

INSPECTION REPORT

ANGLO EUROPEAN SCHOOL

Ingatestone

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115358

Head teacher : Robert Reed

Lead inspector: Grace Marriott

Dates of inspection: 22nd -26th November 2004

Inspection number: 268736

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Foundation
Age range of students: 11-18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll; 1262

School address: Willow Green
Ingatestone
Essex
Postcode: CM4 0DJ

Telephone number: 01277 354018
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs P Johnson
governors:

Date of previous April 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Anglo-European School is a mixed comprehensive school in Ingatestone, near Chelmsford, Essex. It has almost 1300 pupils on roll including a sixth form of over 300 students. It is a specialist language college_which draws its pupils from a wide area of Essex and from Greater London. It is over-subscribed. The pupils and students come from reasonably affluent families and the proportion entitled to free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also relatively low. The main needs are dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils and students come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, though most are of white UK or European heritage. The school has some pupils from Africa, South America, Asia, China and the Indian sub-continent. About fifteen percent of pupils and students speak English as an additional language, but few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has Beacon School status, has achieved the Sportsmark and the International Schools award, and is a training partner for initial teacher training with Anglia Polytechnic University. Pupils join the school and the sixth form with generally above average knowledge, skills and understanding.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
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8402	Vivien Johnston	Team inspector	English IB and A Level
3123 8	Gordon Clubb	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-16, IB and A Level
3235 2	Valerie Malcolm	Team inspector	Science 11-16
3242	Mike Newman	Team inspector	Biology IB, Chemistry A Level
3223 1	Adrian Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-16 AVCE Business
2495	Brian Munden	Team inspector	Design and technology 11-16, AVCE Information and communication technology
1449 0	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History 11-16 IB history
3234 0	Peter McKay	Team inspector	Geography 11-16
2330 7	Neil McDonough	Team inspector	Religious education 11-16, Citizenship
2501	Raye Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art 11-16
3324 2	Stephen Wall	Team inspector	French and German 11-16, IB French, A Level German
3170 1	Graeme Rudland	Team inspector	Music 11-16 and IB
3119 2	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education 11-16
2652	Robin Lomas	Team inspector	Special educational needs
3408 9	Robin Gaff	Team inspector	IB Spanish and A Level French

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Anglo-European is a very successful school which provides a very good all round education in a lively and stimulating atmosphere which gives students excellent opportunities. The international outlook is a key element in its success. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in the sixth form. Leadership and management are good, and focus strongly on providing a high quality education which enables pupils and students to achieve to the best of their ability. Students are very committed to the school and, like their parents, appreciate what it offers. Overall, the school gives good value for money. Its strengths considerably outweigh some relative weaknesses.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- GCSE and International Baccalaureate (IB) examination results are well above average and pupils and students achieved well
- Standards are very good in languages, history, physical education (PE) and citizenship
- The school has a very good sixth form
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is not adequate
- The opportunities for pupils' and students' personal development are outstanding
- The programme of visits, visitors and exchanges linked to the international work contributes strongly to pupils' and students' education
- In a few lessons teaching is not planned as well as it could be and the information about what pupils can do is not being used as well as it could be

The improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has dealt effectively with the issues raised in the last report, except for collective worship. The overall quality of education has been maintained and has improved, most notably in the sixth form curriculum and in GCSE results.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	B
*A/AS level and advanced VCE examinations	E	D	E	

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

For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students achieved similar results at the end of Year 9.

** The results of the students who take the IB examination are not included in this table and it does not, therefore, provide an accurate picture of sixth form standards.*

Pupils and students are achieving well. They join the school in Year 7 with above average standards and by Year 11 they are reaching well above average standards. Test results at the end of Year 9 are well above average, and in English and mathematics, pupils achieve at least as well as those in similar schools. In science, the standards have been well below those of similar schools. Examination results at GCSE are well above average overall. They are better than the results of similar schools. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average overall and well above average in some subjects. In Years 10 and 11, standards are well above average overall. In all years, pupils do particularly well in languages, history, physical education and citizenship. Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. Students who take the IB full diploma (about a quarter of the sixth form) achieve very well. Students taking GCE A Level tend to start their courses with lower GCSE grades than the IB students, and they generally achieve well. Current standards in the sixth form are good. They are well above average on the IB courses and are average overall on the A Level courses. At all levels girls are achieving rather better than boys.

The provision for pupils' and students' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils and students develop into mature and likeable young people who have very positive attitudes to school and participate enthusiastically in what it offers them. Their attendance is good and they behave well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good in the sixth form. In the main school, almost three quarters of the teaching seen was good and around a third was very good. In the sixth form, four out of every ten lessons were very good and over eight out of every ten lessons were good. There were no unsatisfactory sixth form lessons. The school provides a good curriculum with major strengths in languages, the international programme and in its provision for the all-round development of its pupils and students. However, the provision for ICT does not ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The school supports its pupils and students very well and provides good guidance. The school works hard to build relationships with parents and the community. These are effective in supporting pupils' and students' education and the links with the wider international community are very effective in supporting academic and personal development. Links with other schools, both in the UK and abroad are very valuable.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The head teacher provides very good leadership and he is very well supported by the leadership team. They have high aspirations for all pupils and students and are determined to maintain and improve the quality of education the school offers. The school governors provide good support. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are keen to see the school continue to improve.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents show a good level of satisfaction with the school and are supportive of its ethos and outlook. A few have concerns about behaviour and inconsistencies in the operation of school policies, such as homework. The inspection team shared the view of the vast majority of parents that the provision for pupils' and students' all round development considerably outweighs the impact of any inconsistency. Pupils and students are very positive about the school. They are being increasingly consulted over matters affecting the running of the school and feel that their views are being taken more seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

To raise standards further, the most important things the school should do to improve are

In Years 7 to 11

- Raise the quality of the less effective teaching by improving the curriculum planning, the use of assessment and the structure of lessons
- Improve the provision for ICT, particularly in Years 10 and 11

and to meet statutory requirements

- Make provision for collective worship in the main school and in the sixth form

In the sixth form

- Ensure that the less effective teaching takes account of the wider range of ability in some classes

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Anglo-European School has a very successful sixth form. Its strengths have been maintained and the curriculum now includes advanced vocational courses. Academic standards are above average in the IB and at least average in other subjects. Sixth formers have access to an exceptionally wide range of enrichment and extension activities as well as opportunities to take responsibility and develop leadership skills. The sixth form is cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- The strengths apparent in the main school also apply to the sixth form
- Teaching and learning are very good and students are achieving well
- The curriculum is very good
- In a few lessons, the needs of the wider student intake are not being met as well as they could be

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Fourteen subjects or courses were inspected and almost all other subjects were sampled. The teaching and learning in the sampled subjects were never less than good and much was very good.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	<p>English IB: Good. Results are above expectations. Students achieve well because of good teaching.</p> <p>English A Level: Satisfactory. Results are below average. Students' achievement is satisfactory, as are teaching and learning.</p> <p>French IB: Excellent. Standards are well above average. Excellent teaching is encouraging excellent learning and students are making very good progress. Oral skills are particularly strong.</p> <p>French A Level: Good. Teaching is very good. The very good use of French in lessons extends students' range of expression. Students have positive attitudes to the language and testify to the benefits of exchanges. Achievement overall is good, though a few less motivated students taking the course because a language is compulsory in the sixth form depress overall results.</p> <p>Spanish IB: Good. Teaching overall is good, with very good use of Spanish in lessons. Assessment is good. Students are given a clear idea of what they need to do to improve.</p> <p>German A Level: Good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Students make good progress because of the good teaching. Oral skills are well developed in Year 12, but are much weaker in Year 13.</p>
Mathematics	<p>IB: Good. Students achieve well because teachers use a variety of different methods to develop skills and build well upon previous learning. Standards are above average.</p> <p>A Level: Good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and students work hard in response to high expectations. Standards are above average.</p>
Science	<p>Biology IB: Very Good. Standards are above average in examinations and well above average in some lessons observed, Teaching and learning are very good.</p> <p>Chemistry A Level: Satisfactory. Standards meet A Level expectations. Teaching and learning are good, with particular strengths in practical coursework, knowledge and understanding of chemistry and the development of mathematical understanding. Student attitudes are positive and achievement is sound.</p>

Curriculum area	Evaluation
Information and communication technology	AVCE: Satisfactory. Standards are average and students make sound progress, though this has been affected by staffing changes. Teachers have good subject knowledge.
Humanities	History IB: Very Good. Very good teaching, stemming from high expectations and high levels of expertise in the subject, result in very good learning and well above average attainment. Students enjoy this course and achieve well.
Engineering	No focus subject in this area
Visual and performing arts and media	Music IB: Satisfactory. Standards attained by students are below average. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	No focus subject in this area
Business	Business AVCE: Very Good. Students achieve very well because of a strong focus on assessment, a wide variety of teaching and learning styles and good use of visits and speakers to relate the subject to the real world.
General education	No focus subject in this area

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Sixth formers benefit from being part of a lively community where the values and views of others are respected and encouraged. Students have good access to comprehensive advice and guidance. Staff know their students well and are prepared to give considerable time to providing individual support. Assessment is sound and clearly designed to help students meet examination requirements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership of the sixth form is very good, and day-to-day management is effective. The growth in the size of the sixth form is being managed well to ensure that the courses provided are appropriate and viable. The improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students have very positive attitudes to school and appreciate what it offers. They feel it is caring and supportive, though a few felt that they had not had as much information as they needed about university choices, particularly the timetable for making applications. The school has acknowledged this.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in, subjects and courses

Standards are well above average by the end of Year 11 and this is reflected in very good GCSE results. Pupils are achieving well overall, both in terms of their standard of work when they joined the school and their results in the Year 9 tests. In the sixth form, students taking the full IB diploma achieve very well and results are well above average. A Level results are broadly average and students achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average and the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades has improved
- International Baccalaureate (IB) results are well above average
- Pupils and students do particularly well in languages, history, physical education and citizenship
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory
- Standards of literacy and numeracy are very good

Commentary

1. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with above average skills in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in the humanities. In most practical subjects entry standards are in line with the national average, though above average in music.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.2 (36.7)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	39.9 (39.1)	35.4 (34.7)
science	36.4 (36.0)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 188 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2002.

2. Overall, current standards at the end of Year 9 are above average in most subjects and well above in French and music. In French and citizenship, pupils' achievement is very good and in English, music, geography, history physical education and German pupils are achieving well. In other subjects, including mathematics, and science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In ICT it is unsatisfactory even though standards are average, because pupils do not spend enough time using ICT. The results of Year 9 tests, in 2003, in English and mathematics, were as good as those of similar schools but not in science where they were well below.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	77 (74)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	42.8 (41.8)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 183 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ

3. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are seldom less than above average, and well above average in English, mathematics, history, modern languages, music, physical education and citizenship. This is very much in line with GCSE results where the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades has improved by about 10 per cent since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve very well in modern languages, physical education and citizenship. Their achievement is good in most other subjects, though not in ICT where their achievement is still unsatisfactory.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, although their progress in art and information technology is unsatisfactory. Those who have English as an additional language make very good progress in the withdrawal sessions and overall, achieve as well as their classmates, and in ICT they are among the highest attainers.
5. Standards of literacy are well above the national expectation and pupils use their skills well. They are confident speakers, read with understanding and they write well. They have good research skills. Standards of numeracy are similarly very good and pupils are able to apply their mathematical knowledge in a variety of different contexts. In ICT, pupils have average skills but do not have enough opportunities to use these in most subjects.

Sixth form

6. Students enter the sixth form with above average attainment, overall. Those starting the IB diploma course have above average, and often well above average, GCSE results. Those starting A Level or AVCE courses tend to have average or even slightly below average, GCSE results. In general, students are achieving well on the A Level and the AVCE courses and very well on the IB courses. Examination results are above average for the IB courses and average for most of the A Level courses. Current standards are broadly in line with examination results.
7. Fourteen subjects or courses were inspected in depth. Achievement is excellent on the IB French course and very good in IB biology and in AVCE business studies. It is good in IB English, history, Spanish and mathematics and in A Level French, German and mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory in A Level English and chemistry, IB music and AVCE ICT. In the subjects sampled, students' achievement was rarely less than good and it was very good in IB Russian, A Level economics, physical education and art. In general, the difference in achievement reflects the difference in the overall quality of teaching, which was rather better in the IB courses and also to some extent, students' motivation on the compulsory language courses.

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	89.3 (91.1)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A - B grades	23.3 (27.3)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	184.7 (197.5)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 113 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2002.

Standards in the International Baccalaureate Diploma at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of students who achieved all their studies	93 (100)	89.9 (89.5)

There were 113 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2002.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good, which, with their good attendance and behaviour, makes a significant difference to their achievement. Exclusions are rare. Pupils' personal qualities are fostered remarkably well by an outstanding ethos that impressively brings their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness to life. Improvement has been good because strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have an exceptional sense of social responsibility, cultural awareness and open-mindedness reflecting the way their experiences are enriched by the school's ethos and international dimension
- Pupils are very keen and willing learners who rise admirably to the challenges they are given by inspirational teaching in the best lessons
- Sixth form students have a very well developed curiosity, openness and independence which underpins their desire to learn and a mature approach to sixth form study
- Sixth form students are confident and have a remarkable sense of responsibility to others and of the value of diversity
- On occasion, instances of slightly disruptive behaviour interfere with learning, usually when a few pupils are vexed by dull teaching that fails to fine-tune work imaginatively to their individual needs
- Although pupils attend regularly, and as punctually as transport allows, they do not always reach lessons and registrations promptly, partly because staff expectations are inconsistent

Commentary

8. The school is crystal clear about its aim to enrich high quality education with a strong European and international dimension grounded in cultural understanding. It achieves this through vibrant overseas links and study visits. As a result, pupils flourish in a setting where they are expected to be open to new ideas, different cultural traditions, varied ways of life and the possibilities of what they can do if they try. It encourages pupils of all backgrounds to take risks, explore unfamiliar cultures and ideas and learn to become independent. Many pupils praised the "the international view and theme to the school" and high levels of mutual respect. "I like the fact that we have a wide range of people from all sorts of places giving variety to the school and culture, making it an interesting place to be". Their enjoyment of learning languages and other subjects is much enhanced by excellent opportunities to study in other countries for short periods. These give first hand experience of different ways of life and help pupils to shape searching questions on matters such as the pros and cons of democracy.
9. Pupils know that "there are lots of opportunities to do well" so are very keen to take advantage of them. Unusually, many younger pupils wished for additional work to do at home, particularly "more worthwhile homework to be set regularly", reflecting their strong desire to learn. So they relish lessons where teachers "give you hard but exciting pieces of work". They show superb attitudes and concentration when activities are planned imaginatively to develop their skills, as in an excellent Year 8 rugby lesson on principles of attacking and defensive play.
10. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds are highly motivated and usually do what is asked of them with goodwill, even if teaching is less than sparkling. Pupils feel that most examples of misbehaviour, though relatively rare, are linked to how well they are taught. A few younger boys, in particular, are less mature and well-motivated than most, so when teaching does not fire their enthusiasm and hold their attention from the start of a lesson, their interest flags. As a result they misbehave, often drawing in others who are bored or do not understand clearly the purpose of the lesson or what to do. So pupils in such classes comment "I don't think I'm being well taught in some subjects – many pupils disrupt the class not allowing the rest to work properly". Outside lessons, behaviour is very civilised and calm, as most pupils behave very well, are very courteous to visitors and set a very good example for others.

11. No reliable information on attendance is available for the last reporting year because of industrial action that has prevented the school from providing valid data on absences for the past two years. However, school figures that have not been checked and reported in the usual way suggest that the school has fewer absences than found nationally, with a particularly low level of unauthorised absence. This is because pupils want to come to school regularly and take advantage of all the opportunities offered. The school recognises that it has to strengthen its procedures for recording and checking absences to ensure that its duty of care to pupils is met in full. It knows that absence patterns must be identified quickly so swift action prevents individuals from falling behind and doing less well than everyone else.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	840	19	
White – Irish	7	1	
White – any other White background	201	6	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8		
Mixed – White and Black African	4		
Mixed – White and Asian	29	3	
Mixed – any other mixed background	47		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3		
Black or Black British – African	18	1	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5		
Chinese	14		
Any other ethnic group	20		
No ethnic group recorded	5		

Exclusions in the last school year

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

Sixth form

12. As in the main school, students are very keen to take advantage of what the school offers so they are highly motivated with very good attitudes to independent study. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory. Students behave very well and show impressive degrees of maturity. As a result they do very well at school.
13. In general, students, including those new to the school, have highly developed independent study skills and are very committed to their courses. The school constantly encourages them to debate difficult issues such as the morality of specific actions, human rights and duties, whether killing is ever justified and the impact of globalisation on the environment. It results in intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and a capacity for questioning that have a striking influence on students' own development and their approach to learning. This is seen clearly in the quality of debate in subjects such as history and modern foreign languages, including examples of scintillating discussion conducted in French. Students on all types of sixth form programme benefit from the international dimension and outward-looking ethos of the school, which prompt everyone to think, to be open and receptive to new ideas and to aim high. They value the way the school "allows me to develop into my teens with maturity and knowledge".
14. Students respond impressively to the school's very high expectations of them as responsible members of a global community. They thrive on chances to help younger pupils, the elderly and needy children here and overseas, particularly in India, where a school for boys benefits from students' fund-raising. Sixth form students have exceptional

opportunities to participate in cultural exchanges and activities including World Challenge expeditions to Peru and Pakistan, so they anticipate eagerly “the trip to Namibia (2005)”. They are proud of the school, its sense of community and “the variety in pupils – background, race, interests”. Their drive to help others and serve the immediate and wider community reflects the school’s success.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	n/a	School data :	n/a
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school is providing a very good all-round education. The teaching is good overall and very good in the sixth form. The curriculum is good and the opportunities for extension and enrichment are outstanding. The school takes very good care of its pupils and students and provides them with good advice and support.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. In the school as a whole, almost three-quarters of the teaching seen was graded good or better and in the sixth form over eight out of every ten lessons were graded good or better and four out of every ten were very good or excellent. The high proportion of consistently good and very good teaching is the main reason for the success of the students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic
- Teachers value and use pupils’ contributions
- Activities build on previous work with a variety of tasks and well-structured worksheets
- Well-structured tasks of increasing complexity enable pupils to grasp difficult concepts
- Pupils and students are encouraged to develop very good analytical skills
- In a few lessons, behaviour was not well managed and this affected learning
- Some lessons were not well enough planned and structured and pupils did not understand the purpose of the lesson
- The use of assessment and performance data by subject leaders and teachers is inconsistent, though very good in history and physical education and the sixth form vocational business course
- In a few sixth form lessons the teaching, though satisfactory was not as well adjusted to the needs of some students as it could have been

Commentary

15. In the good and very good lessons in all year groups teachers displayed very good subject knowledge and were keen to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with their pupils. Lesson aims were shared with pupils so that they knew what was expected of them and the lessons were well structured. The varied teaching styles which including whole class, individual, paired and group work kept lessons moving at a brisk pace and motivated pupils to work hard and to enjoy what they were learning. In most classes, teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils and give good oral feedback to individuals.

16. The activities moved learning on from simple to complex tasks in a logical progression which pupils understood. In a very good German lesson in Year 11, the structure of the lesson enabled pupils to construct progressively more complex sentences accurately, using different tenses. Questioning was carefully targeted to identify and meet individual needs and to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for the range of pupils in the class. The quality of questioning challenged pupils to think critically and developed their analytical skills and their ability to express their ideas in depth. The contributions the pupils made were clearly valued and used to develop discussion further. In an excellent physical education lesson in Year 8, the use of ICT enabled pupils to develop a better understanding of the principles of attack and defence in rugby, which they then applied to their own game. Their evaluation of each other's work was very good. In an excellent history lesson in Year 9, pupils enthusiastically presented their individual analysis of documents to the class. This developed into a very good discussion in which pupils were keen to offer their ideas. In a very good citizenship lesson in Year 11, the teacher used a role-play exercise very skilfully to give pupils the experience of taking part in an election. Pupils enjoyed the activity, but also took it very seriously and produced some challenging questions for the 'candidates'.
17. Some of the features of the good and very good lessons were present in the satisfactory lessons, but in these the lesson objectives were not made clear to pupils and the level of challenge was not as well matched to the range of needs in the class. At times the work was too easy. On a few occasions teachers did not deal firmly enough with behaviour which was irritating rather than seriously disruptive, but nevertheless took time away from teaching and learning.
18. The use of assessment information by middle managers varies. For example, in history and in the physical education courses there is a very strong focus on ensuring that pupils have accurate and regular information about their progress and how they can improve. Teachers' marking is diagnostic and a key component in the very good progress and achievement pupils make in these subjects. The information pupils are given enables them to use their time wisely outside of lessons and supports independent work very well. Day-to-day measures are supported by very effective departmental systems. Records allow subject leaders to keep a close watch on how individuals and groups of pupils are performing and to act swiftly if problems arise.
19. However in most subjects, the use of information is too dependent on individual teachers. Some use assessment information effectively to plan lessons which are closely matched to pupils' needs and their marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve. Other teachers do not use assessment as effectively. As a result, pupils may know what levels they have reached, but they are not always sure what this means or what they need to do to improve. A minority of teachers do not have a secure grasp, for example, of National Curriculum levels or how pupils can be challenged to reach the highest A* GCSE grades.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well supported. The work of learning support assistants is generally effective, particularly in lessons jointly planned with the teacher. In a Year 7 science lesson, the assistant successfully balanced judicious intervention with a pupil who has a statement of special educational need, with additional support for some lower attainers. This was an efficient way of enhancing the achievement of a group of pupils, and was possible because the assistant knew the lesson content beforehand as well as the needs of individuals. In the Key Stage 4 Learning Support option, very good teaching is effective in enabling pupils to overcome their barriers to learning.

Their basic literacy skills are enhanced and their anxiety about exams is reduced. As a result, their achievement in subjects is greatly enhanced.

21. In some subjects, teaching is successfully matched to pupils' individual learning needs. For example, in geography resources are modified to take account of difficulties in reading or understanding, while in physical education questions are pitched at the level of understanding of individual pupils. In science, in Years 7 to 9, the logical progression of tasks shapes pupils' learning. Sometimes, however, teachers were less aware of needs, particularly if they were emotional or behavioural and had not planned accordingly. This led to slower progress and sometimes to behaviour which hindered the learning of other pupils.
22. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in withdrawal sessions where the work is carefully matched to individual and group needs and they were clearly enjoying the lessons and making rapid progress. The activities are varied to maintain interest and structured to build up their confidence in speaking, reading and writing English. Regular assessment is used both to measure progress and plan future work. In lessons, as with pupils with special educational needs, the support is very dependent on the skill of individual teachers and on a few occasions, teachers were unsure of the best approaches to use. The specialist staff are providing guidance for individual staff on request.

Sixth Form

23. Teaching is very good in the sixth form. Over three-quarters of the lessons seen were graded good or better. The strengths evident in Years 7 to 11 are even more evident in the sixth form. In the subjects inspected in depth, teaching was particularly good in modern languages, history, biology and business studies, it was good in most other subjects and satisfactory in ICT, chemistry and music. In an excellent Year 12 French lesson, students discussed topical and sensitive issues confidently and fluently. They questioned and evaluated each other's views in a sophisticated yet sympathetic manner. In AVCE business studies in Year 13, the individualised teaching was developing students' learning very effectively. The challenging questioning helped students to develop good analytical skills. Sixth form staff have very considerable subject expertise and have a very good understanding of the demands of the advanced courses. In a very good Year 12 biology lesson on genetics, the teacher's very clear explanations enabled the students to achieve very good standards.
24. Teachers expect students to work hard and achieve well and are very willing to give of their time to support individual students who may be finding the courses more difficult. There are no really major weaknesses in the teaching though there are two areas which are not as strong as other aspects. On some occasions on A Level courses, the teaching styles had not been adjusted enough to take account of the wider range of ability in the group. Also in relation to assessment, as in the main school the use of assessment varies and is inconsistent across and within subjects and courses. However, the combination of students' very good attitudes to study, the individual support and the good or very good feedback they receive, for example in the advanced vocational business course and in language courses, help students achieve well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 193 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (2.5%)	53 (27%)	81 (42%)	48 (25%)	5 (2.5%)	1(0.5%)	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. These may not total 100% because of rounding up or down.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities for pupils are outstanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The language college and international school provision permeate the whole curriculum
- Citizenship provision is very good and makes a major contribution to the personal development of the pupils
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities is well-supported
- Most pupils to experience at least one foreign visit and a significant number spend a longer period studying abroad
- The quality of curriculum planning varies between and within subjects and in some subjects the schemes of work do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers
- Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory and resources are below the national average
- The breadth of the experience and opportunities open to the sixth formers is outstanding
- The IB provides significant development for the future life of the individual students
- The requirement that all sixth formers study a language is a barrier to some achieving their goals

Commentary

25. As a language college, all pupils study at least two languages throughout Years 7 to 11. In Years 10 and 11 these languages include the option of studying Japanese or Russian as well as the more usual European languages. In these later years some gifted pupils can choose to study a third language, whilst a very small number are withdrawn from the second language to support their literacy skills. All subjects support the language college ethos substantially. In the first two weeks in school, the Year 7 pupils have an induction course through their normal timetable that focuses on the European and international dimensions of the separate subjects. In history and geography, some lessons are taught in a modern language. For example, a Year 8 group study population migration in French. The school is beginning to develop more vocationally orientated courses and the introduction of the applied GCSE in science in Year 10 is a good example of this.
26. The quality of curriculum planning, though good overall, varies between subjects. It is very good in physical education, geography and technology. However, schemes of work in other subjects do not always give new or less experienced teachers enough guidance. The implementation of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy has become more important to the curriculum development this year, but is still somewhat patchy. There was not enough evidence to make a secure judgement about the provision in religious education, but the time allocation in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form is relatively low. The main weakness in the curriculum is in the provision of ICT which does not ensure that all pupils in Year 7 to 11 receive their statutory entitlement. They do not get enough opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum.
27. Pupils with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language have access to the whole curriculum. The work of the learning support assistants and the teaching in withdrawal groups help to ensure that they make progress at a similar rate to other pupils. The use of subject-specific targets by teaching staff for these pupils is satisfactory overall, but more variable.
28. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and includes all the required elements of drugs and sex education. The citizenship programme is

particularly noteworthy. It is well planned in each year group and provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. Careers education and advice, together with work experience in Year 11, provide very good preparation for further study and the world of work. Some work experience placements occur abroad, mainly in Europe, but have been as far away as New Zealand.

29. The school offers a wide and varied extra-curricular programme within which the international dimension is outstanding. Over 700 pupils travelled abroad with the school last year including 500 being involved in exchanges. For a number of years the school has run extended exchanges where pupils work in a foreign school for as long as eight weeks. This year they are running such visits to Reims in France and Frankfurt in Germany. Pupils are also able to study a minority language, for example, Japanese or Latin out of school hours. The Latin is an on-line study programme. A wide variety of sporting, leisure and cultural activities are also provided. Music, drama and sports clubs are all well supported and the school takes part in competitive matches with other schools in a wide variety of sports. Many subjects provide drop-in sessions and clubs including English, mathematics and science.
30. Pupils who are gifted or talented have been identified and have access to a number of experiences as extra-curricular activities. The science department takes a group to the Christmas lectures to extend their learning. However, the school has already identified the need to develop a programme to further extend the gifted and talented pupils within the classroom.
31. The school works hard to involve its local and extended community. For example, languages staff visit local primary schools to teach Year 5 and 6 pupils. Last year over 800 pupils were involved in this programme and some primary school staff were encouraged to deliver some of the lessons jointly.
32. The accommodation at the school, overall, is satisfactory but varies greatly. Some has been recently built or refurbished and provides a good learning environment. Other areas are less welcoming or maintained. The accommodation for design technology, music and physical education is unsatisfactory. Overall resources for the school are good. There is a good match of staff to the subjects they teach. Resources to support the curriculum vary with science, languages, geography and special needs being good and ICT being unsatisfactory. The number of computers for pupil use in school is below that normally expected.
33. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The curriculum breadth has been maintained. New courses have been introduced, such as applied science and citizenship. Different foreign trips have been fully planned. Curriculum development has supported a continuation of the improvement in standards.

Sixth Form

34. The curriculum is very good overall. A comprehensive range of courses meets the academic and vocational aspirations of students. These ensure continuity in students' learning and promote good achievement. Over 80 percent of Year 11 pupils stay on into the sixth form and many others come from a wide geographical area to join it. Almost all students who start sixth form courses complete them successfully. The school is relatively unusual in offering the International Baccalaureate as well as AS Level, A Level and AVCE courses. Students can choose to study a mix of IB, AS Level, A Level and AVCE courses. The flexibility of choice for the individual student is very good and very well supported by careers guidance in Year 11. All students also take physical education, a language and

follow the IB creativity, action and service (CAS) programme. CAS incorporates citizenship as well as personal and social education. By the end of Year 13, all students have taken the Diplôme du Citoyen which builds on the very good experience of citizenship in Years 7 to 11. The curriculum offered to the students means that they have a wide experience throughout the sixth form and this provides them with significant development for their future life and career.

35. Careers advice is provided as part of the CAS programme. Students have individual counselling advice when requested. They are supported in their completion of personal statements. Many take the opportunity to visit universities to experience the lifestyle and identify courses that may interest them in their future learning. Some students choose to take a further Work Experience placement to improve their understanding of the world at work. Some of these placements are taken abroad.
36. The inclusion of the study of a language for all students at sixth form is appropriate for most students, but for some it has created a barrier. A few students find this an added pressure on their workload and resent the time they spend on the language course. The school has recognised this issue and is seeking alternative courses that will benefit these students.
37. Curricular provision in most subjects inspected is at least good with languages, citizenship and history being very good. Physics is learnt through an interactive course delivered through the intranet. Video-conferencing takes place during some of the lessons in psychology. Music and ICT were satisfactory. With the recent change in the timing of the day, the time allocated to each IB standard course is 3 hours over a fortnight. This does not meet the expectations stated in the guidance provided by the syllabus.
38. The opportunities for enrichment offered to the sixth form are outstanding. They can take part in a full range of sporting and cultural activities. Opportunities to visit and study abroad are varied and meet the needs of the individual. A visit to Namibia is an excellent example of a community service.
39. The teaching staff are very well matched to the curriculum as are the support staff. During the inspection one of the team of technical staff in science supported a temporary teacher to enable a biology group to continue their investigatory work. Resources overall in the sixth form provide good support for the students' learning. The accommodation for the sixth form is satisfactory. However, these areas were designed for smaller numbers than currently use them. There are small seminar rooms provided in a separate area of the school which both staff and students find useful.
40. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good. Some innovative curriculum development has taken place in the sixth form. The introduction of AVCE courses has added a vocational element and added greatly to enterprise and work-related learning.

Care, guidance and support (main school and sixth form)

The support, care and guidance given to pupils and students are very good overall. Pupils and students are increasingly consulted over matters affecting the running of the school and are beginning to feel that their views are taken seriously.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good throughout the school
- Child protection systems and procedures are good
- Induction arrangements are very good
- The monitoring of academic development is good
- The health and safety procedures for international visits and exchanges are very good

- Advice on careers and further study is good, though a few sixth formers felt in need of more support in the early stages of making university applications
- Though the school health and safety procedures are very good, in some departments they are not implemented as well as they might be

Commentary

41. Pupils and students are very positive about the way they are treated by staff, who know them well. The very good relationships with staff are very apparent to visitors. Pupils and students say they feel safe at the school. The child protection arrangements are very clearly set out, and are implemented in accordance with local requirements. The procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and students when they go on international exchanges are very good and amended where necessary in the light of experience. General health and safety procedures are also very good and risk assessments at a whole-school level, are carried out thoroughly. In some departments, however, the procedures, including risk assessments, are not implemented as thoroughly as they should be.
42. The school has developed a creative approach to monitoring pupils' development. There is rigorous analysis of predicted and actual National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades. The Achievement Team's reviews of pupils' progress link academic and personal achievement. This enables the school to take an holistic view of individuals and their needs, based on an analysis of data about attitudes and behaviour as well as progress in subjects. In the case of a Year 9 group, this led to action by the school to address behaviour and academic weaknesses through a combined approach of mentoring of individuals and support for teaching.
43. Pupils say they are given a very good introduction to the school in which sixth formers play an important role. Sixth form staff are very supportive in assisting pupils make the transition from Year 11 to Year 12. Tutors act as personal advisers to pupils, so that all have a named teacher to whom they can go for support and guidance. On the basis of the data provided by the Achievement Team, tutors advise individuals in mid-year guidance interviews on their developing strengths and weaknesses, and, in co-ordination with the Connexions adviser, on their career options. Some sixth form students feel that information and advice about the process of application for higher education were given too late. The school recognises this and has taken steps to be more proactive. Pupils and students feel they are increasingly being consulted, for example through the school council, known as the Student Voice. Some pupils are uncertain that their views are acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community (main school and sixth form)

The school has a good partnership with parents, very good links with the community as a whole and exceptional links with its educational partners in Europe and the wider world. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. All these partnerships contribute significantly to pupils' personal and academic achievement. Strengths in the school's links with parents and the wider community identified by the last inspection have been maintained well, so improvement has been good.

Main strengths

- The school's partnership with the wider international community, including schools in Europe that work with it to offer an imaginative exchange programme, is of outstanding benefit to pupils
- The school makes every effort to work with and for the immediate and wider community, particularly through its support for language teaching, sports leadership and charity work locally
- Pupils join the school from diverse and scattered places because of the school's special character, so it has to work hard to build working relationships with their parents, which it does well

Commentary

44. The school lives its aim of enriching the European and international dimension of pupils' education and experiences through an extensive programme of study visits and exchanges,

particularly with schools in France and Germany. These are exceptionally well planned to give all pupils who want to go an invaluable chance to taste life and practise the language of another country. As a parent wrote "I value highly the visits programme and the European ethos of the school – the impact this has on the taught curriculum is compensated for by the experiences the students gain through their full participation in the programme." The maturity of older pupils who have made full use of the visits programme is marked. Sixth form students comment effusively on the wonderful opportunities that have helped them become self-reliant, mature and open-minded, such as the chance of work experience in Frankfurt, involvement in model United Nations conferences and inspiring visits to art galleries in Paris and Amsterdam. These rewarding visits and the outstanding partnerships that enable long exchanges to take place give pupils exceptional chances to develop skills and qualities priceless for academic and personal achievement.

45. The school's commitment to a cosmopolitan intake, respect for diversity and belief in wide-ranging social responsibility have led local people to question its commitment to the immediate community. In fact, the school has worked very hard to welcome and include local people in its work and to open up facilities for community use. It has particularly strong local links through sport, the performing arts and the 'service' element of the International Baccalaureate. Sixth form students organise a lively Christmas party for local, elderly people. They work with primary school pupils as part of their Community Sports Leader Award programme. Pupils have very good links with local sports clubs where talents in rugby, hockey, netball and cricket flourish. Individual sixth formers use initiative to organise fund-raising and projects of benefit to local citizens such as 'Litterbusters'. Through very good links with local primary schools made possible by the school's specialist status as a language college, primary pupils have admirable opportunities to start to learn foreign languages early. Links with local schools and Writtle College are strong and help to ensure smooth transition for pupils from one school to another.
46. Relationships with parents are effective, contributing well to pupils' learning and students' academic and personal achievement. A few parents from the local area find the emphasis on languages and pattern of option choices too rigid but for most, this emphasis and linked opportunities for study visits in Europe are a key factor in their choice of school. Most parents find the school very responsive to their concerns, although one or two feel that replies to issues raised have been "judgmental and lacking empathy". Communication with parents is generally good, as a wide range of information is sent home regularly, most of it easy to read. The school recognises the urgency of updating the web-site and improving the quality of other information for parents, particularly about homework and pupils' progress, so that they feel fully involved in their children's learning and the life of the school. Reports do not give a clear picture of exactly how well individuals are doing and what specific action they must take to do even better, subject by subject, except in history and usually in languages. The school accepts that it must try extra hard to keep in touch with parents who are far more widely dispersed than usual. Parents think that the school is doing a good job and are supportive of it. "From the very first visit, we were impressed by the evident pride the pupils had in their own school. This pride still exists, driven by a combination of good and enthusiastic teaching, strong leadership and the school's culture".

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership is very good and the management is good, overall. The head teacher provides very strong and determined leadership and he is very well supported by the senior leadership team. Together with other managers they have high aspirations for all pupils and students and are determined to maintain and improve the quality of education offered by the school. The school governors provide good support. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and keen to see the school maintain high standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher's leadership is visionary and charismatic. He places a clear focus on maximising student potential, and the development of the global dimension
- The governors are very well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school
- The strong and efficient senior leadership team ably support the head teacher in giving a clear lead to the school's work
- In its daily work, the school effectively demonstrates that it is a harmonious community with a strong corporate ethos
- The strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals
- The leadership of subjects is good, overall, with strong features in history, modern foreign languages, design and technology, citizenship, physical education and business studies
- The school offers a good programme of in-house support and training opportunities
- The school has a clear organisational structure and well established whole-school policies, but systems and procedures at subject level are inconsistent across the departments
- Performance data is well used by senior leaders to set whole-school targets, but is not being used consistently by all teachers or subject leaders as a tool for monitoring progress

Commentary

47. The head teacher's commitment to the school and the wider community is a significant factor in the very good quality of provision. In clearly articulating a vision that is shared by governors, staff, parents and students he has helped the school to acquire a well deserved standing as a provider of high quality education with a global perspective. The school's reputation extends well beyond the local area so that significant numbers of pupils and students are drawn from a very wide catchment area, including central London. A strong and efficient senior leadership team ably supports him in giving a clear lead to the school's work. In its daily work, the school effectively demonstrates that it is a harmonious community with a strong corporate ethos. School leaders are committed to running a school which gives all pupils and students equal access to the opportunities it provides.
48. The governing body is effective. Governors are very supportive of the school and the head teacher. They value the ethos of the school and its international dimension. Governors take their responsibilities seriously, notably by helping to shape the school's priorities for improvement, monitoring the school's spending and working in close partnership with the head. They have a good understanding about how well the school is performing and have established appropriate procedures and committees to ensure that they fulfil their role. As 'critical friends', they are well aware of the distinction between strategic overview and day-to-day management of the school. They have good links with parents and the local community. The governors meet their legal obligations except for the provision of ICT in Years 10 and 11, and the lack of a policy for collective worship.
49. The leadership team is knowledgeable about teaching and the curriculum. They make good use of self-evaluation, and are successfully involved in the overall monitoring and evaluation of teaching. The school-wide programme of academic reviews is largely effective. Good use is made of the analysis of performance data in planning and setting priorities. Performance management is generally well used to provide teachers with realistic

objectives that help the school move forwards. Overall, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses and is taking appropriate and well-prioritised action to remedy shortcomings in the management of subject teams. Talented middle managers have been identified to engage in peer mentoring and to help raise classroom practice, for example, through the application of national strategies.

50. The current school development plans clearly identify a range of appropriate priorities. These include putting learning and teaching at its heart; developing the whole person in an internationalist climate; pursuing excellence in leadership and management in order to achieve the best standards and performance. The school aims to review these plans regularly and disseminate them to staff. However, they are not yet reflected in all faculty and subject development plans.
51. The school gathers a lot of information about pupils' achievements prior to their entry and while they are in the school. This helps senior staff form a clearer picture of how effective the school is raising standards and it informs whole school and individual targets. These whole-school targets have become increasingly accurate and reliable, particularly for predicting GCSE examinations and in raising questions about performance in individual subjects, where pupils achieve particularly well and where performance might be improved. The collection of data is more advanced and gives a more rounded picture of pupils' achievements than the sixth form data. The achievement team is aware of this and taking steps to deal with it.
52. The leadership of the faculties is effective overall and has a positive impact upon pupils' and students' achievements. Subject leaders are generally well supported and challenged by the heads of faculty and the leadership team, though this has not been fully effective in ensuring consistency of practice. This is evident in the variation between subjects in the quality of planning and in the use made of assessment information. The leadership of subjects is good overall, with strong features in history, modern foreign languages, design and technology, citizenship, physical education and business studies. Good teamwork, thorough curriculum planning and good use of performance data are characteristics of the most effective subject management. The best subject leaders manage developments well and keep up-to-date and well informed about how well their intentions are being realised by observing teachers at work, monitoring pupils' and students' work and analysing results.
53. The school provides training of quality to newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers. It also supports established staff wishing to update and improve their skills and expertise by offering a good programme of in-house support, together with external training opportunities. Current plans incorporate training in ICT skills for both teaching and administrative staff. An advanced skills teacher plays a pivotal role in offering outreach support in languages to feeder primary schools.
54. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis as a result of effective teamwork from committed non-teaching as well as teaching staff. Administrative, technical and maintenance staff are efficient. The school has good systems in place for financial management once educational priorities have been determined. The systems take account of principles of best value. The school's Internal Procedures Manual outlines clear guidelines for financial management and this is contained within the staff policy directory. The Responsible Officer meets regularly with the head teacher to monitor the efficiency and accuracy of financial resources. The school's deficit budget arising from funding changes when the school moved from grant maintained to foundation status, has been a barrier to improving the curriculum, the physical environment and further development of the workforce reform agenda. However, through careful management the school is on

target to repay its loan earlier than originally planned. This will allow for maintenance, curriculum and workforce spending having a priority within the new development plan. The management of the international dimension is exemplary. Each year, pupils and students participate in a broad range of overseas and national visits to support their development as active and effective global citizens.

Leadership and management in the sixth form

55. The leadership of the sixth form is very good, and day-to-day management is effective. There is a clear determination to bring the world into the school, and sixth formers not only benefit from the extra freedom associated with a college type environment, but also find themselves in a lively and intellectually vigorous community where the values and views of others are respected and encouraged. Sixth form leaders do much to endorse the unique ethos of the school and this together with the determination to sustain high standards, creates an aspirant culture in which students grow and flourish academically and personally. Secure and trusting relationships stem from the celebration of diversity and the will to listen and understand. Daily interactions between staff and students are enriched by warmth, levity and wit.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4284091	Balance from previous year	-422610
Total expenditure	4570506	Balance carried forward to the next	-286415
Expenditure per pupil	3701		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related Learning

56. Overall the work-related curriculum is good, with some outstanding features reflecting the role of the Language College, the impact of extensive overseas visits and the citizenship programme. Work experience is provided for all Year 11 pupils over a two-week period organised by Trident. There is also sixth form work experience in Frankfurt. Subject input to work-related curriculum is good in subjects such as science (through a programme of visits as well as applied science GCSE and AVCE). It is also good through Business Education GCSE and AVCE and there is some contribution through the less effective ICT programme.
57. There is a particularly strong contribution through the very effective programme of overseas visits in Years 7 to 9, through the Language College, which has a strong industry related component of visits (such as logging, cider making, coal, slate, power generation, telecommunications, agriculture, furniture manufacture, car and Champagne production in Belgium, France and Germany). The very good citizenship programme also contributes to the work-related learning through the economic awareness components. School events add to the work-related programme such as groundbreakers day for Years 7 and 8 and Industry day for Year 9. Other curriculum areas contribute to skills needed for work, such as the strong literacy and numeracy teaching, especially through the sixth form programmes.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Oral work is very good and this has contributed to the improvement of boys' GCSE results
- Marking of assessed work and books is thorough
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge
- Use of assessment data is not yet precise enough to inform planning
- The department is not using the Key Stage 3 national strategy consistently enough

Commentary

Examination results

58. Results in national tests for 14 year olds taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were very high for both boys and girls with almost three-quarters achieving Level 5 or above. In the most recent National Curriculum tests fewer pupils gained Level 6 or above and therefore, overall results were below those attained in schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. The school has challenged the results and some grades have been raised when re-marked.
59. In 2003 GCSE English, over eight out of every ten pupils achieved Grades A* to C, with one in ten gaining A* or A. In GCSE English Literature, three quarters of pupils achieved higher grades with almost one quarter gaining A* or A grades. The standard of work seen during the inspection was similar to these results.

Standards and achievement

60. Standards on entry are in Year 7 are above average. By the end of Year 9 all pupils achieve well, in particular the lower-attaining pupils who receive good support in literacy. In 2003, girls did better than boys, but the difference between them was less than that found nationally.
61. Good teaching and well-marked homework contribute to pupils' progress. However, in Years 7 to 9, pupils do not always implement advice given in marking to improve their standard of written expression and accuracy. There is little evidence of pupils correcting their work. Standards in Year 7 show improvement because of the way in which the department has carefully planned and implemented the framework for teaching.
62. In Years 10 and 11, standards have improved over some years. In particular, the performance of boys in GCSE English Literature in 2003 was much improved by replacing the written prose study with a similar oral study. By Year 11, pupils are able to make very

good extended oral contributions to lessons because teachers have focused their efforts upon improving standards in speaking and listening. Pupils answer questions and extend their explanations in class in response to carefully focused teacher-questioning. They benefit by developing their individual ideas but there are fewer opportunities to work together in small discussion groups. Given pupils' above average attainment on entry to the school, the overall picture is one of good achievement.

Teaching and learning

63. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory but in Year 7, where additional planning is evident, the teaching is good and pupils learn well as a result. Here, a coherent approach has contributed to pupils' progress. Excellent resources support the learning of individual pupils. For example, a worksheet helped them understand and record the sequence of ideas from the film 'Jaws' which then made it possible for them to produce a more detailed piece of writing. A Year 7 class had extended their interests from reading poetry to composing their own successful 'rap' poems. In Year 8 teaching lacked variety, and opportunities were lost to engage pupils in their work, and some distraction followed. In a very good Year 9 lesson, the pupils in the highest set were able to grasp patterns which identify a sonnet and its form, and were able subsequently, to link form and meaning. In the first two years, wider reading skills for pleasure and information are well developed because effective library lessons are organised jointly by the class teacher and the librarian.
64. At GCSE, good teaching techniques and pupils' self-evaluation contributes to pupils' success. Teachers are subject specialists, and in some top sets pupils are challenged very effectively to think deeply. In a Year 11 class, the teacher clearly set out the differences between a grade A and a grade B response when making comparisons between pre 1914 and post 1914 poetry in readiness for mock examinations. The highest-attaining pupils write well-structured essays but lower-attaining pupils write shorter pieces, which sometimes do not demonstrate their underlying knowledge of literature. Pupils in lower sets are well supported and helped to achieve their potential. Marking is informative and allows most pupils to achieve well, but more able pupils do not always have detailed enough knowledge of the criteria required for them to achieve A* and A grades.

Leadership and management

65. The leadership of the department is good. The head of department has built an experienced team who collaborate well and contribute to the popularity of the subject. Above average standards of achievement have been maintained. The school has benefited from a co-operative approach between English and other departments which contributes to the language college ethos.
66. Management is satisfactory. Information gained from data analysis and monitoring should allow more precise planning for individual needs. Departmental documents are not sufficiently detailed to focus on raising pupils' attainment nor to provide succinct advice to new teachers. Information about the good methodology has not been consolidated into an effective handbook. Progress has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Pupils arrive at the school in Year 7 with literacy skills that are above the national average; therefore standards are high in reading and written work. Speaking and listening skills are well developed, especially in Modern Foreign Languages where there is an emphasis on widening pupils' vocabulary. In English, assessed oral coursework has improved the performance of all pupils, but especially boys, in GCSE examinations.

68. There are examples of good practice in several subjects, where key words and subject specific vocabulary are identified in lessons, and displayed on classroom walls. There are planned opportunities for extended writing, especially in English and History. The librarian has prepared booklets for use in library lessons in Years 7, 8 and 12, to ensure that all pupils are able to use the library effectively. Not all departments have a clear policy for consistently correcting spelling and grammar.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French and German

The school has an outstanding commitment to modern foreign languages. All pupils in Years 7 to 11 study two languages and some study three. All pupils in the sixth form study at least one foreign language. French and German are the main languages, but Spanish, Russian, Japanese and Latin are also offered. Modern foreign languages make an excellent contribution to the school's European and Internationalist ethos. French and German were the focus subjects for the inspection in Years 7 to 11.

French

Provision in French is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the last inspection	Very good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average because pupils are very well prepared for the examination
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use French consistently well in lessons
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good
- Assessment of pupils' written work is inconsistent

Commentary

Examination results

69. An unusually high percentage of Year 11 pupils are entered for GCSE. Results in 2003 were well above average. Girls did better than boys, this was in line with the national picture. In 2004, the GCSE results were even higher, with nine out of every ten pupils entered gaining passes at Grade C or above.

Standards and achievement

70. Teacher assessments for the end of Year 9 in 2003 and 2004 were well above average and reflect the well above average standards seen during the inspection. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a broad range of working vocabulary and well developed listening comprehension skills. Pupils are using a variety of tenses in their written and oral work. Pupils' oral skills are well developed and the higher-attaining pupils are confident speakers and have a wide range of expression. Pupils are making very good progress over time representing very good achievement. The GCSE results in Year 11 reflect the well above average standards observed and confirm the maintenance of the very good achievement from Years 7 to 9. Pupils have a very broad range of vocabulary at their disposal, speak

with very good pronunciation, read with sensitivity and understanding, use complex sentence structure with confidence and have very good understanding of a variety of tenses. Higher-attaining pupils are able to give their opinions with justification and illustration.

Teaching and learning

71. Teaching is very good and encourages very good learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use French very well in lessons to promote listening comprehension skills and present a good role model. Pupils are prepared very well for the GCSE examination because of the very knowledgeable and demanding teaching they receive. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and with a good range of activity to keep pupils motivated and interested. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their positive attitudes and behaviour help to promote very good learning.

Leadership and management

72. Leadership is very good. It presents a very good role model and team work is evident from the consistency of approach in teaching. The analysis of relative strengths and weaknesses is good as is the vision for the future. Management is good. The departmental handbook is thorough and comprehensive. The departmental development plan identifies priorities for action but is rather sketchy in its action plan and success criteria. Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place but is not sufficiently developed to identify strengths and weaknesses and, in particular, to allow the sharing of the large amount of good practice in the department. Pupils' work is regularly marked but the quality of comments is variable and inconsistent in usefulness to the pupils. Progress has been very good. The very high standards identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and GCSE results have improved. Teachers now use the foreign language consistently well in lessons.

German

Provision in German is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average
- Pupils are very thoroughly prepared for the GCSE examination.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge
- Assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent

Commentary

Examination results

73. In 2003 GCSE results were well above average. A large percentage of Year 11 was entered for the examination and pupils achieved better grades overall than in their other GCSE subjects. In 2004 results were similar.

Standards and achievement

74. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well above average in 2003 and 2004. Standards observed during the inspection were above average overall, although the standards for the higher-attaining pupils were well above average. Pupils have a broad range of vocabulary and most are able to use a variety of tenses with accuracy. Only the higher-attaining pupils are starting to use more complex sentence structure to express their ideas and emotions. All pupils are making good progress in oral skills and they have well developed listening comprehension skills. Achievement overall is good but very good for higher-attaining pupils.
75. In Years 10 and 11, standards observed were well above average and this represents very good achievement. Pupils have a broad range of vocabulary, read with sensitivity and understanding, speak with good pronunciation and are able to express their ideas and emotions with spontaneity. Higher-attaining pupils in particular are confident in using complex sentence structure and enjoy the challenges for example, of using subordinating clauses with accuracy.

Teaching and learning

76. Teaching and learning are very good, overall. In Years 7 to 9 it is good but very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and German is generally well used as the language of instruction in lessons. However, on occasions, English is used unnecessarily. Lessons are well planned and contain a good variety of activities to keep pupils motivated and engaged in their learning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very positive and support their learning. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils, who enjoy their studies. Teaching prepares the pupils very well for the GCSE examination. They know exactly what to do in order to achieve the best grade of which they are capable. Pupils' work is regularly marked but teachers' comments are inconsistent in their usefulness in advising pupils on what they need to do to improve, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

Leadership and Management

77. The same judgements apply as for French. The Improvement since the last inspection has been good, though at times English is used unnecessarily in lessons.

Specialist Language College Status

78. The school has been a specialist language college since 1995. The specialist status has had a deep impact on languages teaching within the school: a new language teaching block of classrooms has been built with integrated Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities; the range of languages offered to pupils has been extended to include not only French and German but Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese and Latin; and more staff have been appointed as a result of the growth of languages. Language College status has played an important role in raising achievement across the school, but particularly in languages themselves, where standards are well above average. The specialist provision is fully integrated into the wider European and internationalist aspects of the school's life and makes an excellent contribution to its ethos. The school is very active with other schools and colleges. An outreach teacher has been appointed who co-ordinates very effective work in seven primary schools, teaching French and German mostly to Year 5 and 6 pupils and advising primary school teachers on languages teaching. In addition, the school is the hub of a languages development group involving 18 secondary schools, which meet half-termly to share and disseminate good practice. Together with Anglia Polytechnic University,

the school also organises a very innovative and successful languages day at the university for over 150 Year 12 pupils from a wide range of schools.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long allowing pupils too little time to work
- Pupils' very good attitudes enhance their learning and achievement
- The assessment system is not raising standards as it is not being used consistently
- Good recall of facts and formulas helps pupils to learn
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and encourage learning

Commentary

Examination results

79. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above the national average. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average when compared to all schools nationally, but in line with schools that have a similar intake. Boys do better than girls in the GCSE although both groups perform very well. Indications are that the 2004 results are broadly similar.

Standards and achievement

80. During the inspection, the overall standard of work seen in Years 7 to 9 was above average, although this varied according to set. As pupils start school with standards overall that are above average, this represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils achieve better in Years 10 and 11 and by the end of this time standards are well above average. By the end of Year 9, pupils can use tree diagrams to calculate probabilities. In Year 11, pupils can solve simultaneous equations algebraically and graphically.

Teaching and learning

81. In the lessons seen, the teaching varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Consistently better teaching occurs in classes studying for the GCSE examination. Common strengths in the teaching include good pupil-teacher relationships. These result in a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom which enhances learning. In the less successful lessons the activities at the start become protracted, teachers talk for too long and, as a result, pupils have insufficient time to practise their skills.
82. Pupils are willing learners and they recall facts well. For instance, in one Year7 lesson, a pupil was able to quote their previous teacher and provide a good definition of a prime number. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work and are happy to discuss their mathematics. They are keen to please and generally enjoy the lessons. Pupils are expected to provide their own mathematical equipment in lessons. They often forget to do so and

teachers do not have sufficient resources to provide them. This interrupts learning. Some teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work for pupils. Where this occurs the pupils engage in minor acts of indiscipline.

83. The department has introduced an assessment policy which includes target setting linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades and an element of pupils' self- evaluation. Where implemented, this is helping to raise achievement as it is making pupils think about their mathematics. Not all teachers are operating the policy. The quality of marking in the pupils' books is very mixed. There are examples of good practice with pupils being told what they need to do to improve, but some exercise books are marked in a cursory manner.
84. Mathematics clinics are held on a regular basis. These are run on a drop-in basis and cater for pupils' individual learning needs. Teachers give up their time to organise the clinics and to encourage the pupils to attend. Every year, pupils represent the school in the mathematics challenge and other such competitions. In 2002, they reached the final rounds held in Glasgow.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Problems over the recruitment and retention of teachers have resulted in inconsistencies within the department and a reliance on non-specialist or inexperienced teachers. The department has not adopted the national strategy and lessons lack a clear focus and structure. Issues raised in the last report have been resolved. A thorough review of the department has identified areas for development and work is in progress to improve the provision. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

86. Pupils speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences in the school. They are able to apply their mathematical knowledge in a variety of different contexts. In food technology, pupils weigh ingredients with accuracy, in textiles they consider the use of pattern and in graphics they are required to measure with precision in order to complete isometric drawings. Pupils studying geography make use of statistical tests to compare sets of data and in science they have to read meters accurately. The provision, overall, is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weakness

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are improving
- The commitment to further improvement of standards is strong
- The new applied science GCSE course is meeting the needs of some pupils well
- The budget has been well-managed to provide good resources within the department
- The marking and assessment of work and classroom management are not consistent enough
- Schemes of work do not provide sufficient guidance to ensure consistency
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough

Commentary

Examination results

87. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average and maintain a rising trend. In 2003 and 2004, the boys performed better than the girls. In Year 9, the results in the National Curriculum Assessment tests were well above average, though well below those of schools with a similar intake. In 2002, the boys performed better than the girls but this was reversed in 2003. Standards have been affected by some staffing difficulties.

Standards and achievement

88. Current standards overall are above average. Standards seen in lessons and pupils' books are variable and usually follow the ability of pupils or quality of teaching. In Year 7, pupils could identify the link between a satellite and a solar powered calculator. Pupils could handle microscopes with care and were able to interpret the onion cells specimen they have made. In Year 8, pupils could build an electromagnet and draw the magnetic force it created. By Year 9, pupils have studied a range of topics and show good understanding. Pupils could express clearly their understanding of how drugs affect the body, having researched details for themselves. In Year 10, the applied science pupils set up cultures for a microbiological investigation showing good skills in co-operation and understanding of the use of a control. They appreciate the practical nature of the course and its relevance to the world of work and are well-motivated. In a physics lesson in Year 11, a middle ability group showed very good understanding of the movement of electrons to form charges in everyday situations resulting in a static shock. In another lesson with some lower-attaining pupils, they showed an understanding of how the surface area of the alveoli affected the capacity for gaseous exchange. Overall, pupils' scientific skill on entry to the school is above average and by the end of Year 11 this has been maintained showing satisfactory progress.

Teaching and learning

89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In all year groups, the quality of teaching has a direct impact on the standards and achievement of pupils. Where the pace of the lesson was slower or the

teacher had lower expectations, the progress of pupils was weaker. Good lessons are characterised by high expectations in behaviour, challenging thinking, skilful questioning, good relationships, pupil participation and rapid pace. Many of the lessons seen did not have enough variety to stimulate and maintain interest and pupils were not given clear enough time limits. The extension work for more able pupils was not always challenging enough. While good support is often given to individual pupils with special educational needs during lessons, these pupils are not aware of subject specific targets within their individual education plans.

90. Pupils are generally confident in their skills. This is particularly shown in their oral work. Year 9 pupils clearly expressed the dangers of drugs to the whole class. Year 11 pupils explained ways in which electrostatics can affect everyday life. They are not afraid to ask questions to develop their understanding of science. Where teachers challenge pupils' thinking, pupils take greater responsibility in their learning. The teaching seen on the applied science course was well-matched to the practical nature of the course and to pupils' needs.
91. Homework is used effectively by most teachers to consolidate learning. However, marking is inconsistent. Where marking is good, grades and some constructive comments support the pupils' learning. Some marking is cursory. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. The department has made an effort to assess regularly and record pupil attainment centrally. It is not yet using assessment to inform the planning of the curriculum or lessons. Pupils do not feel that they know how they are performing in science as assessments are not used to inform their progress sufficiently well.

Leadership and Management

92. The leadership of science is good with a clear vision for the subject and its future improvement. The departmental development plan identifies the areas for development appropriately. The introduction of the applied GCSE science course is innovative and is helping to improve the motivation of the pupils studying the course. It is making a good contribution to work-related learning. Lesson observations and book checks are used to monitor provision but, as yet, these have not ensured that all pupils receive equal opportunities within the subject. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The budget for the subject has been well managed to provide good resources, enabling pupils to experience scientific investigation and supporting teachers in their delivery of the curriculum. The technical support provided for science is very good. The schemes of work are not yet sufficiently detailed to ensure consistently high expectations, breadth and balance of teaching and learning styles. The provision of ICT is not consistent enough. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory though the quality of teaching is more variable mainly as a result of staff recruitment difficulties. Standards have improved at a similar rate as the national trend. The new laboratories have greatly improved the accommodation for science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has not ensured that all aspects of ICT are covered and this results in many Year 10 and 11 pupils underachieving
- In the best lessons pupils achieve well because of good guidance and support
- There is too little teaching and so pupils do not have the opportunity to learn enough
- The planning for individual needs within some lessons is not good enough because teachers do not always match the work accurately to these needs

Commentary

Examination results

93. The applied GCSE in ICT is a newly introduced course and as yet there are no results.

Standards and achievement

94. By the end of Year 9, standards are in line with national expectations but this represents unsatisfactory achievement given above average levels of attainment on entry to the school. Many pupils are experienced users of ICT and their potential is shown in the quality of their work using word processing. They had produced very attractive documents and presentations about themselves, with good consideration of audience. However, pupils in Years 7 to 9 have a higher proportion of theory work and less time for the practical ICT application than in most schools. Whilst the content of the National Curriculum is taught to these year groups, the limitations of time and, to some extent, resources, mean that the principles of the national strategy cannot be applied and this restricts the achievement of pupils. The range of software available is too narrow so that, for example, Year 8 pupils were designing a web site about the school using the standard word processing package, rather than a web writing program.
95. In Year 11, pupils were not entirely clear as to whether they were following an ICT course although they are taking an applied GCSE in ICT as part of a combined package with a technology option. The time allocation is insufficient for pupils to achieve their potential and Year 11 pupils reported that they had not had any ICT lessons since the beginning of Year 10. Pupils thought that they had done some coursework but had little idea of the level at which they were working in the subject. The very positive attitudes of pupils and use of computers at home results in average standards despite the lack of provision. However, the standard of work in ICT of many pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not on a par with their other subjects. They underachieve because they do not have enough ICT lessons and so do not cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs made less good progress than their classmates because their specific needs were not dealt with, but pupils with English as an additional language were among the best performers.

Teaching and learning

96. Teaching observed was at least satisfactory and often good. In Years 7 to 9, non-specialist teachers work from materials that provide a satisfactory basis for learning. In a Year 7 lesson observed, relationships were very good and pupils engaged quietly in a test exercise. However, at least half the pupils did not have enough time to complete the test and it is not clear how the assessment information gained will be used. In lessons where pupils have access to computers they are supported well by a subject specialist who monitors and advises pupils helping them to progress well. However, the dislocation of theory and practice limits the effectiveness of learning. In Years 10 and 11, the fragmentary nature of pupils' lessons leads to learning being unsatisfactory because there is so little teaching. They cannot build their skills in an organised way and teaching time focuses on a rush to produce coursework.

Leadership and management

97. The new leadership of the subject area of ICT has worked hard to mitigate the lack of specialist staff and lack of curriculum time. Changes in school policy, such as the provision of regular, although still insufficient, ICT teaching in Years 7 to 9, have not yet had time to have an impact on standards. The provision for Years 10 and 11 is unacceptable. The number of computers is below the national average and access to computer rooms is inadequate. The mapping of the use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory and not enough guidance is given for subject teachers to ensure they are meeting the ICT requirements. Despite recent major improvements, the school has failed to keep up with the significant changes in national expectations for ICT teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

98. There are some examples of good use of ICT for learning such as in geography and technology and pupils with special educational needs had a good ICT experience in a lunch club where they used the internet to research information on a famous scientist. However, this is not the case in all subjects, with the result that pupils do not get their full ICT entitlement. For example, they are not learning about control in technology or data logging in science. The internet is used in many subjects to develop the awareness of different cultures as part of the school's international ethos. Some teachers use data projectors to bring learning alive, but many teachers lack confidence in the use of ICT and the use of computers across the curriculum is insufficient. Pupils tend to use computers more in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. The overall experience of pupils is not monitored well enough and major subjects do not contribute well enough to pupils' ICT experience.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is improving under new leadership
- In GCSE examinations in the last two years, pupils have achieved less well in geography than in their other subjects
- ICT is used effectively to enhance learning in geography
- The majority of pupils respond to good teaching with positive attitudes
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have the opportunity for off-site fieldwork

Commentary

Examination results

99. Teacher assessments indicate standards at the end of Year 9 were well above average in 2003 and 2004. GCSE results were above average in 2003 but were significantly lower in 2004. In both years, pupils performed below expectations based on their prior attainment and achieved less well than in their other GCSE subjects.

Standards and achievement

100. Pupils enter Year 7 with above average attainment in geography. In Years 7 to 9, pupils develop map reading and interpretive skills and a very good knowledge of places and features. By the end of Year 9, the majority of pupils use geographical terms accurately in oral and written work and show a very good understanding of complex ideas, such as the demographic transition model. The work of lower-attaining pupils is less detailed and more descriptive, with less understanding of cause and effect. The effective use of ICT is evident in the high quality displays of volcanic events by Year 7 pupils and Year 9 PowerPoint presentations on aspects of Japanese culture. Pupils taking GCSE apply and extend their knowledge through detailed case studies. Those working at the higher levels write fluently and at length in response to examination questions. Pupils in Year 11, for example, show a good appreciation of the relationship between environmental and economic factors in explaining and examining possible solutions to the problems of farming in glaciated uplands. Pupils

of lower attainment demonstrate their knowledge of river valley features more effectively through a virtual fieldwork experience than in writing.

Teaching and learning

101. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. The best lessons have clear objectives, cater for different learning styles and provide activities of increasing challenge. This enables pupils to acquire geographical terms and ideas in small, manageable steps. Questioning is used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge. It could be better targeted to assess learning and ensure participation. ICT is used well to give a visual focus to teachers' explanations. Teachers have high expectations for work and behaviour and give good support to individuals. Most pupils respond to good teaching with positive attitudes, hard work and good behaviour. The progress of a small minority is hindered because they are inattentive and lack concentration.

Leadership and management

102. New leadership has had to address long-standing issues identified in the previous inspection. After a period of little progress and declining GCSE results, there has been a need to prioritise and identify strategies which will have the most immediate impact on raising standards. Consequently, the short-term focus has been on improving teaching, curriculum and resources. Totally new schemes of work enable lessons to provide more relevance, challenge and activities better matched to needs, with good opportunities for independent learning and the use of ICT. More fieldwork is already scheduled for next year. Revised assessment procedures keep pupils better informed of their progress towards clear targets. Assessment data, such as that provided by Year 7 baseline tests, is used to inform curriculum planning. Determined leadership and capable management have already brought about significant and rapid improvement. In the longer term, there is a clear awareness of the need to do more to evaluate the performance of the department, particularly through the more formal monitoring of teaching and the analysis of assessment data.

History

Provision in history is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above national expectations
- Pupils achieve well in history
- Teachers have high expectations and a very good command of the subject; lessons are challenging and can lead to impressive levels of pupil participation
- The departmental leadership is providing exemplary teaching and a very real understanding of how pupils learn

Commentary

Examination results

103. Standards are well above national expectations at both key stages. In 2004, teachers' assessment of pupils' performance at the end of Year 9 indicates well above average attainment for both boys and girls. At GCSE significantly more pupils attained A* to C grades than did so nationally in 2003, and these results were improved upon in 2004 when

86 per cent of pupils gained A* to C grades, and 32 per cent got an A* or A. The attainment of both boys and girls was well above national averages. In terms of relative performance at GCSE, history has been one of the strongest subjects in the school over the past two years.

Standards and achievement

104. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. Pupils successfully build on historical knowledge and understanding through increasingly critical use of sources. They write structured, extended accounts, synthesising information from a range of evidence. The highest-attaining pupils show a maturity of approach and are intellectually curious. Their conceptual understanding is very good. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils acquire the skills and confidence to challenge assumptions, follow lines of independent enquiry and to construct coherent historical arguments.

Teaching and learning

105. History teaching is of a good quality overall, with exemplary practice from the departmental leadership. Particular strengths of teaching include secure specialist knowledge, effective questioning, high expectations and dynamic, well-paced delivery. In the best lessons, these qualities are underpinned by an enthusiasm that leads to high levels of pupil participation. Overall, activities and demands are matched sensitively to pupils' needs to produce good learning. Teaching methods are well selected and time is used productively for independent and collaborative work. Pupils generally respond very well to the challenge of lessons and demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. Their zeal is reflected in the high numbers choosing the subject as an option in Year 10. Assessment is good; pupils are well aware of the levels at which they are achieving and what they need to do to improve further. Individual target setting helps pupils to aspire to the highest standards. Homework assignments extend class learning well.

Leadership and management

106. Overall, leadership is very good and management systems are effective. The leadership provides expert knowledge of the curriculum, how to teach it and how pupils learn. The department is committed to maximising pupil potential and works very hard to raise pupils' performance. The departmental database is used very effectively to assess performance against targets and year group assessment results. Appropriate priorities are being set for the future. These include the increased use of ICT, further integration of national strategies in Years 7 to 9, further work on the culture of pupil self-evaluation and refinement of policies relating to provision for the gifted and talented and pupils with special educational needs. The quality of reporting to parents is good, because teachers clearly explain how pupils are performing and make detailed subject references. The quality of curriculum is very good and reflects the school's international dimension successfully. A commendable feature of the department is the teaching of *The First World War* topic to a Year 9 group in German. A range of visits, including a visit to the battlefields, enrich the curriculum. Topics of study make a very effective contribution to moral, social and cultural education. The department has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Religious education

It was not possible to make an overall judgement about the provision in religious education as no lessons could be seen in Years 10 and 11 other than for the few pupils taking GCSE religious education and no samples of work were available for scrutiny.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and in the GCSE course
- The quality of teaching in religious education lessons results in good achievement
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not allocated enough time

Commentary

107. The judgements refer to religious education taught in Years 7 to 9 and for GCSE taught in Years 10 and 11. The school covers aspects of the taught components of the agreed syllabus through its citizenship programme. There is insufficient time allocated to fully meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. It was not possible to judge the religious education element of citizenship therefore overall provision could not be judged nor could improvement since the previous inspection.

Examination results

108. The number of pupils taking GCSE is too small to make national comparisons.

Standards and achievement

109. In lessons seen in Years 7 to 9, pupils have a good knowledge of the four religions studied within the agreed syllabus. They know how belonging to a faith community can make a difference to people and their lives, through understanding about birth and marriage ceremonies and how different religions deal with issues such as death. By the end of Year 9 pupils know about pilgrimage and how these are linked historically to religious beliefs. Pupils know how to respond to contemporary moral issues and, through studying the Holocaust, how religion has caused conflict within the lives of individuals and groups of people. In the GCSE course, pupils are able to explain Christian teachings on the sanctity of life and apply their knowledge to respond to moral teachings about abortion. They can give reasoned explanations for the approaches by different denominations to the sanctity and the quality of life in relation to these issues. Pupils have good understanding of absolute and relative morality and how these are viewed in different religions. Pupils understand how religious leaders present a moral authority and that the Ten Commandments help Christians to make moral decisions. Pupils know how to use biblical references to support arguments for GCSE examination answers.

Teaching and learning

110. Group work and whole-class discussions are features of teachers' planning and these help pupils to learn about religion through sharing ideas and through developing listening skills. Assessment takes place at the end of each unit of work and pupils' books are marked regularly. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand the assessment criteria and know how to improve their work. In GCSE classes, pupils' understanding of their target grades is inconsistent. Teachers' use of videos and PowerPoint presentations help pupils to learn. Good use is made of model making of places of worship and this allows teachers to assess the effort pupils make. Pupils' learning is enhanced through visits to places of worship and through listening to experiences of the Holocaust from a visiting speaker.

Leadership and management

111. The department is managed effectively. The head of department has a clear vision to improve the numbers taking GCSE. Teachers are knowledgeable and manage classes well. Performance management is in place and there is a good curriculum in Years 7 to 9 and for GCSE. The department assesses according to the attainment targets and parents receive a report which includes the levels. The Year 10 and 11 curriculum was an issue in the previous report. Although the school has made some improvements in this area by

including religious education into the Key Stage 4 citizenship programme, the amount of time allocated is insufficient.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in food and textiles are very good
- Very good leadership and management of the department and effective teamwork
- Well-organised programmes of work
- Positive atmosphere and working relationships in lessons
- Increasing use of computer-based work
- Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. were over-estimated
- Resources available for practical work in the resistant materials subjects are limited
- Some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory
- The health and safety risk assessments in resistant materials are not rigorous enough

Commentary

Examination results

112. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are well above the national average and have been over-estimated. Current Year 9 work indicates that attainment is in line with the national expectation. In 2003, GCSE results overall were in line with the national average for A* to C grades but well below for A* to G. Within these results, the results for food and textiles were considerably above the national average and for resistant materials, graphics and systems and control, considerably below the national average. Girls did much better, and boys much worse, than their national averages. The proportion of girls attaining A* and A grades was well above the national average whilst a very high proportion of boys were un-graded. Boys did much worse in design technology than in most of their other GCSE subjects. In 2004, there was a considerable improvement in results attained for the resistant material subjects and results, overall, were above the national average.

Standards and achievement

113. By the end of Year 9, pupils develop a satisfactory range of designing and making skills and their achievement is satisfactory when compared to their design and technology capability on entry to the school which is average. Pupils have opportunities to research and analyse existing products. They develop designing and recording skills, including some use of computer skills, and have opportunities to model and make items in a variety of materials, components and ingredients. Standards attained are satisfactory, overall. Higher-attaining pupils produce good quality work in well-organised folders which show greater depth of knowledge, understanding and higher levels of recording skills. The quality of making is affected by the limited resources available, in terms of tools and equipment, particularly in the resistant materials areas.
114. By the end of Year 11, pupils' work is very well structured to address the requirements of the examination and achievement is good. Design folders include a good range of computer-generated work which is used to improve presentation, but there is insufficient evidence of computer-aided design or manufacturing. All pupils, including those who have special needs, have good opportunities to develop designing skills in suitably structured and researched coursework. However, knowledge development and the ability to apply knowledge in the development of design ideas is a relative weakness in resistant materials and electronics. Higher-attaining pupils produce high quality folders and final products are made to a good standard in food and textiles. However, lack of access to a suitable range of equipment and under-developed practical skills are affecting the quality of practical work in the resistant materials areas.

Teaching and learning

115. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Pupils benefit from a well organised but relatively inexperienced team of teachers who deliver centrally planned courses well. A good range of learning activities captures the interest of pupils and because teachers' expectations of behaviour and performance are suitably high, pupils are attentive, concentrate well and develop good working relationships. In Years 10 and 11, programmes of work are very well structured to meet the requirements of the examination syllabuses. Teachers provide good individual support in lessons. Expectations of pupils are suitably high, but the pace of learning could be improved in some lessons to use available time more effectively. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are compliant and cooperative. Many spend a lot of time at home to present their coursework to a high standard. Marking and assessment procedures

are satisfactory, but more written comments could be used to inform pupils about how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

116. Leadership and management of design technology are both very good. The close cooperation, which takes place within the team of design technology teachers, enables the department to provide a balanced curriculum within the limited curriculum time available. Departmental documentation provides good central support for programmes of work. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, however, the condition and organisation of some working areas are unsatisfactory. The condition of one food technology room is unsatisfactory and practical areas for resistant materials are under-equipped and in need of reorganisation. Risk assessments should be more rigorously applied. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama

Provision in drama was sampled. The subject makes a significant contribution to the aims of the school. The standards of work seen were above average in Years 7 to 11 and pupils were achieving well. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and are well supported by experienced teachers. The subject provides opportunities for pupils to explore a range of moral, personal and social issues. The GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average. The teaching seen was good and often very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their enthusiasm inspires pupils who quickly become immersed in their work.

Art

Provision in art and design is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 2004 GCSE results and standards of work in Year 11 show improvement
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and are keen to improve
- Teachers make insufficient use of their assessments of pupils' learning
- The curriculum lacks a coherent framework that progressively builds on pupils' experiences and achievements

Commentary

Examination results

117. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, the proportion of A* and A grades was above the average but the overall results showed a significant proportion of pupils did not achieve their target grades. Since the last inspection, where results were very high, standards have fallen. There are signs that standards are improving. The 2004 results were above average. The school's analysis shows achievement to be satisfactory.

Standards and achievement

118. Teachers' understanding of what pupils can be expected to do and achieve are not firmly embedded across the work of the department. Achievement is variable and standards in some groups are higher than in others. This is most noticeable in Years 7 to 9 where the curriculum lacks a suitable framework of subject and cross-curricular requirements and expectations. Some effective group work was seen where ideas and observations about the work of Picasso were shared. Generally though, too few opportunities are planned for pupils to develop their understanding by talking about their own and others' work. The development of skills and use of computers across year groups is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection.
119. The majority of pupils are keen to do well and they have very good attitudes to learning. However, progress in Years 7 to 9 is erratic. Whilst pupils do the work they are set, many are unclear about its purpose, how well they are progressing towards their target levels and how they can improve. In Years 10 and 11, teachers' references to the examination assessment objectives provide pupils with a more focused basis for managing their time and studies. Most demonstrate good levels of independent study. Many examples of creative and imaginative use of materials were seen including 'wire drawings' and large-scale card, wire and plaster sculptures based on shells and other natural forms. Pupils' very good literacy skills, coupled with their enthusiasm and curiosity, lead them to make thoughtful and analytical notes and inspired drawings in their sketchbooks. Many were able to give well-argued accounts of the connections between their own work and the artists they were studying.

Teaching and Learning

120. Teachers have good subject knowledge, often used effectively to suggest pupils look at a particular artist's work or to demonstrate different techniques. In a Year 9 class on portraiture, pupils were helped by the teacher's demonstration to more effectively distort the facial proportions and features. Some teaching is very effective and leads to very good learning because expectations - of effort and work rate - are high and understood and respected by pupils. Clearly pupils enjoy the subject and the opportunities it provides for practical work alongside research and investigation. Many speak passionately about very well-planned and organised visits to exhibitions and galleries. In all lessons, pupils' behaviour was well managed and relationships were very positive. The work and presence of sixth formers add to the diversity and richness of experiences that younger pupils respect and value.
121. A weakness in the learning is that the use of assessments by teachers, both to plan for pupils' differing abilities and needs and to monitor their achievements, is inconsistent. As a result some pupils do not achieve their potential.

Leadership and Management

122. There is good teamwork across the department and the determined efforts to bring about improvements to GCSE results are proving to be successful. In Years 7 to 9, however, improvements to curriculum planning are taking too long and differences in teacher expectations, for example in the quality of homework or the decline in the use of sketchbooks, have not been tackled rigorously enough.

Music

Provision in music is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and this leads to good achievement in all years
- Teachers are enthusiastic and this leads to good attitudes and commitment to learning amongst pupils
- Unsatisfactory accommodation limits the opportunities that pupils have to work in groups within and outside of lessons

Commentary

Examination results, standards and achievement

123. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average, representing good achievement because on entry to the school, pupils' standards are above average. Standards of singing in Years 7 to 9 are very high, and pupils develop good understanding of notations. By the end of Year 9 they know how to compose using melody and chords, and many do so with good stylistic understanding. They evaluate each other's work with respect and critical discernment. Recent GCSE results have been well above national averages. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are also well above average. Pupils' achievement is good. They build on the strong foundation of skills laid in Years 7 to 9 and compose imaginatively for their instrument, using computers to support them. Many perform to very high standards.

Teaching and learning

124. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well paced and pupils are given clear information about what they are expected to achieve. The teaching of singing is a notable strength. A well chosen repertoire and high expectations from the teacher mean that pupils participate willingly and experience a high quality of music making. The commitment and enthusiasm of teachers results in good attitudes and behaviour from pupils. Large class groups in all years limit the amount of support the teacher can give when pupils are working individually and in pairs. In Years 7 to 9 this sometimes means that boys lose interest in the task and achieve less well. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is well focused on the requirements of the GCSE examination. Teaching does not sufficiently focus on strategies for ensuring that pupils remember what they have learned, and this means that pupils feel less confident in their listening work.

Leadership and management

125. Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership is vibrant and energetic, and this has had a positive impact on the popularity of the subject. There is a clear vision of how the department needs to develop but this is not mapped out thoroughly enough in plans. A range of extra-curricular activities is developing well because the quality of rehearsing is good. Instrumental teaching is very well supported by the school, and the number of pupils benefiting from tuition is a little above the national average.
126. The accommodation is inadequate to meet the many pressures of a successful and expanding department. The lack of reasonable sized practice rooms limits the teaching activities that can be undertaken. The opportunity for pupils to work in the department

outside of lesson times is also restricted by this. The small number of computers means that pupils in the large Year 10 and 11 groups do not get adequate access to them in the lessons to compose. They are not used to support learning in Years 7 to 9. Progress since the time of the previous inspection has been good because standards are much higher in Years 7 to 9, and other strong features of the department have been maintained.

Physical education

All pupils follow a course of physical education in Years 7 to 9 covering games, gymnastics, swimming and athletics. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils follow a non-examinable course covering a range of activities. Two groups of pupils, with approximately 20 in each group, follow a GCSE physical education course. All these courses were inspected.

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE are above the national average, and improving
- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11, especially in GCSE groups
- Leadership and management are very good
- Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities
- Accommodation is spacious, but of unsatisfactory quality
- Warm-up activities are not sufficiently linked to the skills introduced in lessons

Commentary

Examination results

127. In 2003, results were above the national average, but the proportion of pupils attaining A* and A grades was below average. Girls' results were significantly lower than boys'. In 2004, results improved significantly and were, again, well above average.

Standards and achievement

128. Pupils enter the school with average standards overall. They achieve well and, by the end of Year 9, standards are above average. Pupils gain new skills, apply them in suitable games and have good knowledge of rules and health-related fitness. They have very good knowledge of the principles of attack and defence in games and are able to apply it in small-sided games.
129. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good and, as a result, pupils attain standards that are well above average by the end of Year 11, especially in GCSE theory and practical lessons. Pupils have very good knowledge of the principles and components of fitness in Year 10. In Year 11, pupils have very good knowledge of skill development and training principles, which they apply very well when preparing activities for their Personal Exercise Programme. In soccer, they lead activities with very good knowledge of strategies to improve control and make more time to pass effectively. Year 10 girls perform basic jumps and routines in trampolining with good control and body shape. They have good technical knowledge and use it well to analyse performance and suggest improvements.

Teaching and learning

130. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use their very good knowledge to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, gain new skills and understanding. This is because teachers have high expectations and plan progressive tasks which strongly engage pupils. As a result, pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour throughout the 2 hour lessons. In the most effective lessons, pupils are given very good opportunities to analyse performance and evaluate their own performance and that of others. This was particularly effective in an excellent Year 8 rugby lesson when higher-attaining pupils analysed the strengths and weaknesses in basic techniques and used this knowledge to coach groups of other pupils in order to improve their individual skills and apply them in game-like situations. However, some warm-ups are not very imaginative and do not relate to the activities of the lesson.

Leadership and management

131. The department is very clear about its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the development plan focuses on actions to improve achievement, especially by providing a wider curriculum for Years 10 and 11. Schemes of work are exemplary and provide very good support for teaching and learning. On-going assessment is used very well so that pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve. Teachers are very committed to provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Consequently, many pupils gain

representative honours and school teams and individuals are successful in local and regional competitions. Although accommodation is ample in terms of space, it is unsatisfactory, overall, as the sports hall needs refurbishing and the combined gym and hall is barely adequate for some activities. Improvements in standards and the quality of teaching since the last inspection have been very good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school has few vocational course in Years 10 and 11. The main focus in the inspection was the Applied GCSE science course, which is reported in the science subject report. In the work sampled it was evident that business studies is well established in Years 10 and 11. The teaching and learning were good and pupils perform better in business studies at GCSE than in many of their other subjects.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

The school has a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education which includes provision for citizenship.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above Average	Above Average
Achievement	Very Good	Very Good
Teaching and learning	Very Good	Very Good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Very Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average across the school and pupils benefit from the quality of teaching within a well planned curriculum
- Pupils' experience is enhanced through the excellent programme of cultural exchanges
- Assessment and accreditation procedures through the diploma are providing a platform for further improvement
- The development of the Student Voice and the marking of pupils' work in Key Stage 3 are not yet fully developed

Commentary

Examination results

132. There are no comparative examination results.

Standards and achievement

133. On entry, Year 7 pupils have average skills in understanding about being an informed citizen but through the well-planned curriculum they soon improve their attainment. They understand about the rights of young people and are able to take part in structured discussions. By Year 8, pupils know about youth crime and criminal justice. They develop skills of enquiry and understand the work of UNICEF. By Year 9, pupils know about income tax and national insurance. As pupils progress through Years 7 to 9, they make very good progress in understanding about conflict as a world issue and the importance of solving issues fairly. Pupils achieve highly in Key Stage 3 because they have very good attitudes to learning and demonstrate a mature approach to discussion about topical issues.
134. In most Year 10 classes, pupils are developing their ability to use their imagination to make informed responses to situations not yet experienced. For example, they consider conflicting views about the siting of an airport and the effects on the local environment and

know about global issues through involvement in the model United Nations forum. In Year 11, pupils understand why it is important to play an active part in democratic processes through their work on election procedures. They are able to speak confidently about political ideology, in a Year 11 lesson pupils planned speeches from different political perspectives and argued sensibly about the relative merits of private and state education. Pupils have developed skills in analysing and evaluating local government issues and how taking an active part in the electoral process can help to bring about change in society.

Teaching and learning

135. Pupils' learning develops through a well-planned curriculum taught by a group of specialist teachers. Lessons are well planned and pupils know the objective of each lesson. Teachers use a range of approaches to encourage citizenship development. Pupils are taught to work in groups to discuss topical issues. They learn to listen and reflect and develop confidence in public speaking and how to argue rationally. Stimulating activities such as role play in the form of hustings, elections and exit polls make a positive impact on learning, as does the United Nations day when pupils in Year 10 have a mock assembly and take on the role of different countries to debate global issues. Learning is enhanced through development of the school's accreditation at Key Stage 4 and for Year 7 and Year 8. The structure of the diploma programme helps teachers to plan lessons. It is not yet operating in Year 9. Teachers make assessments at the end of each unit of work but the marking of pupils' exercise books is inconsistent in Years 7 to 9. Teaching encourages a range of views and pupils learn to be respectful of each other and tolerant of individual views. They have good attitudes towards each other. In timetabled citizenship lessons, teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and this expertise helps pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the political system and the economy. The use of ICT to support teaching is beginning to impact on learning.
136. The outstanding programme of international cultural exchanges enables pupils in all years to experience life in different countries and how political systems operate and about social responsibilities such as issues concerning recycling in Germany. Each year in excess of five hundred pupils benefit from this experience.

Leadership and management

137. The school has made very good progress in its introduction of citizenship. The department has provided training for all staff and has developed a variety of resources to cover the programme. Each year, parents receive a progress report containing an assessment against National Curriculum criteria. All pupils are developing their citizenship through membership of the Student Voice as they all vote for representatives. The council has recently been reconstituted and has a senior teacher taking a lead role. As this develops, pupils will further understand democratic principles. The school is developing a data base containing all citizenship activities. The school provides for teacher development through including student teachers in citizenship observations. Citizenship is a central part of the school development plan and makes a valuable contribution to the school's ethos. Support from the school's governors and senior management team is contributing to the development of citizenship.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The tables below show entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003 (latest year for which national comparisons are available). They do not include the results of students who took the IB examinations.

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
French	2	50	78.2	0	18.9	10	27.6
Design and technology	1	100	74.9	0	15.1	20	25.3
Mathematics	7	42.9	61.9	0	17.1	11.4	22.1
Music	1	100	86.5	100	21.4	50	30.7
Other social studies	6	66.7	69.7	0	16.7	20	24.1

This table does not include the results of students who continued to A2.

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	9	88.9	98.6	44.4	50.5	77.8	87.5
Biology	17	100	96.4	23.5	39.2	77.6	78.6
Business studies	7	100	98.7	14.3	36.8	68.6	80.1
Chemistry	9	77.8	97.6	22.2	49	60	84.9
Economics	11	72.7	98.9	18.2	52	49.1	88.3
English/ English Literature	25	92	99.4	28	36.3	72.8	80.9
English Literature	10	100	99.5	20	46.5	76	86.5
French	15	80	98.8	26.7	51.5	60	87.6
Design and technology	12	100	97.8	16.7	35	71.7	77.9
Geography	4	100	98.7	0	44.5	60	84
German	17	94.1	98.4	35.3	47.9	72.9	84.8
History	14	100	99	35.7	44.6	78.6	84.6
Mathematics	10	90	96.7	30	55.6	78	88.8
Music	2	100	98.8	0	38.9	80	81.1
Other social studies	5	100	97.4	60	42.7	88	81.8
Physics	8	87.5	96.7	37.5	44.6	72.5	81.7

Religious studies	8	87.5	98.8	12.5	46.7	65	85.6
Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Spanish	3	100	98.3	33.3	50.2	66.7	86.9
Sports studies/PE	6	100	98	0	30.9	70	75.2
Business Studies VCE	25	88	65	20	14.6	62.4	60.1
Science VCE	2	100	44.8	0	3.7	50	58.5
Information and Communication Technology VCE	15	86.7	77.9	20	23.4	60	64.9
Travel and tourism	2	100	71.8	0	14.5	50	62.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The school offers courses in English and English literature, French, German, Spanish and Russian. English literature, IB French, A Level German, and IB Spanish were the focus subjects. **IB Russian** was sampled. A very good lesson was observed with Year 12. This met the needs of students whose achievement was very good in that they developed their grasp of Russian, and confidence in it, in some very difficult topics. Written work showed very good use of assessment.

ENGLISH

Provision in IB English is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths

- IB results are above the world average, and students achieve well
- The students are articulate, confident and interested in English
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to stimulate constructive dialogue in discussion with students during lessons

Commentary

Examination results

138. The students do well in IB English, particularly in the higher course. Here, almost all gain grades 5 or 6, with a small number gaining grade 7. Students are also successful at Standard level, although the spread of grades is a little wider than for Higher. Almost all the students taking the IB course in English have gained grades A* to B in the subject at GCSE. They make the transition to the demands of the IB well, as they respond with enthusiasm to the demands of the course and the way it is taught. A strong focus is placed

on students developing their understanding of and response to texts, and being able to present their ideas orally as well as in writing. By Year 13, students have a good knowledge of how to analyse texts, drawing on literary and linguistic approaches. They argue their points of view cogently, referring to the texts to illustrate their views. They also draw confidently on a wide range of ideas and sources as they discuss literature from different periods and countries.

139. The students have very positive attitudes to the subject and its breadth of content. They are set challenging tasks, which they tackle with interest and determination. The teachers have very good subject knowledge, and are particularly good at engaging students in a reflective discussion of issues, asking probing questions that make them think further. Discussions at the start of the lesson are usually followed by students working independently on the topic, in pairs or small groups, and then presenting their work to the other students. This approach suits most of the students very well. Teachers are good at providing individual support, which helps those having difficulties and sets additional challenge to those who are working confidently. Occasionally, teachers had not thought sufficiently about the students' needs in coping with the work that was set, for example, when IB examination criteria were discussed without the students having a copy of the relevant information.
140. IB English is led and managed well, with appropriate deployment of teaching staff and a strong commitment to teaching it well. Staff training is provided, such as on how to assess students' oral presentations. The English handbook is at an early stage of development, and does not yet include a comprehensive set of reference and guidance for the IB courses such as the useful booklets of guidance given to students. The last report made very little mention of the IB course, but the indications are that it has been developed well over recent years. Standards are still above average, and the course is increasingly popular.

Provision in A Level English is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they convey to students in an interesting way
- Students are enthusiastic, they enjoy the subject and how it is taught
- Students appreciate the level of individual support they are given
- The teaching meets the needs of higher-attaining students best, but it is not always well-enough structured to support lower attaining students

Commentary

Examination results, standards and achievement

141. The A Level courses attract students with a wider range of attainment at GCSE than for IB English. The English language and literature course has a wide appeal. It is very popular because of the content of the syllabus, with its emphasis on exploring a wide range of texts

from a linguistic as well as a literary point of view. The course has proved particularly successful for boys, several of whom have achieved very good results.

142. The majority enter A Level with grades A and B, but the range is from A* to C. A Level results were below the national average in 2003, for both English and English language and literature. The 2004 results were similar to those for 2003. Standards at the end of Year 13 are also below average overall. Students' achievement is satisfactory as the majority do as well as predicted from their GCSE results.

Teaching and learning

143. The teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to explain aspects of linguistic and literary theory clearly. Students gain a good knowledge of technical terminology, and use it confidently in discussion and their written work. Teachers also have considerable expertise in literature, which contributes to students' enthusiasm for reading. The teaching is most successful in meeting the needs of the higher-attaining students, as challenging tasks are set and students given many opportunities for independent and group work. This approach sometimes means that lower-attaining and less confident students struggle as they need a more structured approach that shows them how to do the tasks. This is most evident in the language element of the course.
144. Students are very motivated by the teaching approach adopted within the department. They work hard in lessons and when preparing their written assignments. These are carefully researched and presented. Marking of written work is always encouraging and sometimes informative as to how to improve in future. Most students know what they need to focus on next, because they are given much individual support in lessons and at other times of the day. They are very appreciative of the extra time teachers give to them.

Leadership and management

145. Recent improvements to the A Level provision include a very recent change of examination boards, following a review of why students were not doing as well as the department would like them to. Training has successfully updated teachers' expertise in linguistics, for the language and literature course. The curriculum is enhanced by very worthwhile visits, such as to Lyme Regis in connection with the study of 'The French Lieutenant's Woman'. A department handbook is at an early stage of development, and is yet to have the guidance needed on issues such as teaching approaches to suit the wider range of students now taking A Level courses in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

146. In the sixth form, the strengths evident in the main school are even more apparent. Students use their literacy skills very well in research and written work. The teaching develops students' speaking skills to a high level, through a considerable emphasis on discussion in lessons. The IB diploma course develops very good skills.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

Provision in IB French is excellent.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Excellent
Teaching and learning	Excellent

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths

- Students have a very good grasp of French and use the language confidently, accurately and competently
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and the teaching is challenging and dynamic
- Leadership and management are very good

Commentary

Examination results

147. In 2004, IB Higher results were above average in comparison to international statistics as were the standard results. At each level, around a third of students gained the two highest grades.

Standards and achievement

148. Standards observed during the inspection were well above average and very high in some aspects. Students join the course with above average attainment but make excellent progress. Achievement is, therefore, excellent. Students have refined listening comprehension skills and a very broad range of working vocabulary. They are able to express their ideas, emotions and opinions with spontaneity, accuracy and confidence. The students are confident and competent in using complex sentence structure and enjoy contributing to lessons.

Teaching and learning

149. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use French exclusively and skilfully as the language of instruction. This promotes very developed listening comprehension skills and presents a very good role model for learning. Lessons are well prepared and teaching is rigorous, demanding and dynamic. Independent learning is promoted and students are involved in evaluating the work of their peers and learning from each other. In one particularly impressive lesson, the teacher took a back seat role as the students gave presentations, corrected their own and others' mistakes and evaluated individuals' performance sensitively and accurately. Teaching prepares the students very well for the examination and they know what they need to do to improve. The students' attitudes to their studies are exemplary.

Leadership and management

150. Leadership is very good. Teamwork is evident from the consistency of approach and the consistently rigorous and demanding teaching. Teachers are excellent role models for the students. Management is also very good. Resources are appropriate to the needs of the students and demands of the examination. Teachers have a very good and detailed knowledge of the examination and its demands. Opportunities to share the excellent practice among other members of the languages department are not exploited fully. The subject was not reported in the last inspection.

Provision in A Level French is good.

Students normally enrol for 2 year courses leading either to A or AS Level.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching observed was very good
- The majority of students are well motivated towards language learning
- Teachers' use of assessment and feedback is good
- The 2-year AS level course is inappropriate for many of the students enrolled

Commentary

Examination results

151. Results for A Level in 2003 were well below average. In 2004, however, a pass rate of 100% was achieved at A Level, although results at grades A and B were below average. Results for AS level were very low in comparison to national averages.

Standards and achievement

152. Students in Year 12 following the A Level course are clearly building on the skills they acquired for GCSE, and are beginning to develop a good understanding and command of the language of analysis and discussion, for example, in comparing new and traditional media. Their speaking and listening skills in particular are developing well. They enjoy discussing, in French, new topics in class and can back up their opinions with good illustrations. In Year 13, students understand and use relatively complex forms, such as the subjunctive. They are able to discuss advanced topics such as abortion using the language of feelings and emotions. However, the listening skills of students taking the 2-year AS level course are much better developed than their oral and writing skills, which are weak.

Teaching and learning

153. Teaching observed in Year 12 was good, and in Year 13 it was very good. Teachers generally conduct by far the greater part of their lessons in French, providing a very good model for their students. They use French not only for all classroom business, discussion and question-and-answer sessions, but also to explain and clarify points which the students find difficult. Assessment is thorough and constructive. Students are given clear indications of what they need to do to improve their standard of work in the marking of written assignments and in feedback in class. Students show in general a very positive attitude to language learning. They acknowledge in particular the impact that participation in school exchanges has had on their language development. Two year AS students, however, are in general less well motivated. Despite teaching that is well prepared, focused and rigorous, they are reluctant to respond to questions and to participate in oral work.

Leadership and management

154. Staff teaching A Level French are very well led, and they work well together as a team. They co-ordinate their teaching, as well as the work of the French assistant, to ensure that the students receive a full and varied coverage of the syllabus, and are well briefed about exam requirements. Schemes of work contain a detailed account of topics and supporting resources but do not give a sufficiently clear indication of timescales for coverage. Students begin the two year AS level course with GCSE grades which would not enable them to gain admission to such courses in most other schools. The course is too difficult for them, and so the results that they achieve are very disappointing, despite the good teaching which they receive.

Spanish

Provision in IB Spanish is good.

In previous years, students have enrolled for either Standard or Higher level courses. Numbers of students taking the IB Spanish course have fluctuated, and currently none are studying for Higher level. 8 students are taking the Standard level course in Year 12 and 2 in Year 13.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good

Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at higher level are above average
- The overall quality of teaching observed was good
- Departmental leadership is very good
- Students do not always have sufficient access to specialist resources during their lessons

Commentary

Examination results

155. A pass rate of 100% has been maintained at higher level for the last 3 years and results have been above average in comparison with worldwide figures. There were no entries at Standard level in 2003. In 2004, results at Standard level were slightly below average.

Standards and achievement

156. The standard of attainment and students' achievement during lessons and in written work are variable, though achievement is good overall. Year 12 students make good use of expressions they have learned in previous lessons, and they are improving their oral skills. In written work, they show that they have extended their grasp of a range of structures beyond those required for GCSE, accurately using for instance the pluperfect tense. They can justify their opinions, and describe people and situations in some detail. Year 13 students have less well developed oral skills, although they can speak with a fair degree of accuracy and confidence when prompted. Their comprehension and writing skills are better developed, and they can use sophisticated language, in for example, making comparisons in Spanish between the media in Spain and in Britain.

Teaching and learning

157. Teaching observed in Year 13 lessons was good, and in Year 12 it was very good. Lessons were well planned to include a range of activities at an appropriate level. The teacher made very good use of Spanish to introduce, explain and illustrate topics, broadening the students' vocabulary and range of expression, and the lessons were conducted for the most part in Spanish. Year 12 students were keen to discuss in Spanish the topics they are studying (such as health and fitness) and could do so with confidence and a fair degree of accuracy. The teacher has a good rapport with the class, and the students are well motivated towards learning the language. The Year 13 students were less forthcoming in class, but judicious prompting by the teacher resulted in their being able to hypothesize about a topic (the legalisation of "soft" drugs) and back up their opinions. Use of assessment is good. Written work is corrected thoroughly, and students are given clear indications of the levels they are achieving, and of what they must do to improve the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

158. Leadership is very good, and management is effective. The leadership provides a clear vision of the role of languages, and a very good understanding of the department's strengths and areas for development. The departmental handbook provides a

comprehensive account of aims, objectives, policies and procedures. However, schemes of work for Spanish do not give sufficient detail about the time scale for covering the different aspects of the syllabus, and would not be helpful to a new teacher joining the department. Resources for Spanish are satisfactory, but not all lessons are timetabled in specialist rooms, with the result that students do not have sufficient access to dictionaries and other reference sources.

German

Provision in A Level German is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Good
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge
- German is used consistently well in teaching
- In Year 13 students' oral skills are weak
- The two year AS course is unsuitable for many of the students who study German as a compulsory subject

Commentary

Examination results

159. In 2004, 17 students were entered for the A level examination and results were above average. All students gained pass grades and about a fifth gained grade A. AS results in 2004 were below average. 13 students were entered of whom about half passed with relatively modest grades.

Standards and achievement

160. Many higher-attaining students elect to study IB German. Overall, therefore, students are above average rather than well above average on entry to the A level course. In Year 12, standards observed were above average and this represents good achievement. In Year 13, however, standards observed were average, representing satisfactory achievement. Students' listening comprehension skills are well developed. Students in Year 12 enjoy speaking German and are becoming increasingly proficient in expressing their ideas and emotions in complex and interesting sentence structure. In Year 13, by contrast, oral skills observed were weak. Students have a broad range of vocabulary and read well with sensitivity and good pronunciation.

Teaching and learning

161. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Learning is stronger in Year 12 than Year 13. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use German well in lessons to promote very good listening comprehension skills. This also presents a good role model for learning. In Year 12, students' attitudes and behaviour are very positive, but in Year 13 most students are reluctant to join in lessons and do not complete preparation at home, which excludes them from playing a full part in lessons. This is because many of them feel that the compulsory study of the language is taking time away from their other subjects. Teaching is demanding, rigorous and aimed at the demands of the examination for which students are well prepared. Lessons are well prepared and the range of activities is appropriate to the abilities of the students and the demands of the examination.

Leadership and management

162. Leadership is very good. The teamwork is good and a consistency of approach was evident in all the lessons observed. Management is good overall. Resources are well managed and suited to the demands of the examination. Teachers have a good and detailed knowledge of the demands of the examination. The 2 year AS course for students studying German as a compulsory subject is not, however, suited to their needs. The school is aware of this and is exploring alternative provision. German A level was not reported in the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Courses are offered at A Level and IB at standard and higher levels.

Provision in IB mathematics is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average

Achievement	good
Teaching and Learning	good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths

- Over 60% of the students in years 12 and 13 achieve well in the course
- Good working relationships between students and teachers contribute to a productive atmosphere within the classrooms
- Students achieve well because teachers are secure in their subject knowledge; use a variety of different ways to deliver the lesson and build well upon previous learning
- Despite sometimes being very quiet, students are interested, enthusiastic and attentive in class

Commentary

Examination results

163. Students have the opportunity to study IB mathematics at standard and higher level. Almost two-thirds of students in Years 12 and 13 study the course. In 2003, forty three students were entered for standard level with just over three quarters of them achieving grade 4 or above.

Standards and achievement

164. Standards seen in lessons were above average and the students' achievements were equally good. Where achievement is good the teachers have planned the work to take account of prior attainment and to systematically build upon previous learning. For example, in one Year 12 lesson the teacher developed GCSE work on percentages so that students could recognise the difference between arithmetic and geometric progressions.

Teaching and learning

165. The standard of teaching is good overall and is founded on the teachers' good subject knowledge and the good working relationships which exist between the students and the teachers. These factors combine to provide a pleasant and productive atmosphere within the classrooms. In the better lessons the teachers use a variety of different teaching styles. For instance in one Year 12 lesson the teacher used question and answer, paired discussion and students working at the white board to investigate the division of polynomials. This variety maintained the students' interest and raised achievement.
166. The students are enthusiastic about the subject and are pleased to talk about their work. In some lessons the students are very quiet and strategies to encourage them to discuss and debate are not always incorporated into the lessons.

Leadership and management

167. Schemes of work have been updated to take account of changes to the requirements of the examination. At the time of the last inspection mathematics at sixth form was not reported on as a separate subject and therefore it is not possible to evaluate progress since that time. Leadership and management are good.

Mathematics across the sixth form curriculum

168. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Students in Years 12 and 13 speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences within the school and how these have prepared them for their present courses and for entry into

higher education. The school library provides an attractive area and has a satisfactory range of material to support independent study. Evidence of students using their mathematical knowledge in other subjects was found in IB physics where students performed a mathematical modelling simulation.

Provision in A Level mathematics is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge which promotes good achievement
- Students work hard in response to the teachers' high expectations
- Achievement is enhanced through the teacher stressing the requirements of the examination during the lesson
- Teaching is good overall, but not enough opportunities are provided to develop students' independence of learning

Commentary

Examination results

169. In the 2003 examinations almost all students studying the subject passed A Level mathematics with a grade D or better and more than a third passed with the top grades of A or B. These results are below the national average. Indications are that the 2004 figures are better.

Standards and achievement

170. Standards seen in lessons were above average, overall, and the students' achievements were good. Only five students currently take the course. This means that each has a large influence on overall standards. This is why the standards observed differ so much from those in previous years. Achievement is good because the teachers plan the work to build upon previous learning. For example, in one lesson Year 13 students confidently tackled problems relating to continuous random variables and were able to constructively criticise a probability density function.

Teaching and learning

171. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge for A Level which motivates students to work conscientiously. Students respond appropriately to teachers' high expectations. In the better lessons, teachers relate the work to the requirements of the examination and to how marks are awarded. This is good as it provides an incentive to learn. The students enjoy the subject and respond well to work which is challenging but within their grasp. There are insufficient strategies for independent learning incorporated into the teaching and learning and too few opportunities for the students to discuss their mathematical thinking and philosophy. Students answer questions confidently but rarely respond with questions of the teacher which extend the topic into new realms.

Leadership and management

172. Schemes of work have been updated to take account of changes to the requirements of the examination. At the time of the last inspection mathematics in the sixth form was not

reported as a separate subject and therefore it is not possible to evaluate progress since that time. Leadership and management are good.

SCIENCE

The curriculum in the sciences is good. It comprises the IB at both higher and standard levels, and A Levels in biology, chemistry and physics. In addition an AVCE science is offered. Focus subjects were biology IB and A Level chemistry. Lessons were sampled in AS biology, IB chemistry, IB physics and the AVCE science course.

In a Year 12 'AS' level biology lesson, students showed interest and good literacy skills in summarising the role of RNA in protein synthesis. Teaching and learning were good, standards were above average and achievement over the module was good. In a Year 12 chemistry lesson, higher IB students carried out an experiment on heat generation in a displacement reaction with good practical skills. Standards were above average although the class had some mathematical difficulties, which good teaching and learning, together with their good attitudes were helping to overcome. Achievement was good. In a Year 12 **physics** lesson, higher IB students were challenged to work out a mathematical model of the pressure of an ideal gas. Very good attitudes to work contributed to well above average standards. Achievement was good and teaching and learning, especially of numeracy, were very good. In a Year 13 **AVCE science** lesson, a small number of students were kept very interested by a demonstration and interactive CD on the medical uses of ultra-sound. Teaching and learning were good. Standards were below average but achievement was good. The course has a strong applied component, including visits to waterworks, a brewery and hospital, which contributes to understanding of the world of work.

Biology

Provision in IB biology is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent teacher subject knowledge and understanding
- Very well prepared practical work, excellent technical support and very good use of ICT to support and extend analysis of results
- Very good student practical skills, knowledge and understanding; very good literacy skills used to talk about and reflect upon their work
- Very good student attitudes to work and to the subject at both higher and standard levels
- Good day-to-day assessment, information shared with students about their progress and very good use of homework
- Students would welcome a wider range of teaching strategies and these should be recorded in schemes of work to help and guide new teachers

Commentary

Examination results

173. In 2004, results in IB biology at the Higher level exceeded the world average by more than a grade and equated to an average A2 B grade. At standard level, those Arts students taking biology as their cultural science also exceeded the world average, although by a smaller amount. The higher group was all girls while in the standard group there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In the higher group, students were all in the middle range of value added, which had been calculated on a very tough criterion; so achievement in these examinations was good.

Standards and achievement

174. Standards observed in lessons were well above the average expected in a sixth form biology course. Practical skills were very good. Standard students were well able to set up a rather fiddly experiment on photosynthesis in pondweed. Higher students were adept at the use of a microscope and they were able to calculate magnification and make hypotheses about the distribution of stomata on variegated leaves. A Year 13 higher group was able to discuss the ultra structure of the kidney, which they had just started to learn about, with very good use of technical vocabulary and appreciation of the importance of cell structure (such as fenestration in glomerular capillaries). The Year 12 had a well above average understanding of genetics problems. They showed facility in solving monohybrid problems in which phenotypes and dominance had to be inferred from the written statements. In at least one case, understanding went further; with one student able to spot that the genetic ratios were probabilistic, an indicator of very high attainment.
175. Literacy and numeracy are much enhanced by the nature of the IB course. One student had written his extended essay on a biological topic (allergy) and all students had good and very good technical vocabulary. Numerical understanding was also good, developed in the use of spreadsheets to enrich practical work as well as the coursework contribution of statistical methods in the 6-day field course. Attitudes and personal development were very good. Students were very positive and co-operative at both levels, practical skills were strong and they were very willing to engage in debate about the theory of the subject, such as field development in embryology. Students are above average, when they enter the course, but their academic and personal development justifies the judgement of very good achievement in the higher course and good achievement in the standard.

Teaching and learning

176. The teachers seen were very experienced and had excellent knowledge and understanding of biology across the whole syllabus. They use ICT very well to complement practical work. Explanations are very clear and the teachers are very alert to day-to-day learning, for example on the genetics work. Homework is used very well to consolidate learning. Experiments are very well thought out and greatly assisted by excellent technician work which is regarded highly by staff and students. Students appreciate the quality of the teaching but, being experienced by a wider than usual curriculum offer in the IB are sophisticated enough to want a wider range of teaching strategies, although the ones in use are very effective. Students integrate well. Some travel great distances to access the courses. In biology, the teachers are aware of the performance of all students and the students are aware of their current achievements.

Leadership and management

177. Leadership and management are good. Biology is a popular subject (with 8 teaching groups). Fieldwork is a strength of the department and enriches the course. However the current schemes of work do not always give new or less-experienced teachers enough support. Staffing is very good, overall, for teachers and technicians, and resources are good including texts (some of which the students have to pay for). Accommodation is good because biology is mostly taught in the newer and larger laboratories, which are very well looked after. The contribution of technicians to the subject is excellent. Biology was not mentioned in any substantial way in the previous inspection. Since that time, numbers have increased and a relative weakness among the sciences has been reversed. Therefore, improvement has been good.

Chemistry

Provision in A Level chemistry is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher knowledge and understanding of chemistry and of coursework requirements is good
- The practical nature of the course leads to good student motivation
- The department has been strengthened by new staff
- Attitudes are in general good, although some of the “A’ level students lack confidence in themselves
- However the schemes of work for A Level are not providing enough guidance

Commentary

Examination results

178. In 2004 the results of a small cohort met A Level expectations, with a range of grades from B to D, and students’ achievement was satisfactory.

Standards and achievement

179. The standards observed in the school broadly met expectations, although they varied and some classes had below average knowledge of chemical reactions. In both AS and A2 classes, the students met expectations in the practical skills. During practical work, which they valued, they exercised good co-operative and manipulative skills. Most AS students were able to calculate relative atomic mass and to reach results with an acceptable range of accuracy. Year 12 students had some problems in a synoptic approach to the periodic table, finding it hard to co-ordinate knowledge and understanding about bonding and electron orbitals with patterns of melting and boiling points across period 3. However they were guided in doing the task and achievement in this lesson was good. The Year 13 group was not, at this stage, able to draw upon knowledge of the types of chemical reaction in order to discuss what they were doing in the hydrolysis of castor oil, which reduced the exercise to recipe following. Students enter the course above average, but not markedly so. Attitudes are good both to work and the subject, but lack of confidence does reduce performance. Therefore, overall achievement observed in lessons is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

180. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of chemistry and of the examination requirements. They explain chemical processes clearly. Teachers’ planning was geared to dealing with student difficulties, including additional support for those who needed it for various reasons. The best teaching made good use of the information from assessment of students’ understanding to plan the next stage of their work though in some classes the information about students’ achievement was more limited. Teachers used a variety of teaching strategies including involving students in sorting and sequencing information about the periodic table. Numeracy is aided by the large number of students who take mathematical courses alongside A Level science. Though students varied in their skill at estimating precision (with a tendency to use all the decimal places the calculator provides, regardless of the accuracy of measurement). Some spelling of technical terms, (such as van der Waals forces) was idiosyncratic). Some lessons lacked pace initially, because teachers were not yet used to planning double lessons around the registration break. In such cases teachers had not given sufficient thought to challenging students to think as they followed instructions.

Leadership and management

181. The leadership of chemistry is good and management is satisfactory. The strengths lie in the progress on schemes of work, although this was stronger in the IB course than the A level course, the increasing use of ICT, the recent appointments, the good regard to safety and the technician support, Staffing is good as are resources. However the schemes of work for A Level are not providing enough guidance for less experienced staff, and the monitoring of teaching and learning, though satisfactory, could be more effective. The accommodation is satisfactory; chemistry is largely taught in the older smaller laboratories because this is where the fume cupboards are situated.

Improvement is hard to judge because there was little effective comment about chemistry at the time of the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus of the inspection was the AVCE course in ICT.

Provision in AVCE information and communication technology is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are well supported in their learning
- The course is well managed and makes good use of the teaching expertise available
- Students develop ICT skills and knowledge and are able to apply these effectively to satisfy examination requirements
- Students develop their independent learning skills well
- Frequent changes in the teaching team and inconsistent access to some computer programmes in the past have affected the continuity of students' learning

Commentary

Examination Results

182. This is a relatively new subject within the school. The first results available in 2003 were in line with the national average. 2004 results were similar. Current marked work, and work in progress indicates that this level of success is likely to be maintained. Student numbers have increased considerably in the last year.

Standards and achievement

183. Students' ICT knowledge, on entry to the course, varies considerably but they make sound progress throughout the course because of the secure teaching they receive. Students produce computer presentations, develop and use skills in applying spreadsheets and produce web page designs. They carry out research using the internet and use the information gained to make evaluations of computer equipment which has an impact on society and the environment. Examination of current work showed good evidence of increasing knowledge and understanding and the ability to respond satisfactorily to the tasks set. This is enabling them to become more independent learners. Finished work indicates that tasks are completed to at least a satisfactory standard and more able and experienced students produce work to a good standard.

Teaching and learning

184. The teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and in some aspects it was good. The course is well structured and teachers use their subject knowledge well, as for example in the teaching of spreadsheets and web page design. Students are well supported by teachers monitoring individuals' computer work in lessons and because they are guided well through written material. Students co-operate well and support each other's learning. In the best lessons, teachers consistently challenge students by reviewing their work, enabling them to achieve well. Students have clear deadlines for the submission of work and students have to plan how they will complete each unit within the time available. They

get good guidance on how they might improve their work and are clear about the requirements for different grades. Students value and appreciate the teaching they receive. However, frequent changes of teachers throughout the course have affected the continuity some students' learning. Students have good literacy skills and this is enabling them to write good evaluative texts and develop their independent learning skills.

Leadership and management

185. The new course has been introduced successfully. A lot of effective work has been done to organise the course and prepare both materials and teachers to support learning. A team of teachers, some of whom are ICT specialists, delivers the curriculum effectively because the available expertise is used well. Whilst relatively successful, the course is still developing and would benefit from a more consistent team of ICT specialist teachers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

186. Students have satisfactory access to computers for individual study. Experience of using computers in lessons is variable but overall, good. For example, in advanced level science, students use a range of appropriate computer programmes in biology, physics and chemistry. Very good computer-generated presentation work takes place in textiles. Internet researched information is used effectively in business studies. Work in travel and tourism enabled computer-generated slides to be used very effectively to demonstrate how groups of students had planned a day's outing. Overall, students have a good range of computer skills and use these effectively to enhance the content and presentation of their work.

HUMANITIES

The school offers a range of IB, A Level and AVCE courses. History IB was inspected in depth and geography and religious studies were sampled. In **geography**, one lesson of a combined A Level and IB Year 13 group was observed. A good *PowerPoint* observation on the Jurassic Coast was used effectively to prepare for an examination question in coastal erosion. In response to questioning, students demonstrated above average levels of understanding of the causes and effects of coastal processes. A good **religious studies** A Level lesson was observed in which students of above average standard achieved well because they were challenged to debate fundamental issues about existentialism. The teacher used a video documentary to support learning to focus on specific questions about the human condition.

History

Provision in IB history is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Students' standards of work are above average at both the higher and standard level of the IB

- The very good teaching is based on excellent subject expertise and very good levels of challenge
- The very good quality of learning, which results in good achievement
- The enjoyment students derive from the course, which is reflected in the popularity of the subject

Commentary

187. Following an established pattern, results at IB were above the national and the worldwide average in 2004. At higher level, about half the students reached the top grades and results in history are amongst the strongest in the school.

188. In the work seen standards are above national expectations. Students are achieving well in terms of prior attainment. Encouraged by their teachers, students learn to think creatively and to consider different analytical approaches and historical interpretations. Written work demonstrates the growing ability of all students to challenge the assumptions implied in a question, and to select and use knowledge relevantly and effectively. Those at the top end of the range show a strong synthetic understanding and a well-developed ability to reach sound historical judgments. Adopting a critical approach, students can produce convincing arguments and reach coherent conclusions. They are focused and responsive, when sharing different perspectives and ideas, or testing out their views in class discussions. Overall, students become confident, independent learners and as such are well prepared for university education.
189. Teaching in the sixth form is never less than very good. Lessons are interesting and enlivened by humour. Teachers' excellent subject expertise allows them to confront students energetically with issues surrounding evidence and the significance of historical controversies. Using skilful questioning techniques, teachers heighten the appreciation of different factors in historical causation. Lessons are designed to extend historical enquiry and to develop conceptual understanding. The good relationship of staff and students contributes to an atmosphere that is both constructive and secure, and is reflected in the significant take-up for the subject and very good record of retention. There are currently 65 students studying IB history at either standard or higher level in the sixth form.
190. Subject leadership and management are very good. Excellent knowledge of the curriculum and a very good understanding of the way students learn, colours the work of the department. Teachers share high expectations. Their commitment is demonstrated in the regular assessment of written work, and the quality of diagnostic feedback, which provide students with detailed indicators for the improvement of their performance. Very good use is made of assessment data including value added information. The breadth of curriculum is impressive, and does much to reflect the emphasis the school places on the value of human diversity and international understanding. Students have good access to ICT for independent study, but there is room to extend the provision of ICT for teaching purposes and the stock of books held in the library. Once resources become available, there are plans for the electronic exchange of work. The department has made good Improvement since the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The area was not a focus for the inspection, but work in **A Level food technology** was sampled. Students worked independently on coursework projects exploring how children's food could be healthier. They were investigating how school meals could be made healthier and experimented with how to improve children's diet by considering the balance of sugar and fruit in the production of toffee apples. Students achieved well.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The main focus for the inspection was IB music, but work in art and theatre studies was sampled. One **AS-level art** lesson was sampled, standards were well above average, reflecting the above average standards on entry to the course. Students are making good progress. The curriculum is significantly enriched by visits to galleries and in particular by a visit to the Netherlands, where students studied still life painting. Teaching and learning were good overall. On the **art IB** course teaching is very successfully building on students' prior attainments and experiences. Their learning is very good as a result. A key feature of the very good teaching is the preparation for, and experiences of, seeing artists work. One excellent lesson of **theatre arts IB** was observed. The relationships established over time

and the quality of teaching had raised the expectations of students so that both achievement and standards were well above average.

Music

Provision in IB music is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Below Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide positive individual support to students on the course
- Achievement is limited by inadequate timetable provision
- Teaching is not always sufficiently well focused on the learning needs of students
- Students make a positive contribution to the musical life of the school and this supports their personal and musical development

Commentary

Examination results

191. Recent examination results have been below average.

Standards and achievement

192. The standards of work seen are below average. Students write articulate essays, and compose confidently using computers. Their knowledge and recall of basic musical concepts are weak and this has an impact on their attainment. Achievement in lessons seen was satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

193. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students receive good individual support and advice within and outside of timetabled lessons. Some teaching is not sufficiently well structured to ensure that students learn effectively. Students do not have adequate reference material in their folders to enable them to consolidate and revise what they have been taught.

Leadership and management

194. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some students who are accepted onto the course lack the skills to cope with the demands of the programme. The timetable provision for the course is well below the recommended minimum, and some students cannot attend all of the lessons because of timetable clashes. Teachers make up for this by providing extra tuition outside of lesson times.

195. Students are encouraged to contribute to the life of the department and provide valuable support to teachers in lessons, and by participating in, and sometimes leading, extra-curricular groups. The use of students as excellent role models was evident in a solo performance in assembly and in providing the accompaniment for singing.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

There were no focus subjects in this area but work in AVCE leisure and tourism and physical education was sampled. In the **physical education** lesson observed the teacher gave very effective support to individual students in preparing extended essays on sports

psychology. Examination criteria were used very well to enable the students to match their essays to requirements and achieve higher grades. Standards were good. One lesson of **AVCE leisure and tourism** was sampled in Year 13. Students prepared a *PowerPoint* presentation of a planned trip with a range of options for possible activities. Transport had been arranged and all activities were costed. Learning was good, as a result of the purposefulness of tasks, the students' very good attitudes and teacher's good knowledge.

BUSINESS

The school offers courses in business courses in the IB and AVCE and economics at IB and A Level. The focus subject for the inspection was AVCE business, and economics was sampled. In the **economics IB** lesson sampled, clear teaching enabled students to develop their understanding of economic concepts through explanations that linked demanding economic theory concerning the relationships between consumer behaviour, to the real world. In the **A Level economics** lessons sampled, students increased their understanding of economic development because of stimulating teaching. Clear whole-class teaching was combined with group and individual work to develop analytical skills. Students developed a good understanding of alternative measures of economic growth.

Provision in AVCE business is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Not reported separately in the last inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many students achieve results that are well above what might be expected from their GCSE results
- Constructive guidance and feedback are given on students' coursework, enabling them to make very good progress
- Relationships between the teachers and students are very productive
- The course builds sequentially on students' knowledge and skills, making very good use of situations from the real world of business
- A good range of visits and speakers contribute well to the achievement of students
- There are insufficient opportunities for monitoring teaching to ensure consistency across the department

Commentary

Examination results

196. In 2003, results were around the national average and in 2004 results were similar reflecting the full range of grades.

Standards & Achievement

197. Standards seen in the current Year 13 are above average, which represents very good achievement for students who tend to have below average GCSE point scores for A level students. In the current Year 13, around a quarter of students are on target for the highest grades. By the end of the course, students can give a thorough descriptive account of the basic characteristics of different customers for chosen organisations, such as large retail outlets, international fashion brands and

international car manufacturers. They can design a marketing campaign for a new product and can indicate the implications of human resource problems, for example the messages that high staff turnover may tell a police force about morale.

Teaching and learning

198. Teaching and learning are characterised by a strong focus on assessment and very good written and oral feedback. Students receive very detailed feedback helping them to improve their work. Relationships are very good. Students work hard throughout lessons. Teaching observed was consistently good or better. Students' response to the subject is very good. They appreciate that they receive one-to-one help and value the access to teachers out of lessons and the after-school 'catch up' sessions provided. They believe that the approach in the subject encourages them to become self-motivated and that the teachers genuinely care about their education and well being. Computers play an important role in students' learning. Word processing and internet research are used extensively, and dedicated business education websites are used well to support independent learning. A wide range of teaching and learning styles is used. Visits to Eurodisney accompany the study of marketing and develop students' understanding of the real world of business well, in addition to enhancing the international dimension. During the inspection, Year 12 students were preparing to participate in a Young Enterprise trade fair and this enabled students to learn very well about enterprise.

Leadership and management

199. The leadership of the department is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all courses offered. Plans are well developed and provision is well thought out. Business is well established in Years 10 and 11 and this is providing an effective grounding for sixth form courses. The match of staff to the curriculum is good, drawing on the relevant strengths of teachers. Staff make themselves available to students out of lessons. Assessment and its verification are well managed. Resources are good and well organised. There is access to computers for independent work and for whole-class teaching. The AVCE has been introduced successfully providing a wider range of business courses at advanced level to meet the needs of different students. Teaching and learning are not yet monitored well enough.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Sixth form grade	School grade
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	4	3
Overall standards achieved		2
Pupils' achievement	3	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		1
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	3
How well pupils learn	2	3
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		1
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and schools	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the head teacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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