical features mar the work of middle attaining pupils when care is not taken with proof reading and editing.

151. The quality of teaching is very good. All teachers have in-depth subject expertise, which they use to challenge pupils and help them develop their literary and interpretative skills. They encourage independent thinking and use talk as a central activity so that pupils can discuss and develop their response. They make excellent use of the three-part lesson, particularly the starter activity to review and consolidate previous work. Teachers use their knowledge of the examination specifications to help pupils make very good progress. This is done successfully by using the assessment objectives to drive up standards. Pupils are in no doubt about exam requirements. Marking is very detailed and identifies areas of work for improvement that are linked to the assessment objectives.

152. Monitoring and assessment of pupils' work is excellent. The supportive approach ensures that pupils achieve very well. Pupils have access to a breadth of materials for research and development. Wider reading and research using ICT are positively encouraged. Progress since the last inspection has been excellent. Results have risen significantly and are now above average; teaching is very good; pupils achieve well; and plans are now being developed to offer English language as an examination subject. The leadership and management of the subject are strong. Teachers are well deployed and the team effort has resulted in a unified department driving up standards.

Literacy across the curriculum

153. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. They are given opportunities to take part in oral work and reach high standards in formal debate in sociology. In physics, teachers give good support to pupils making presentations. There is a high level of comprehension work and group debate and argument in maths when pupils work on solving mathematical problems. Throughout the Sixth Form pupils exercise independent learning skills well through wide reading and research. Pupils use the Library Resource Centre very well during their study periods and free periods and find that the library is well resourced with specialist journals and textbooks to support their study. Extended writing is well structured, though in physics pupils struggle with written work and ideas are not expressed clearly, as they do not adapt their writing well to the purpose of their work. In mathematics, pupils write explanatory notes in full to explain the strategies for solving problems. In history, pupils who struggle to express themselves use writing frames to structure their work.

GERMAN

German is currently taught only in Year 12.

Provision in German is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Excellent linguists provide very good teaching in well-structured lessons.
- Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress.
- Pupils are too reliant upon dictionaries and other sources to deduce meaning.
- Strong emphasis on acquisition of grammar underpins pupils' language skills.
- The number of pupils taking German in the Sixth Form is low.

Commentary

154. There are no previous examination results which can be compared against national statistics. Standards attained by pupils in lessons and in their written and spoken work are well above average. Achievement is very good because they have a very strong grasp of grammar, write with accuracy, have a solid base of vocabulary, which they use in their spoken language, and pronunciation is usually very good. Listening comprehension skills are also high and pupils are able to use extended language and more complex constructions. Pupils are, however, occasionally too reliant upon dictionaries and other sources to work out meaning before trying to use their own knowledge and skills.

155. Teaching is very good. Teachers are excellent linguists and their lessons are conducted at a brisk pace incorporating a well-planned range of activities. Questioning is well focused and teachers make very good use of TV/video and authentic texts to stimulate discussion. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their studies and are willing to put forward ideas and to learn from their mistakes. Tasks set are appropriately challenging because teachers have high expectations of their pupils; this enables them to make very good progress. The strong emphasis upon acquisition of grammar creates a sound foundation for pupils' linguistic development and this has a very beneficial impact on the quality of the German that they speak and write. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently, provide clear guidance on how they might improve and are always encouraging in their verbal and written comments.

156. Since this is a new German course in the Sixth Form it is not possible to comment on improvement in standards or teaching since the last inspection but this does represent a satisfactory improvement in curriculum provision albeit with a low number of pupils taking up the subject.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The focus subjects were mathematics, physics and chemistry.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are very high.
- Teaching and learning are excellent and so is pupils' achievement.
- Leadership and management have established an excellent team of teachers.

Commentary

157. Modules in pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics were inspected. Year 12 pupils study the first modules in pure mathematics and statistics, together with the first module in either mechanics or decision mathematics. In Year 13 pupils study a further two modules in pure mathematics, together with the second module in either mechanics or statistics. Further mathematics was not inspected.

158. In the 2003 GCE A Level examinations the standards of the 19 pupils entered were above average. All were successful at grade D or better, over half with the higher A/B grades. In 2003 the AS Level results were above average, but widely spread from the highest grade A to unclassified. The unclassified grades were the results of pupils beginning their course with too low a level of algebraic skill. Lower attaining pupils in Year 12 this year are studying decision mathematics.

159. Standards of mathematics seen in Year 13 reflect the high standards seen in recent examination results even though the number of pupils has increased significantly, to 32. Over two thirds are currently working at the higher A/B grades. This represents excellent achievement, as very high standards are being maintained by the excellent quality of the teaching and learning and the excellent attitudes of the pupils to their studies. Standards in Year 12 are above average, which represents satisfactory achievement compared to the above average standard of these pupils at the start of their course. Low attaining pupils have difficulties with basic algebra, for example in factorising quadratic expressions. This severely restricts their ability to solve problems in pure mathematics. They do as well as they can. Other pupils are achieving an excellent basis in AS Level mathematics.

160. Teaching and learning are excellent. There is a small element of good teaching, but most is excellent. Difficult ideas and skills are taught in an inspiring and highly effective way. In mechanics, for example, excellent subject expertise enables pupils to learn new problem solving techniques by very good use of questions and very well thought out explanations. All pupils are involved in this learning, greatly helped by the individual support from the teacher and the resource bank of solutions and hints for solutions, which are a notable feature of the teaching and the excellent planning. In pure mathematics the computer controlled screens are used in some lessons to provide excellent learning opportunities for visual learning, especially in advanced graphical work. Pupils have developed excellent independent learning skills through imaginative group work, oral contributions from pupils in lessons and the excellent use of assessment in the teaching.

161. Leadership and management are excellent because the mathematics teachers form an excellent team. They work together so well. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent because standards have improved to very high levels. Teaching has also improved and is now outstanding.

Mathematics across the curriculum

162. Standards in mathematics in the Sixth Form are well above average. Standards in statistics are very high and used very effectively in sociology. Standards in computing are above average and support good learning. Opportunities are missed to enhance learning through mathematics in psychology, where standards are average. Standards are as expected in other subjects.

PHYSICS

Provision in physics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have an infectious enthusiasm for their subject, and understand how pupils learn best.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject lead to curiosity and a will to succeed.
- Numbers are rising, and examination results are improving.
- Use of ICT in teaching is not as good as it could be.
- Pupils do not present their written work carefully enough.

Commentary

163. The number of pupils choosing to study physics has more than doubled since the last inspection. In 2003 examination results at A Level were well below the national average. In some years pupils of relatively modest attainment have chosen the subject and, although their results have been below the national average, they have achieved well. The most able pupils always do very well, gaining high grades, and it is common for about half of them to gain the highest grades A or B.

164. These results reflect very high quality work in lessons. In Year 12, pupils very quickly learn to think as physicists do, and to understand the power of mathematics to lead to precise physical interpretation. Practical work is good. Pupils' folders show that they can tackle routine questions with facility. Careful marking and good comments help them to improve. However, pupils' extended writing is not as good as their engagement in high-level classroom discussion. The current Year 12 and 13 pupils, who came into the Sixth Form with mainly high GCSE grades, fully reflect their ability in their work. The department has a tradition of pupils continuing their studies in physics or the other sciences at university. Overall standards are above average and achievement is very good.

165. Teaching and learning are very good overall and some lessons are excellent. The two teachers work very well together so that pupils' experiences consistently help them to appreciate how different parts of the subject are related. Teachers know their pupils well and support them brilliantly, so that they do as well as possible, whether they are potential undergraduates in university centres of excellence or pupils with SEN.

166. The department is very well led. The head of department works with his colleague to maintain a constant drive for high standards. He manages resources well, but there is insufficient use of ICT, and opportunities are sometimes missed for a more innovative approach to teaching. Rising numbers and improving results indicate very good progress since the last inspection.

CHEMISTRY

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above the national average by the end of Year 13.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Very good use is made of assessment data to improve individuals' performance and curriculum planning.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to develop further pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

167. The GCE A Level results in 2003 were close to those of other schools nationally. The proportion gaining higher grades A and B was below average but all pupils gained a pass. There were no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls or between those of different ethnic heritage. In the 2003 A Level examination, the proportion of pupils gaining the A and B grades and of those gaining A-E grades were lower than in 2002.

168. Pupils' achievement overall is good. This is as a result of very good teaching and the very good attitudes to learning of most of the pupils. Most pupils in a Year 13 lesson about transition metals achieved well and developed a good understanding of the way electron orbital configuration contributes to the reactivity of metallic ions in solution. Standards observed in Year 12 are above average and achievement is mostly good. Most pupils have a good grasp of the conventions for naming and drawing complex hydrocarbon molecules and the mechanisms of addition and substitution reactions. By this stage in their AS Level course they are developing their techniques and understanding of volumetric analysis well and use them effectively in measuring the enthalpy of neutralisation.

169. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use well in demonstrations and when assessing pupils' learning through challenging questioning. Pupils learn well because the teaching is often challenging, lessons have a lively pace and teachers expect a high quality of work. Although teachers make good use of new technology in lessons, insufficient opportunities are available for pupils to develop their own ICT skills during lessons, particularly in data-logging. Marking and assessment procedures are very thorough and contribute to the good teaching and learning that occurs. Homework and formally assessed work is regularly and thoroughly marked, with useful feedback which helps pupils to improve and is greatly valued by them.

170. Leadership of the subject by the Head of Science is very good. She provides a very good teaching role model and has facilitated good shared practice amongst teachers through observations of each other and very effective monitoring of teaching and learning. The subject is very well managed through productive meetings and the very effective organisation of resources and equipment. Since the last inspection standards have continued to rise steadily, with the exception of last year, and improvement since the last inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus subject was ICT.

Information and Communication Technology

Provision in ICT is **good**.

- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.
- Pupils can be passive in lessons because they are not always challenged to speak for themselves.

Commentary

171. Results in the A Level exam have varied considerably over the last four years. In 2003 results were above average. Current standards seen are average. Pupils entered the course with a wide range of prior attainment but overall were below average for a course of this type. Achievement over the two year course is good, although it is better in Year 13 as pupils have learned to work more independently and produce work in more depth and detail. Pupils develop good skills in turning their knowledge of information technology into practical projects. Boys and girls achieve equally well, although some of the highest attainers are boys.

172. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned and challenging and the teachers make good use of visual resources to enhance demonstrations. The best lessons are lively and involve pupils in active participation in practical explorations of concepts which would otherwise be difficult to grasp. Pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm and work hard. However, the teaching sometimes allows pupils to remain too passive; they sit and listen, taking notes rather than being challenged to think and explain for themselves. This slows the process of learning how to evaluate and explain decisions that they have made in systems analysis - a vital component in the early part of the course, which the pupils taking the AS Level exam often find difficult. Many pupils achieve disappointing results in this first stage of the course and it is only the most determined who decide go on to complete the course and achieve well in the second year. The use of assessment is good. The marking and feedback to pupils are concentrated on improving the detail and accuracy of the work. Pupils say they are well supported and that the course is well suited to their needs: many intend to go on to further study in computer science.

173. Leadership of the course is good. The expert curriculum leader for ICT constantly strives to improve his own knowledge and teaching skills, to improve the curriculum and to interest and stimulate the pupils. The evaluation and development of the curriculum is good and is aimed at raising achievement. Previous performance patterns are analysed to help plan future developments. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection when A Level courses were first introduced.

Competence in ICT

174. The pupils' competence in ICT is above average. Opportunities to use these skills are good in most subjects at A Level although access to computers is not always available. Sixth Form pupils have their own study area with computers attached to the network and can take a course with a qualification, the European Computer Driving Licence. Pupils who are gifted or talented are given opportunities to develop their skills, for instance in computer programming or web-site design.

HUMANITIES

The focus subjects were geography, history, sociology, psychology and government and politics.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses:

- The achievement of pupils is good.
- The quality of teaching is good, promoting learning of high quality.
- Levels of attainment are above average and rising.
- The number of pupils taking geography is disappointing, and their previous attainment if often weak.

Commentary

175. Levels of attainment at the end of both Years 12 and 13 are above average. In recent years all pupils have successfully gained a pass grade at A Level. The prior attainment of pupils taking the subject, a significant proportion of whom have not taken geography at GCSE Level, is broadly average and pupils achieve well. Pupils from different backgrounds achieve equally well and extension work is always available to cater for the needs of those with greater previous geographical experience.

176. Although pupils do not attain as well in geography as in some other subjects, levels of achievement are good. Their progress is enhanced through increasingly proficient research skills that raise levels of attainment by making good use of the Internet and fieldwork as a means of learning.

177. Above all learning is good because teaching is good. Teachers are good facilitators, guiding pupils well and providing a variety of tasks in lessons that assist pupils to learn for themselves. Teaching makes effective use of good quality departmental resources. Pupils are often actively involved in lessons but occasionally teachers play too large a part and learning becomes passive. All lessons are very well planned, the pace is brisk and pupils are kept busy. Relationships are good. Pupils respond well, listening attentively and working well together. Many show their ability to use previous knowledge to respond accurately to questions, to apply it to new situations, to challenge hypotheses and to develop further enquiries. This is especially evident when dealing with global issues and phenomena in Year 13.

178. Courses in geography are now fully established in the Sixth Form though the numbers taking the subject are often small. This is an improvement since the last inspection and owes much to the current leadership and management of the department, the quality of teachers, their hard work and willingness to raise the status of the subject among pupils. Overall leadership and management are good, systems of marking and assessment are increasingly effective in supporting and encouraging pupils. The head of department leads by example and provides good support to his colleague currently in his first year of teaching.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good leadership and management help to maintain good teaching and learning.
- Consistently good teaching has resulted in improving standards.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to take further responsibility for their own learning.
- The use of computers in lessons is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and this contributes to achievement levels.

Commentary

179. Achievement is good for the majority of pupils. Standards in 2003 were in line with the national average. The trend in recent years has been one of good improvement in standards. Results in 2003 reflected the underachievement of a minority of pupils who started the course with below average standards or with no history qualification at all. This highlights the effectiveness of the carefully planned induction programme for pupils, particularly those new to the school.

180. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are generally keen to learn and take a pride in their work. A minority fail to take full responsibility for their learning, not completing homework in sufficient detail, and their commitment to wider reading is inconsistent.

181. Current standards are above the national average for the majority of pupils. This constitutes good and often very good achievement. The most capable pupils have very good historical knowledge. They write detailed and accurate essays on Germany and Bismarck. Less capable pupils tend on occasions to write descriptively and do not always answer the question fully. Pupils analyse sources carefully and are able to draw relevant conclusions, but occasionally find it difficult to balance the use of source material and their own knowledge. During discussions pupils demonstrate good oral standards but are not always comfortable when asked to raise questions and analyse critically. They use computers well for coursework and homework requiring research, although there is insufficient use of computer technology during lessons.

182. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge well to support and guide pupils. Pupils benefit from thorough planning of lessons that matches a good range of teaching methods to their different learning requirements. On occasions pupils' concentration levels are tested by overlong teacher-led sessions and opportunities are missed to hand more independence for learning to pupils. There are some inconsistencies in the level of challenge presented to pupils during lessons. Assessment procedures are used well and pupils benefit from very good feedback. Opportunities are missed for pupils to take more responsibility for tracking their own progress and setting targets for development.

183. Leadership and management are very good. Thorough monitoring procedures are important in ensuring the continued high levels of teaching, learning and achievement. Teamwork within the subject is strong with a clear, shared commitment to the improvement agenda set by the leadership. Resources are good and used very effectively to develop work for pupils of different abilities. Documentation provides good support for teachers although programmes of work require the further development of more precise learning objectives and support for key skills. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Sociology

The provision in sociology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieved very well in 2003 in both the AS and A Level examinations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and results in very good progress in lessons.
- Standards of work seen in Year 13 are well above average.
- Pupils' views of the provision of sociology and their attitudes in lessons are very positive.
- There is a lack of ICT resources to extend and support pupils' learning.

Commentary

184. Standards seen in Year 13 are well above average. Pupils achieve very well and have developed a very good understanding of traditional and contemporary ideas. Pupils' average points score and the percentage of higher grade passes have generally been above the national average in recent years. Results dipped in 2002 and were in line with the national average. However, in 2003 results improved considerably with an increased average points score well above national average. This represented very good achievement especially since none had studied the subject at GCSE before joining the Sixth Form.

185. Teaching and learning are very good and result in very good progress in lessons. Teachers have a very good up-to-date command of the subject and a genuine enthusiasm, which ensure that pupils are challenged to think sociologically and to refer to appropriate research. As a result, they are also growing in confidence and being very well prepared for their examinations. Lessons are demanding but a variety of structured activities ensure that pupils are engaged and deepening their knowledge and understanding of the common themes across the topics they study. This approach was also helpful when introducing the theory of social capital theory to Year 13 pupils. Very effective use of traditional resources enlivens lessons and provides pupils with the background knowledge and understanding required to attain higher grades. Very good quality marking, particularly of essays, is much appreciated by pupils because they are told what they need to do to improve. Their very positive views of the subject and good working relationships in the classroom result in a very positive learning atmosphere. On occasion, there could be a little more use of directed questions to ensure that all contribute fully.

186. The subject is very enthusiastically led and managed. There is a very good focus on ensuring continuing very good provision along with the further improvement of standards. There is, however, a lack of ICT resources in the subject to support and develop the quality of pupils' learning further. Sociology was not reported on at the previous inspection.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards attained at A and AS Level are average although over a third of pupils achieve the highest grades A and B.
- Pupils experience a good range of activities, especially in Year 12, but too much is done for them.
- Pupils' achievement varies widely especially in Year 13 where there is some inconsistency in their attitudes to learning.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively.
- The quality of assessment is good. Marking of essays is very thorough and constructive.

Commentary

187. Psychology is a popular subject in the Sixth Form. Attainment at both A and AS Level is consistently average. Almost all pass, with over a third achieving the top two grades. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but varies widely. The quality of much of the written work seen is very good, but pupils' responses to questions in class indicate a wide range in the level of their understanding of psychological theories. Achievement in one Year 13 class is being adversely affected by the poor attitudes of a minority of pupils, who have adjusted poorly to a change of teacher. In contrast, some articulate Year 12 pupils display an excellent understanding of some difficult psychological issues. Some of these pupils have produced high quality additional revision notes. They are very well motivated, which is resulting in their producing very good essays. Whilst most of the high achieving pupils observed are girls, with boys appearing to be less well motivated, a greater proportion of boys achieved the highest grades at A Level in 2003. The reverse was true at AS Level.

188. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory with some good features. Most pupils appreciate the good use of discussion in lessons and value the opportunity to debate issues. Especially in Year 12, pupils are experiencing a good range of activities. However, too much is being presented to them, which results in some remaining too passive. Some Year 13 pupils, in contrast to their less motivated peers, welcome that they are expected to do more for themselves this year. Most lessons follow a common format, with good quality questioning at the start to check on pupils' understanding of the previous lesson's work. Whilst some pupils display an excellent grasp of issues, others remain silent. Good quality hand-outs are provided, but teaching tends to be restricted to sharing the content of the hand-outs, rather than emphasising the main ideas and expanding upon them. Opportunities for pupils to research topics and to make presentations are too infrequent. Year 12 pupils recognise the value of a collaborative revision task they had undertaken. They understand that they learn best when carrying out research and then having to explain the topic to others. However, generally there is too little collaborative work and opportunities to present the findings of individual research are few.

189. The quality of assessment is good. Pupils are set regular essay tasks and tests. Marking of essays is very thorough and constructive. Pupils are given clear advice on what they should do to improve their work. Good use is made of model answers. More motivated pupils make good use of ICT to keep up to date with research.

190. Psychology is part of the humanities faculty. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new teacher is evaluating the scheme of work and making appropriate adjustments to the organisation of the course. She is reviewing the order of modules and the timing of examination entries, in order to maximise achievement whilst providing an improved learning experience for pupils.

Government and Politics

Provision in government and politics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching promotes good learning and achievement.
- Good management ensures that assessment and other procedures have been developed well.
- Pupils use computers well for research but the subject has limited access to ICT resources.
- There are not yet enough opportunities for independent learning.

Commentary

191. In 2003 standards were close to the national average at A Level and all pupils passed. However, because of frequent changes in teaching staff few pupils reached the higher grades and some underachieved. Results were better at AS Level and all pupils have continued with the subject. Standards are at the national average in Year 13 and continuity in teaching staff ensures that pupils are now achieving well. The subject is increasing in popularity; the present Year 12 is a much larger group and attainment is above the national average.

192. Because teaching is effective pupils in Year 13 show good knowledge of complex issues, for example the history of our relationships with the European community. They are confident in completing research tasks and in writing essays. Activities in class ensure that they keep up to date with current events. Visits to Westminster and to the law courts add a valuable extra dimension to their learning. Most pupils prepare well for lessons, plan their work well and are active in answering questions and providing information, but they do not have enough opportunity to take a leading role in lessons or develop fully independent learning skills.

193. Pupils in Year 12 showed good understanding in evaluating different types of constitution but had not had the opportunity to read valuable articles before the lesson.

194. The highest attaining pupils are able to identify the conflict between concepts such as the right to life and the availability of abortion on demand because of the level of debate and discussion within the class. Teaching promotes a good level of participation and all pupils are able to express their views well. Assessment contributes to pupils' achievement and motivation because marking is very thorough and provides detailed advice on strategies for improvement. There is a very clear focus on examination board criteria. Available resources are used well but pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT or audio-visual resources.

195. The quality of pupils' experience in the classroom is a result of good planning. Management is good and the teacher in charge of the subject has achieved a great deal in a relatively short time. The choice of options studied and the decision to take January exams are an indication of the decisive approach to leadership. There is a clear focus on raising standards now that stability and continuity in teaching have been achieved. The subject was not reported on in the previous inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

There were no focus subjects in this area.

BUSINESS

Business education is taught at GCE A Level and also for the AVCE. The focus subject was business studies.

Business Studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards at A Level are well above average, and above average at AVCE.
- Teaching at A Level is good and leads to good learning.
- Very good teaching helps pupils to achieve very well in the AVCE course, because of the focus on key skills especially numeracy.
- Very effective management of the assessment and portfolio elements of the AVCE course.
- Links with local business are under-developed.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not available for pupils to use in lessons.

Commentary

196. Pupils enter AS Level business studies with above average attainment at the beginning of Year 12 and gain examination grades that are well above average. AS and A Level examination results in 2003 were well above the national average for proportions passing and gaining top grades. Results on all courses improved significantly from 2002. Both girls and boys achieved well, and sometimes very well, because their results were considerably higher than predicted. Attainment on entry to the AVCE course is well below the national average and the majority of pupils do not have C grade at GCSE in English or mathematics. Results at AVCE were above the national average in 2003 and current Year 13 pupils show a similar level of attainment.

197. In lessons and work pupils attain at above nationally expected levels, and are achieving well at A Level and very well on the AVCE course as a result of very good emphasis on literacy and numeracy. In examination course work projects Year 13 pupils show an above average awareness of gaps in the market for businesses of different types. They use ICT adequately to present their reports, including full evaluations, but not enough to analyse financial data using spreadsheets or ratio analysis. As there are no computers in the business classrooms, pupils cannot use ICT in lessons. Year 12 pupils of different ethnic groups work very well together in small groups to define key terms and measure labour productivity using formulae. Through making paper chains in a production simulation they learn essential differences between types of production method. AVCE pupils have very positive attitudes to their work because skillful teaching raises their confidence and encourages a high level of participation and inclusion.

198. Teaching and learning are good at A Level and pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning for the AVCE course are very good and pupils achieve very well. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils, very good subject expertise and enterprising methods help sustain pupils' very good attitudes to work. When pupils misunderstand marketing and financial concepts, teachers reinforce theory clearly, using topical case studies effectively. Teachers assess work very thoroughly and give pupils useful targets to help them improve. Pupils practise examination skills frequently. There are no pupils identified as gifted and talented but higher attaining pupils are fully stretched.

199. Leadership and management are very good, reflecting clear vision for improvement. Experienced specialist staff work very well together as a close-knit team. In the short time she has been in post, the co-ordinator has helped improve standards significantly and plan further improvements. Pupils' achievement is regularly monitored. More links with local businesses and greater use of ICT in lessons is planned. The AVCE co-ordinator provides very effective leadership and management and all members of the department contribute to the success of AVCE pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus subject was theatre studies.

Theatre Studies

Provision in theatre studies is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Some very powerful and imaginative practical performances using a wide range of theatrical techniques.
- Good group discussions in planning and devising performances.
- Good literacy skills and understanding of text and sub-text.
- A lack of critical evaluation in written work and confidence in using technical terminology.

Commentary

200. A very small number of pupils take AS and A Level courses, so comparison with other subjects or with similar schools is unreliable. Those who were examined in 2003 achieved a good range of A-C grades.

201. Although there are some very able pupils taking the courses, attainment on entry is below average. Standards achieved in drama at GCSE do not match the good and very good results achieved in English, resulting in considerable effort being placed on ensuring thorough understanding of basic performance skills in Year 12. Many pupils lack confidence in using the subject vocabulary and have difficulty in expressing a critical viewpoint in their written work. Standards observed are average, with strengths in practical performance work and in the quality of discussion. All pupils understand complex texts, discuss issues in a mature manner and share ideas on interpretation, producing some imaginative work. Achievement is good. Characters in plays are generally well developed, but there is a tendency to focus more on interpreting direction than in fully considering the impact of relationships between characters which should influence responses.

202. Teaching and learning are good. The newly appointed teacher has created more structure to the courses, developing skills sequentially and encouraging pupils to build on what they know. Lessons are well planned with ample opportunity for pupils to contribute ideas. The teacher has the confidence to allow pupils to think for themselves, and to steer discussion rather than influence the outcome. Written work is marked thoroughly with comprehensive feedback, which identifies not only shortcomings but also how to improve. As a consequence of good teaching, learning is good.

203. The subject is well led and managed. Administration is thorough and detailed with clear structure and focus. The scheme of work has been restructured to be more coherent and there are clear procedures for the monitoring of progress. As a very new appointment, the subject leader has yet to see the full impact of the changes made.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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