

INSPECTION REPORT

ATTLEBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL

Attleborough

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121167

Headteacher: Mr S Bailey

Lead inspector: Mr J Bald

Dates of inspection: 6 to 9 December 2004

Inspection number: 268741

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:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	881
School address:	9 Norwich Road Attleborough
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Butcher
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is below average in size, but is growing quickly with the expansion of the town. There are slightly more boys than girls in the main school. The sixth form is very small, but works in association with a much larger sixth form in a nearby town. The school has recently become a specialist mathematics and computing college. It holds the Investors in People award. Very nearly all students are of white British heritage, with a very small number from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; a small proportion of these students have English as an additional language. Most students joining the school have reached average standards for their age. The proportion of students with special educational needs is broadly average, but an above-average proportion have a statement of special educational needs; many of these students have difficulties with behaviour. The stability of the school population is above average, and its social and economic circumstances are broadly average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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33160	Natalia Power	Team inspector	English
18886	Frank Ruggiero	Team inspector	Mathematics
6432	Mick Sewter	Team inspector	Science; Chemistry (sixth form)
33727	Nick Vinall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
15075	Bryan Goodman-Stephens	Team inspector	Citizenship, English as an additional language
20533	David Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology
33738	Moazam Parvez	Team inspector	Geography
4223	Garth Collard	Team inspector	History
4426	Terry Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31821	Brian McCann	Team inspector	Physical education; sociology (sixth form)
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides good education. Standards at GCSE and A-level are broadly average, and represent good long-term achievement. Teaching and learning are good, with very good features, and there are good opportunities for practical and creative work. Some of the benefits of these strengths are lost through weaknesses in marking and in the curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The school's status as a mathematics and computing college is helping to raise standards, and sits well beside its very good provision in design and technology. The school is led and managed well, and the headteacher's strong leadership charts a clear path for improvement. Value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All groups of students achieve well from a very wide range of starting points.
- The headteacher provides very clear and effective direction to the school.
- Teachers prepare interesting and engaging lessons; the best teaching is excellent.
- Students behave well and work hard. Relationships and guidance to students are very good.
- There are weaknesses in marking and day-to-day assessment in several subjects.
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 suffers from weaknesses in timetabling and co-ordination.
- The school's small sixth form is well organised and effective, and student numbers are rising.

When the school was last inspected, in January 1999, teaching and learning were good, but it had weaknesses in planning and organisation, and did not meet several key statutory requirements. Following a drop in standards in 2002, the school has recovered well, and its response to the points for action from the last inspection has been good. The present headteacher has introduced a series of innovations that are improving the working atmosphere of the school and its provision for students who need extra support. While some weaknesses have still to be fully put right, the school's overall improvement has been good, and it is very well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			Similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	C	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	C	C	

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

Achievement is good. GCSE results are consistently within the average band, but are improving at an above average rate, and show good progress from students' starting points in Year 7. The standard of work seen during the inspection was also broadly average in Year 11, and showed further signs of improvement in several subjects. Achievement in Year 11 is good. In core subjects of the National Curriculum, it is good in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and satisfactory, with good features, in English and science. There is good achievement across a wide range of other subjects, with very good achievement in design and technology. National test results in Year 9 are average overall, but improved to well above average levels in English in 2004, and were above average in science. Achievement in the current Year 9 is good. There is good achievement in most subjects in Year 9, and recent improvements had led to

satisfactory achievement in other subjects by the time of the inspection. Sixth form standards are broadly average, and represent good achievement from students' GCSE results.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Students behave well, work hard and accept responsibility. Students with behavioural difficulties worked well during the inspection, and the school ensured that their behaviour did not disturb the learning of others. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, and taught in an atmosphere of shared interest and co-operation that leads to good learning. There is a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching, and a strong commitment from the headteacher and all staff to improving teaching and learning by using a wide range of teaching methods and new resources, including ICT. Long-term tracking of students' progress is satisfactory, but weaknesses and gaps in day-to-day marking in several subjects limit the benefit to students of the school's good teaching. Homework is used well in most classes, but there are some gaps.

The curriculum is good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form; in Years 7 to 9 it is satisfactory. There are some good new courses, but weaknesses exist in the timetable and in the co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and some aspects of special educational needs provision. Enrichment of learning is satisfactory, and very good in sports, but limited by the school bus schedule. The school has plans to improve this. The school is now well staffed, and has a good programme for improving its site. Arrangements for health and safety are good, and students receive very good support and guidance. The school involves them and acts on their views. There is a good relationship with parents, and very good partnerships with other schools and the community. The sixth form's link with Wymondham College makes an essential contribution to the range of courses it offers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management, and is ably supported by the senior leadership team. The management of care and guidance to students is very good, with an excellent recording system. Middle managers provide a strong sense of direction, though not all ensure consistency in marking and homework. The work of governors is good. They provide clear direction, and have made big improvements in meeting statutory requirements since the last inspection. They have made arrangements for a daily act of collective worship to take place, but this does not consistently happen in practice.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and students see the school's work as satisfactory overall, and both had concerns about behaviour and the quality of teaching, particularly from temporary teachers. Inspectors found that behaviour was now good, and behavioural difficulties were managed well. The school accepts that there have been weaknesses in teaching in some subjects in the recent past, but inspection evidence indicates that these have now been tackled effectively.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve co-ordination of literacy, numeracy, and some aspects of special educational needs.
- Ensure that marking gives guidance on improving work, and tackle the gaps in homework.
- Improve timetabling and arrangements for the grouping of students in classes, in Years 7 to 9.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides good education. Standards are broadly average, and represent good achievement from students' GCSE results. Teaching and learning are good, and students' very good attitudes contribute to a pleasant working atmosphere. Leadership and management are very good, and the link with Wymondham College is very well managed. The sixth form has been thoughtfully developed since the last inspection. Effective financial management ensures that it provides good value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teachers know their subjects very well, and adapt work effectively to students' needs.
- Advice, guidance and support for students are very good, and particularly well organised.
- Standards are above average in mathematics, and numeracy skills are used well.
- A minority of students' achievement is held back by weak literacy skills.
- There is a need to improve the library, and to extend the use of ICT in lessons.
- Management systems are compact, well thought out and highly effective.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good in English. Teachers know the subject well, and their effective teaching leads to average standards and good achievement at A-level.
Mathematics	Good. A flexible approach and good teaching are leading to rising numbers of students. Standards are above average, and achievement is good.
Science	Satisfactory in chemistry. There is a high pass rate, mostly with low grades. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and teachers know the subject very well. . Some students need to improve the organisation of their written work.
Information and communication technology	Good. Teaching and learning are good, and students are achieving well in this newly introduced subject, though some have weaknesses in their literacy skills.
Humanities	Good in sociology. Students do well to achieve broadly average standards without having studied the subject at GCSE. Teaching and learning are good.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school has clear systems for setting targets, tracking progress towards them, and providing personal support and guidance to students. Its approach is very well organised, and involves students very effectively in assessing their own needs and progress. The quality and consistency of guidance and support makes an important contribution to achievement and to students' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is led and managed very well. The head of the sixth form has a clear view of its contribution to education in the area, and works closely with the headteacher to develop courses that meet students' needs within the school's budget. Teaching, learning and standards are closely monitored.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students have positive views of the sixth form. They enjoy their work and school life.

The most important things the sixth form should do to improve are:

- Improve the levels of support and teaching for students with weak literacy skills.
- Improve the range of books in the library, and carry out plans to extend the use of ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards in Year 11 and in the sixth form are broadly average, and represent good achievement from students' starting points. Standards in Year 9 are also broadly average, but are rising, and also show good achievement. There are no significant long-term differences in the achievement of different groups of students, but there is some variation in achievement among subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- 2004 GCSE results show very good value added from these students' standards in Year 7.
- Work seen during the inspection showed good achievement in Year 11 across a wide range of subjects, including mathematics and ICT.
- Achievement is very good in design and technology, particularly at A and A* grades at GCSE.
- Achievement in English is good in Year 9; it remains satisfactory overall at GCSE.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well.
- There is little long-term difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
- Overall achievement is good in the sixth form, and standards are above average in mathematics.

Commentary

1. Standards reached by students joining the school have been broadly average in recent years, though students now joining Year 7 have achieved higher results than students in earlier years in their primary schools. Most students now in examination year groups had reached broadly average standards when they joined the school. While the proportion of students with special educational needs is broadly average, it includes an above average proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs, who often have difficulties with behaviour.
2. From this starting point, overall achievement in the school is good, and it has established a trend of improvement. The standard of work seen during the inspection in Year 11 was average to above average in almost all subjects. It was below average in music, despite recent improvements, because of earlier staffing difficulties, and well above average in design and technology. While the proportion of students passing five GCSE subjects at grades A*-C was broadly average in 2003 and 2004, overall GCSE results, which take account of each grade achieved, were above average in 2003, and showed further improvement in 2004. 2004 results showed particularly good achievement among lower-attaining students, who often gained grade D where their standards on joining the school would have indicated lower grades. Higher-attaining students achieved a growing proportion of A and A* grades in 2004, particularly in double science, English and design and technology, though this remains inconsistent between subjects. GCSE results are now improving at an above average rate.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	52 (49)	51 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (91)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-	98 (97)	97 (96)

G grades		
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	292.2 (35.4)	282.5 (34.7)

There were 148 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. A new system for calculating points was introduced in 2004.

- Overall, Year 9 national test results and teachers' assessments in ICT were average in 2003 and 2004. These results have, however, been above average in science for each of the last five years, and showed a very good improvement to well above average levels in English in 2004. The standard of work seen during the inspection showed a similar pattern to that in Year 11, and represents good overall achievement from students' starting points. There is, however, a barrier to achievement in some students' weak literacy skills, and arrangements for co-ordinating literacy provision do not at present do enough to combat this.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.2 (33.4)	33.3 (33.4)
mathematics	36.3 (35.8)	35.5 (35.4)
science	34.0 (34.6)	33.1 (33.6)

There were 149 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Within the core subjects of the National Curriculum, standards are broadly average, with good achievement among higher-attaining students, in English, mathematics and science, and above average in ICT. Overall achievement in these subjects is satisfactory in English and science, and good in mathematics and ICT. Achievement in most other subjects is good. Achievement in design and technology is very good at GCSE, and there is no unsatisfactory achievement, but achievement in citizenship is only just satisfactory because of limited teaching time. 2004 GCSE results were a little better among girls than boys, but the gap was narrower than in most schools. Boys achieve more than girls in science at GCSE, and girls do better in design and technology, history and religious education. The quality of work seen during the inspection showed no significant overall differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Students with special educational needs achieve well overall, with some very good achievement in vocational courses. The small number of students who have English as an additional language work hard and achieve well. The achievement of gifted and talented students is satisfactory, and they do well in response to the school's extensive opportunities for sport and its growing opportunities in art and design and drama. These students could, however, achieve more if provision were better co-ordinated.
- Current standards in Year 11 present a similar overall picture to those at the time of the last inspection, but they are more consistent, with better results from lower-attaining students, and improvements in subjects, notably ICT, where the last inspection identified weaknesses. There have been improvements in the numbers of students reaching and exceeding nationally expected levels in Year 9 national tests, including a very good improvement in English in 2004. ICT results, which were not included in these calculations at the time of the last inspection, were below average; they are now average, and improving rapidly. The headteacher's leadership and management are having a positive impact on standards and achievement. In his four years in charge of the school, he has given high priority to improving the consistency of teaching and learning. This has maintained strengths and brought improvement in several subjects where achievement was weak. The appointment of new specialist staff, sometimes very recently, is also having a positive effect on achievement, and the school's recent status as a mathematics and computing college is making an impact on standards in mathematics and

ICT, though this is too recent to be reflected in examination results. The targets the school sets itself for national tests and at GCSE are very challenging in view of students' starting points. It met some, but not all, of its targets in 2004, and exceeded its overall target for GCSE. The school's recovery from the fall in standards that occurred in 2002 has been good, and it is well placed to improve further.

Sixth form

6. The sixth form is very small, and the number of students taking each course is often too low to allow for meaningful comparison with national results. The school operates a flexible approach to entry to the sixth form, which ensures that students are qualified to undertake their courses, but offers good opportunities for students, including those with English as an additional language, who have lower grades than would be required by some schools. As a result, while the sixth form includes some students with very high GCSE results, overall standards among students joining Year 12 are below average. A-level results are within average bands overall, and there has been recent improvement in most of the subjects fully inspected, and standards are now above average in mathematics. AS results were weak in 2003, but improved in most subjects in 2004. National comparative figures for the sixth form were not available at the time of the inspection. The standard of work seen during the inspection was also broadly average in each subject fully inspected (16), and had good features in individual lessons, with outstanding achievement in work sampled in art and design. Overall, this represents good achievement from students' starting points. Leadership and management ensure that students' progress is carefully tracked, and that students are given good guidance on the local provision that will enable them to achieve best.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	90.8 (91.7)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	32.7 (21.6)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	240 (234.6)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 27 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Attendance is also good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Punctuality is good throughout the school. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff work very effectively to create a sense of community and desire to learn.
- Most students want to learn, and they behave well. Relationships are good, and often very good.
- Very effective support for students with behavioural difficulties ensures that they do not disrupt learning.
- Students are happy to accept responsibility; they carry out their duties efficiently and in a friendly way.
- Students learn to respect the views of others, and develop a clear sense of right and wrong.
- There have been no permanent exclusions recently, but the rate of fixed-period exclusion is comparatively high.

- The school deals successfully with misbehaviour when it occurs.
- Drama lessons offer very good, and sometimes excellent, opportunities for social development.

Commentary

7. The headteacher, his senior colleagues and all staff in the school work consistently and effectively to develop positive attitudes and good behaviour among all students. Behaviour in more than four lessons out of five and by students around the school was good or very good, especially when students were well taught. Very little unsatisfactory behaviour was seen, and it was effectively handled. A minority of parents and a larger number of students were concerned about the consistency of behaviour. Discussion with students and analysis of the school's records indicated that these concerns had been justified in the recent past, particularly in departments that had had a high turnover of staff, but that they were now being effectively tackled. The atmosphere throughout the school is friendly and purposeful, and encourages an enthusiasm to learn and to take part in extra-curricular activities. Most students are keen to learn, and the minority who have behavioural difficulties receive support that encourages them to take part, but does not permit them to disturb the learning of other students. Students respect each other's views, and relationships between staff and students and amongst students are good. No racism was seen, and the school does not tolerate racist or other anti-social behaviour. Students, especially the older ones, welcome opportunities to take responsibility, often as prefects, and carry out tasks willingly and efficiently.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	860	69	0
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	1	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

8. Fixed-period exclusions have increased considerably since the last inspection, though permanent exclusions have reduced to zero. Measures to promote good behaviour and reduce exclusions, including the behavioural support centre, have contained the number of fixed-period exclusions during this school year. The level, however, remains higher than in many schools, because the school does not tolerate behaviour that interferes with learning or with respect for students and staff. The rate of fixed-period exclusion also reflects the high number of students who join the school with serious behavioural problems, for whom there is little alternative local provision. Most exclusions are short. The school does all it can, including

using external advice, to minimise exclusions and to be fair to those excluded. It works effectively to re-integrate students who been excluded from other schools.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.2%	School data	0.3%
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.

9. Measures to promote attendance are very good, and parents are very successful in ensuring that their children attend regularly. Attendance is above average overall, though there was a dip in the past year, with a slight increase in unauthorised absence; during the current term attendance has improved to 94.1 per cent. Punctuality in the morning is occasionally affected by some students' travelling difficulties, but is generally good.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

10. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies are well organised and usually focus on moral and social issues, though they and tutorial periods do not always include the planned daily act of collective worship. In some lessons, notably in religious education and art, students have good opportunities to reflect on personal belief, and for sensitive analysis of feelings. This is not, however, consistent across the school, and some opportunities for reflection are missed. Attractive and aesthetically pleasing displays around the school enhance the learning environment and contribute to students' spiritual development.
11. Provision for students' moral development is good, and has very good features. The aims and positive ethos of the school provide a very good foundation. The behaviour policy makes clear what is acceptable, and is applied consistently, with very effective additional support for students who need it. Students are expected to accept responsibility for their actions and to be tolerant and respectful of each other. Teachers give a strong lead in encouraging good relationships and in helping students to distinguish right from wrong behaviour. Many departments encourage students to reflect on moral issues. This is particularly strong in art through its work on drugs awareness, bullying and eating disorders, in history with its coverage of slavery, child labour and the suffragette movement, and in geography through the study of environmental issues. Students regularly contribute to national and international charities, and to the work of a local school for students with special educational needs. The 'Question of the Week' response board in the library challenges students' opinions on a wide range of moral issues and publishes outcomes for all to see.
12. Provision for social development is good, and has excellent features. Assemblies and the school council emphasise the importance of living in a community, and help students develop a sense of responsibility, although some tutorial periods could make a more effective contribution to this work. Drama lessons and dramatic productions provide very good, and sometimes excellent, opportunities for students to work together and to explore the nature of social relationships. Students have good scope to interact with others in lessons through the use of paired and group work, especially in science, citizenship, ICT, art and PE. The school's extensive provision for sport makes a very good contribution to students' personal development. Teachers and educational support staff working with students with behavioural difficulties are highly skilled in communication, and benefit particularly from the excellent systems set up by a deputy headteacher for assessing and tracking students' personal development. The best work of teaching assistants in this respect is excellent: it enables students with serious behavioural difficulties to take a full part in lessons and to enjoy their work. There is very effective additional support for Traveller students and for those in public care.
13. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. There is an emphasis on the richness and diversity of other cultures in some subjects, and students understand the range of cultures represented in modern society. Work in art introduces students to forms of expression for a wide range of non-European cultures, and there is good representation of a range of cultures in music and religious education, which includes effective study of the African-Caribbean experience of education. The school provides a good range of opportunities for students to participate in social and cultural activities, including day trips to the theatre, to museums and galleries, and a residential visit.

Sixth form

14. Behaviour and attitudes in the sixth form are very good. Students trust staff and have come to regard them as better-informed friends who can really help them personally and academically. They are happy and experience no form of harassment. Sixth form attendance this term is very good, better than in the main school. This is in stark contrast with last year, when the

attendance of Year 13 students, who have now left, was poor, though that of Year 12 students was good. Sixth form students take a thoroughly responsible attitude to attendance and punctuality, which they see as being in their own best interests. The school makes good provision for the personal development of sixth form students, encouraging them to take responsibility within the main school and the community.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, with very good features, and arrangements to assess and track progress are satisfactory. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities in Years 7 to 9, and is good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The school takes good care of students, and provides very good guidance on their work and personal development. Relationships with parents are good, and there is a very good working relationship with other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with very good features, throughout the school, and there is a strong working partnership between teachers and students. Arrangements to assess standards and track progress are satisfactory overall. There are good features in Years 10 and 11, but weaknesses in day-to-day marking, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and also in some sixth form subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan interesting lessons that engage students and make them want to learn.
- There is very good teaching in over a quarter of lessons, and the best is excellent.
- Teachers make good use of time and of new ICT resources.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for students with special educational needs.
- Some of the benefits of teaching are lost because of weaknesses in day-to-day marking and assessment.
- Students co-operate well with teachers, and take responsibility for their own learning.
- The headteacher and senior managers monitor teaching and take effective action to improve it.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 122 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactor y	Unsatisfacto ry	Poor	Very Poor
5(4%)	29 (24%)	52 (43%)	36 (30%)	0	0	0

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

15. Since the last inspection, the school has experienced a high turnover of staff, and a significant number of parents told inspectors that they felt this had led to inconsistency in the quality of teaching, particularly where classes were taught by temporary teachers. By the time of the inspection, this issue had been tackled effectively by the headteacher and senior staff, and a good level of consistency had been established. New staff are well qualified for their work, and newly qualified teachers often teach to a high standard. Heads of department promote consistency and teamwork within their subjects, and have a clear view of the link between the long-term quality of teaching and learning and examination results. The headteacher and senior staff monitor teaching and learning closely, and have used training days well to help

teachers plan effective lessons that meet the very wide range of learning needs among the students. This includes effective use of lesson structures from the national strategy for Years 7 to 9, and good additional support for students whose behaviour difficulties are a barrier to learning. The outcome of this work is teaching that is similar in overall quality to the good teaching seen at the last inspection but more consistent, and well adapted to the changing needs of the students.

16. Throughout the school, good teaching is based on very good knowledge of subjects, and planning that uses this to design interesting work that challenges students and develops their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers foster good relationships with students, sustain a good pace of work, and make good use of resources, including the school's developing ICT resources. Where the teaching is very good and excellent, teachers have very high expectations of students, and do all they can to inspire them to achieve the highest possible standards.
17. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or better, planning and subject knowledge are strong, but there are some weaknesses in the pace of work and in matching work to the needs of all of the students in the class. The use of homework is satisfactory, with good features in some subjects, including science, but analysis of students' planners also showed some gaps in homework, confirming the concerns of some parents that it was not always set when it should be. In most lessons, students' good attitudes make an important contribution to learning, and they form a very effective partnership with their teachers. Mostly in Years 7 to 9, the behaviour of a small minority of students is a potential barrier to their own and others' learning. This occurred rarely during the inspection, and, when it did, prompt action was taken by senior managers to remove disruptive students and to protect the learning of classes.
18. The school has developed good systems for assessing standards and tracking students' progress. These are generally well used, and are good in Years 10 and 11, when they are linked effectively with GCSE requirements. However, significant weaknesses in day-to-day marking in several departments limit the contribution of assessment to guidance of students, and to teachers' planning. These weaknesses are frequent and significant enough to remove some of the benefit to students of the school's good teaching, and are a most important issue for the school to address.

Sixth form

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is similar to that in the main school. Teachers know subjects particularly well, and build on the growing maturity of students to develop a positive and successful working partnership. Weaknesses identified in day-to-day assessment and marking continue to affect the learning of a minority of students in the sixth form. However, sixth form students work well outside lessons, and appreciate the guidance on this that they receive from their teachers. This contributes to the good climate of achievement in the sixth form.

The curriculum

The curriculum in the main school is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 10 and 11. The sixth form curriculum, with courses offered at Wymondham College, meets students' needs well. The range of enrichment activities outside lessons is satisfactory, and good in the sixth form. The school has sufficient, well-qualified staff, and satisfactory resources for learning. Accommodation is adequate. The headteacher is developing staffing, resources and accommodation very effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to work creatively in drama and art, and to use ICT.

- Learning opportunities in Years 7 to 9 are restricted by weak timetabling and grouping of students.
- There is a good range of options, vocational courses and work experience for students in Years 10 and 11.
- The use of national strategies is satisfactory, but literacy and numeracy need to be better co-ordinated.
- The library is very well organised and is used intensively to promote interest in reading and study.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good overall, but the co-ordination of some aspects of their curriculum needs to be improved.
- Students have very good opportunities to take part in sports outside lessons.
- Other activities outside lessons are seriously constrained by the timetable of school buses.
- The school's link with Wymondham College provides valuable flexibility in the sixth form.

Commentary

20. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for academic progress and creative work. It has good features, including very good creative opportunities in drama and art, and increasingly effective use of ICT. An innovative course in learning skills in Year 7 is helping to boost students' confidence. Weak timetabling, however, leads to gaps between lessons in this subject and citizenship, and reduces the amount of time for history and geography among students choosing to take two languages. The grouping of students in Years 7 to 9 is effective in English, but leads to teaching groups in some subjects that are composed on the basis of standards in other subjects. There are also some subjects in which teachers too often have to share teaching for the same class. The national strategy for Years 7 to 9 is used in planning lessons, but provision for literacy and numeracy are not yet co-ordinated effectively across subjects. All of these factors limit the quality of learning, despite the good quality of teaching.
21. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides a wide range of flexible learning opportunities that meets the needs of all students well. There is a good range of GCSE courses, coupled with flexible learning and vocational courses in co-operation with two local colleges. These links make an important contribution to the education of lower-attaining students, including those who would otherwise be at risk of exclusion. There are suitable arrangements for work experience.
22. The proportion of students with special educational needs, particularly in behaviour, poses a significant challenge to the school, and, overall, the curriculum meets their needs well. They have very effective support from teaching assistants and specialist behavioural staff, and benefit from flexible learning in Years 10 and 11. Traveller students receive effective personal support and teaching that take good account of their interests and experience. Students' personal development and behaviour are closely and effectively monitored, with good involvement of students in assessing their own needs. Work in the newly established behaviour unit is based on the work done in students' classes, but needs to be further adapted to meet individual needs, particularly of students working at a standard well below that expected for their age. The unit does not yet have full information on schemes of work in each department, and has no facilities to use ICT for learning. Assessment of students with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection, but the review of targets in their individual education plans is too slow, so that some targets are out of date. Special educational needs in mathematics are identified, but specific targets for mathematics are not set; this makes it very difficult for teachers to adapt work to these students' needs.
23. Enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory but inhibited by the need to provide students with bus transport to rural areas after the end of the normal school day. More enrichment activities at lunchtime would improve learning. The school offers a very good range of sports, and a

good range of musical activities. A week of enrichment activities provided at the end of the summer term, in place of the normal curriculum, is well planned and effective.

24. Accommodation is satisfactory and is being developed very well, with good attention to improving currently limited access for people with disabilities. New accommodation will replace the present inadequate facilities for science. ICT is being developed as quickly as funds permit, and most adaptations of existing rooms are effective, though ICT in design and technology is inadequately accommodated. Learning resources are satisfactory or better in most subjects, but there are too few resources in music. The library has satisfactory to good resources in all subjects except citizenship, which has too few books. It is very well used to promote literacy and study skills, with attractive displays reflecting students' reading interests. By the time of the inspection, the school had recovered from staffing difficulties that had affected the quality of learning and achievement in some subjects over recent years. The number of teachers is now adequate, and teachers are well qualified in their subjects. Support staff are well qualified and experienced for the work they undertake, and make an important contribution to management. The headteacher's high priority to recruiting and retaining highly skilled staff makes an important contribution to the quality of teaching, to provision for students' personal development, and to arrangements to involve and engage those students with serious behavioural and learning difficulties.

Sixth Form

25. Although the sixth form has a very small number of students, it is managing its curriculum well, and provides a good range of A-level and vocational courses that fits well with other local provision, including a wider range of specialised vocational courses in colleges. The sixth form curriculum has good flexibility, and the link with Wymondham College allows students to pursue their interests in subjects where the school would have too few students to form a viable teaching group. There is a good range of enrichment activities – Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, complementary studies, general studies, key skills and the Young Enterprise Scheme. As a part of the tutorial system, there are arrangements for individual counselling, group work and careers and higher education advice. The sixth form has adequate resources and accommodation, and good staffing. The management of the sixth form curriculum enables the school to plan effectively for sixth form expansion within the projected growth of the main school.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of students' welfare, health and safety. It provides very high levels of support, advice and guidance, which are firmly based on the monitoring of progress. The school consults students effectively and acts on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide very effective support, advice and guidance to all students.
- There is very effective additional support and guidance to students who most need it.
- There is an excellent system for tracking and reporting on personal development.
- Some aspects of day-to-day guidance need to be made more consistent.
- All child protection procedures are in place and there are good relations with outside agencies.
- The school consults students extensively, involves them, and acts on their suggestions.

Commentary

26. Students are very highly valued. They and their parents recognise that teachers know students well and treat them fairly. Students know they have access to highly professional support and guidance, and that there is always at least one member of staff with whom they

can develop a thoroughly trusting relationship. The school has recently established an excellent tracking system that provides highly detailed information on each student's personal progress, and its good assessment systems provide effective guidance on work and progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Day-to-day guidance in marking and in tutorial periods, however, needs to be more consistent. Guidance to students with additional learning and behavioural needs is very effective, and is based on an increasingly sophisticated system of personal assessment as well as on good understanding of each student's needs. Guidance on career choices and on the next phase of education is well organised and effective. The school has extensive systems for consulting students, both on their own work and on that of the school, and makes good use of students' suggestions in improving its work.

27. Health and safety procedures are well organised and effective. The school is taking action on two small issues noted during the inspection. Child protection arrangements meet the requirements of the local authority, and there is a good working relationship with outside agencies.

Sixth form

28. Sixth form students are very well supported. Their personal development is very effectively tracked, and staff know them very well. Students told inspectors that they received very good guidance, especially on using their time outside lessons and in preparing for university entrance. They welcome the opportunities to contribute to the school community through voluntary work with younger students and through the sixth form council. Additional enrichment activities for the sixth form are very good. These are viewed by students as entirely appropriate to expanding their knowledge of their subjects without distracting them from the core of their studies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Those with the local community and other schools and colleges are very good in the main school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school deals with parents' concerns well, and systematically seeks their views.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and about the school's activities.
- At all levels links with the local community are extensive, varied and of significant value to students.
- Most parents use planners well to communicate with the school and check homework, but some do not.
- The sixth form link with Wymondham College plays a key part in the school's provision.

Commentary

29. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. Many parents support learning closely through their children's planners, but a minority do not. Attendance at academic review days, where targets are agreed, and 'cause for concern' evenings is very high, but disappointing for coursework or revision explanation meetings for Year 10 or 11 parents. Most parents welcome the school's comprehensive monitoring of progress, and the speedy contact with pastoral staff when a student's progress is either very good or causing concern.
30. Most parents are happy with the information they receive, though some feel they could be kept better informed. Inspectors' view is that there is a little inconsistency in reporting standards between subjects, but that the overall quality of information for parents is good. The

prospectuses and the governors' annual report to parents are thoroughly professional, and there is an informative monthly newsletter, supported by a helpful welcome pack. The website is clear and helpful, but the school recognises it needs further development, such as covering the curriculum for Years 10 and 11. Two interim progress reports give parents a good indication of how their children are doing. The full annual report provides detailed information, though students' knowledge, skills and understanding are not always fully reported in each subject. The school consults parents annually on their views about the school's performance in many areas. Parents' evenings are well organised and parents are generally happy that the school deals very systematically with concerns and complaints.

31. The school has very good relationships with other schools and colleges. Arrangements for students transferring from primary schools are very good. Academic links are extensive, with the school providing weekly master classes in the main feeder schools in mathematics and ICT from Year 5 onwards. There is equally good co-operation on the transfer of students with special educational needs. The school has developed exceptionally strong links with two local colleges of further education, which offer very good pre-vocational courses from Year 10 to students on the flexible learning programme. The sixth form's links with Wymondham College play an essential part in offering a full range of A-level and AVCE courses in such a small sixth form. Sixth form students had much praise for the school and for the guidance they received on further education or university entrance.
32. The school has a very good range of community links, including extensive commercial sponsorship, work experience, and student participation in local events. Students make a very fine contribution to the community through their extensive involvement with charities and their community service work with a local special school and with senior citizens.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher's leadership is very good. The governors are well organised, and make a good contribution to the school's direction. Management is good overall, and has very good features, including the management of the sixth form and of arrangements for students' care and guidance. Statutory requirements are met, apart from that for a daily act of collective worship; the headteacher and governors have made suitable arrangements for this, but these are not consistently put into practice in assemblies and tutorial periods.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very clear vision and direction for the school.
- The senior leadership team and the governors are well organised and effective.
- Provision for care and for equal opportunities is very well managed.
- Good financial management gives the school control over its development.
- The mathematics and computing college is managed very effectively.
- Teaching and learning are very closely monitored and effective action is taken to improve them.
- Very close and effective attention is paid to recruiting new staff, and to using the workforce agreement.
- Some aspects of the management of the curriculum could be improved.
- In some departments, assessment and tracking of progress need to be made more consistent.
- The small sixth form is very effectively led and managed.

Commentary

33. The headteacher's direction for the school is based on commitment to the highest possible standards, combined with equal and fair opportunities for success for all students, including those whose education is placed in jeopardy by their behavioural difficulties. In the four years

since his appointment, he has carried out a major reshaping of leadership and management systems to tackle weaknesses identified at the last inspection, where strategic planning and financial management were weak. The headteacher's approach has been to build on existing strengths, and set up systems to tackle weaknesses, making full use of new initiatives, including the mathematics and computing college, the workforce agreement, additional provision for behavioural support, and advanced skills teachers. He pays particularly close attention to recruiting staff and to identifying and developing their talents. While some of these features had only been introduced in the term of the inspection, they had already given the school a clearer sense of purpose, and were having an impact – fixed-period exclusions were falling, behaviour in lessons was good, and there was evidence of rising standards and improved teaching in several subjects. The school's promotion of good attitudes among boys leads to good GCSE results, with lower-attaining students often reaching grade D rather than lower grades. Morale among staff and students is high, and there is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school.

34. Management is good. Development planning has improved significantly since the last inspection, and now meets the school's needs very well. The senior leadership team is well organised and effective, and makes good use of information from assessment to track the school's performance. Regular meetings between senior managers and subject leaders ensure that school policies are effectively reflected in work in subjects. The headteacher and senior colleagues keep in close touch with the quality of teaching and learning through regular monitoring, and work continuously to improve it. Most subjects are managed well, but subject leaders do not always ensure that assessment and marking are used effectively to guide students. The school makes effective use of lesson planning from the national strategy for Years 7 to 9. It has taken recent steps to improve the co-ordination of numeracy work, but more work is needed on the co-ordination of literacy. Management of special educational needs has improved since the last inspection, though further improvement is needed in target setting for mathematics and in adapting assessment to meet the needs of students working at a level well below that expected for their age. New provision for behavioural support is being managed very well by the headteacher, with full use of the flexibility provided by workforce reform. The management of care and guidance to students is very good, with outstanding features, and greatly improved financial management since the last inspection has given the school flexibility to develop its site and resources.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,791,478	Balance from previous year	40,506
Total expenditure	2,804,163	Balance carried forward to the next	25,786
Expenditure per student	3,753		

35. The governors are well organised and effective. They understand the principles of best value, and apply them well in practice. They are fully involved in the direction of the school, in monitoring progress and in setting targets. They and the headteacher have made very good progress since the last inspection in meeting statutory requirements, of which the last report listed several important breaches. The one breach of statutory requirements found during the present inspection was in provision for a daily act of collective worship. The governors and headteacher have put in place a framework for this to take place in tutorials and assemblies each day, but this was not carried through into practice. The breach does not affect standards.

36. Improvements in leadership, management and governance since the last inspection have been a key element in ensuring the good overall quality of education now provided in the school. Value for money has improved from satisfactory to good, and the school is very well placed to develop its work further.

Sixth form

37. The school's small sixth form is led and managed very well. The head of the sixth form has developed compact and very effective systems for monitoring teaching, learning, standards and progress, and has developed courses that are cost-effective and meet students' needs well. The flexibility provided by the link with Wymondham College, which has a much larger sixth form, is an essential element in this provision, and is very well managed. Strategic planning for the sixth form takes full account of other local provision, particularly in vocational courses, and of the need to maintain sixth form provision in the town at a time when the main school is growing rapidly. Financial management ensures that sixth form funding is properly spent, and the sixth form provides good value for money.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work experience is well organised and effective.
- Vocational courses for students with special educational needs good.
- Partnerships with local colleges and Connexions are very effective.
- Co-ordination and policies for work related learning are not fully in place.

Commentary

38. Students begin to learn about the world of work in citizenship in Years 7 to 9 and progress to a range of vocational courses in later years. In Years 10 and 11, students take one or more GCSE courses in child development, design and technology or ICT. A small group of students with special educational needs take the BTEC course in hospitality, leisure and tourism at level 1 at the school and a range of other vocational courses, including catering at level 1, at the City or Easton Colleges in Norwich. Standards vary but most students achieve well and sometimes very well on these courses. The students have satisfactory opportunities to apply what they learn in lessons to the world of work.
39. All students undertake one week of work experience at the end of Year 10. They work with many different types of local employers. Nearly all students are judged to have completed the experience well and most mature as a result of the experience. When students leave the school they have a satisfactory understanding of the workplace and are well placed to progress into the sixth form, further education or employment. In 2002, the school received the Careers Foundation Award by the Norfolk Careers Service.
40. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Courses are taught by specialist staff and are well resourced. The school has developed good working links with City and Easton Colleges to widen the range of vocational courses offered. Work placements are organised in partnership with Connexions. Students are encouraged to find their own work placements and eight out of ten are successful. The work to be done is clearly defined. Students are well prepared for the experience at school and their performance is effectively assessed both by employers and a selected group of tutors. Students have satisfactory opportunities to share what they have done and learned with other students, and their assessment records are placed in their progress files.

41. The quality of leadership is good. Individual activities are managed well by specialist staff. A co-ordinator for work-related learning has recently been appointed and has made an effective start to her work. The school has not yet developed a policy for work-related learning. Individual activities are monitored and assessed well but students' overall work-related achievement has yet to be evaluated. Teachers are adequately trained.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the subject in detail and teach it well.
- Results in Year 9 national tests in 2004 were very high, but GCSE results are still broadly average.
- Some of the benefits of the teaching are lost through weaknesses in marking, assessment and homework.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well overall, but not all work is closely adapted to the needs of the lowest-attaining students.
- The head of department has a clear programme for improvement and is beginning to raise standards.

Commentary

42. Results in Year 9 national tests in 2004 were well above average, and significantly better than those in 2003. This reflected detailed attention to teaching writing in the department, with close involvement of local advisory staff. GCSE results were broadly average in 2003 and 2004, and in line with those of similar schools. There was, however, a good improvement in the results reached by higher-attaining students in 2004, and boys did as well as girls.
43. The overall standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly average. Students are responsive and articulate in their spoken answers and in discussion but their written work is not of a comparable standard, because teachers set too little written homework to enable skills to be practised. Students with special educational needs achieve well overall, and many have benefited from the school's programme of booster classes in Years 7 to 9. However, work for a small number working at a level far below that expected for their age is not yet adapted closely enough to their needs. Overall, achievement is satisfactory, and has good features.
44. Students in Year 9 achieve well because teaching is closely focused on meeting examination requirements. Students in Years 7 and 8 achieve less well because teachers do not set and mark enough written work to enable them to practise skills fully and also because narrow schemes of work prevent teachers from introducing students to a variety of written tasks. Lower-attaining students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well, because teachers have high expectations for these students, and because they are well supported by the teaching assistant linked to the English department. However, higher-attaining students in Years 10 and 11 achieve less well in their class work because teachers do not always provide them with sufficiently ambitious tasks and because some do not set enough written work.
45. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know the subject well and make it interesting. They build warm relationships in the classroom, and students are enthusiastic and willing to learn. Texts are chosen to appeal equally to boys and girls. Most lessons are well planned, but they do not always provide work matched to the needs of different students within the class. An assessed piece of work each half-term is closely marked and graded, but the outcome is not used consistently to give students advice on improving their work and to set

targets. Day-to-day marking is infrequent and inadequate. As a result, students have too little guidance on how to improve their work, and derive less benefit than they should from their interesting lessons. In some cases, this left students frustrated, as they did not know how to put right their mistakes.

46. Nevertheless, the overall leadership of the department is good. The head of department has a good long-term programme for raising standards and has already brought about improvements by creating a strong team of teachers, providing them with good schemes of work and organising students into effective teaching groups. In view of the weaknesses in marking and assessment, present in all classes, management is only just satisfactory, despite good features in improving teaching in lessons. Since the time of the last inspection, when the department was considerably smaller and differently organised, improvement has been satisfactory. Classroom teaching remains good, and examination results have recovered following a drop in performance. Marking, which was a strength of the department in its last report, is now a key area for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. It has good features, including effective additional classes for students with weaker literacy in Years 7 to 9. Elsewhere, provision suffers from lack of effective co-ordination, and good provision in individual departments, such as art and design and geography, is not sustained across the school. Most departments draw students' attention to technical vocabulary, but have not followed this through into the development of a consistent approach to all aspects of literacy in their subject. The library makes an effective contribution to literacy through its promotion of reading and study, despite having a low number of books in relation to the size of the school.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 10 and 11, but very few students take languages to GCSE.
 - The department is well led and management is satisfactory.
 - Students have good grammatical and comprehension skills, but lack confidence in speaking.
 - Work is regularly marked, but some marking does not give enough guidance on how to improve work.
 - There are too few learning opportunities beyond lessons.
48. The school offers French and German. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average in both languages. Students have good grammatical and comprehension skills, but are significantly less confident in speaking, and this is restricting overall progress. Written language is usually accurate, but limited in scope. Achievement is satisfactory, and good in top sets, but students still tend to rely too heavily on the teacher or other support. The small number of students taking languages to Year 11, reach above-average standards. These students write accurately and with a secure grasp of grammatical structures and there is evidence of extended writing. Understanding of the spoken and written language is usually good but students' ability to communicate at length is weaker because they lack the confidence to speak unprompted. Achievement among students in Years 10 and 11 is good. Overall, achievement is now satisfactory following a period of staffing difficulty. Nevertheless, the school is aware of the serious decline in the number of students taking languages in Years 10 and 11, and is taking steps to improve provision.

49. Teaching is satisfactory with good features, and was very good in one lesson. Teachers know the subject well, and plan well-structured lessons. In the best lessons, enthusiastic presentation, good visual stimuli and an appropriate use of the foreign language hold students' interest, and challenging tasks encourage them to apply what they know in new contexts. Emphasis on understanding grammar provides a tool for developing meaningful and extended language. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, but in some lessons, presentation is not imaginative enough, there is too much use of English, and too few tasks require students to use French or German. Overall, teachers are not doing enough to encourage students to question or to seek help in the foreign language. In the vast majority of cases teachers have established a relaxed relationship with their students, who have a positive attitude to their studies. Many students are, however, too passive and this is having a negative impact upon the development of their spoken language. Teachers mark students' work regularly, but do not always give students clear guidance on how to improve their work.
50. Leadership is good. The recently appointed subject leader understands the crucial issues facing the department, and fosters good teamwork among colleagues. Areas for improvement, including the very limited enrichment activities and restricted resources for learning, have been identified, and she is working with the headteacher to protect provision, including opportunities for students to take two languages to GCSE. She has made a good start to managing the department, and the school recognises the need for sustained good management to bring overall provision up to a good standard. When the school was last inspected, there were significant weaknesses in teaching in Years 7 to 9, and in standards at GCSE. There have been improvements in both of these areas, though the GCSE results reflect the narrow range of students now continuing with languages. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory, and the department is now well placed to improve further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved to above average levels in Year 9 and Year 11, and achievement is good.
- Good leadership provides a strong drive for improvement and self-evaluation.
- Promoting and sharing good practice and curriculum enrichment are raising achievement.
- Inconsistencies in marking students' work limit how far some students can improve.
- Limited use of ICT by students constrains understanding in some areas, but facilities are improving.

Commentary

51. Results in Year 9 national tests have been broadly average in recent years, but the proportion of students reaching the higher level 6 was above average in 2004. GCSE results are also broadly average, and there is no significant difference in the results obtained by boys and girls. Following changes of staffing and the school's new status as a mathematics and technology college, the standard of work seen during the inspection was better than that indicated by these results, and was above average in Year 9 and Year 11. Most students with special educational needs achieve well, though the achievement of some is held back by the lack of targets in their individual education plans. Overall, achievement is now good.
52. Teaching and learning are consistently good, and sometimes very good. The best teaching raises achievement significantly. It motivates, challenges and engages students through well-planned and structured lessons; interesting and interactive activities start lessons promptly at a challenging level and pace; focused and skilful questioning involves students fully, so

deepening their understanding; ICT resources are vividly used and maintain the pace and interaction of the lesson. All teachers have good subject knowledge, are able to convey it well, use methods and resources effectively, and through good relationships maintain a purposeful atmosphere. Students with special educational needs are provided for well. Gifted and talented students follow an accelerated and enriched curriculum and achieve well. However, achievement in a minority of lessons is limited when pace or challenge is sometimes lost; teachers in these lessons do not involve students enough in explaining their answers, and do not encourage independent learning sufficiently. More importantly, marking in some classes is too infrequent, does not provide advice on how to improve, and does not insist on good presentation of work.

53. Leadership and management are good. Good delegation and support from senior leadership and the LEA are improving teaching and integrating the use of ICT by teachers. The very good accommodation also helps to promote good teamwork. Good practice is shared and promoted well: the Advanced Skills Teacher is having a considerable impact, expertise in SEN is being used to improve all schemes of work, and staff enthusiasm is channelled well by the head of department into curriculum innovation and development. Rigorous self-evaluation complements detailed development planning. Data is used well to track students' progress, but inconsistencies in marking are compounded by the lack of subject-specific targets. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. By the end of Year 9, numeracy skills and students' achievement overall are now good and boys' achievement has improved. The use of ICT by students and the inclusion of mathematics targets have improved but insufficiently. The curriculum is significantly enriched by competitions, out-of-lesson support and access to good websites.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Provision is satisfactory. There are good features in some subjects, including science, where students make good use of algebra as well as number work in calculations, and in geography and design and technology. The department has recently provided very good guidance on developing number work in subjects, but this has yet to be supported by fully effective monitoring and co-ordination.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination and test results are above average in Year 9 and Year 11.
- Girls achieve less well than boys at GCSE, and this issue is not being tackled systematically enough.
- Teachers know the subject well, and the best teaching is very good.
- Leadership is good, with some very good features, and science has a positive image in the school.
- Assessment is rigorous, but information from assessment is not used systematically to raise standards.
- Opportunities for learning beyond lessons are extensive, and science clubs are well attended.
- Accommodation and resources are barely adequate; the school has good plans to tackle this.

Commentary

55. Students join the school with broadly average standards, and their overall achievement in science is satisfactory. It has good features in Year 9 test results and in some GCSE results. Results in national tests in Year 9 have been above average in each of the last five years, chiefly because of the high proportion of students reaching the nationally expected standard. Boys and girls reach similar standards in Year 9. By Year 11, however, GCSE results are significantly above average for

boys, but not for girls. In 2004, however, higher-attaining students did well in GCSE double science, with above average proportions of passes at A and A* grades. The standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly average. Some students, most often lower-attaining students, were achieving well, but some higher-attaining students were not fully extended. This reflected some inconsistency in the quality of teaching, which has been affected by a high turnover of staff in recent years.

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and have good features. Teachers have a keen sense of purpose, and good specialist knowledge and understanding. They use elements of the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 well, explaining learning goals clearly, and using effective starter activities. Almost all teachers communicate very well with students and present work enthusiastically, so that students respond with energy and interest. Where teaching is very good, work is closely matched to the needs of all students in the class, and supported with explanations that are easy for lower-attaining students to understand. Teachers' expectations of students are not consistent, however, and they do not always pitch work at the right level for a class, or ensure that it is matched to the needs of all of the students. A small minority of lessons had weaknesses in class management, and were only just satisfactory. Arrangements for assessment are systematic, but information from assessment is not used consistently to plan work and address weaknesses. Teaching and learning are hindered by accommodation and resources that are barely adequate, and there are too few opportunities for students to use ICT.
57. Leadership is good, and has some very strong features. The head of department has fostered a strong sense of teamwork and sustained standards well despite the high turnover of staff since the last inspection. Management systems are in place, but monitoring of teaching could focus more quickly on identifying and tackling weaknesses, and the department is not making the best use of its own information from assessment, particularly in tackling girls' achievement at GCSE. Technicians provide very good support to teachers and students in practical science, although there are too few to adequately cover all subjects. Since the last inspection, there have been many positive developments in the organisation of the science curriculum, the design of new courses and the provision of science clubs, which are exciting and well attended. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, and the department is well placed to improve further once the school has carried out its plans to improve accommodation and resources, including ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the subject very well and plan effectively; the best teaching is excellent.
- The excellent range of courses in Years 10 and 11 enables all students to achieve well.
- Standards are rising because of very good leadership and management of the subject
- Good relationships and teachers' very good class management contribute to learning
- Teaching promotes good independent learning skills.
- Assessment does not give students a clear enough view of the standards they have reached.

Commentary

58. Standards among students joining the school are a little below average. The results of teachers' assessments in Year 9, and the standard of Year 9 work during the inspection were broadly average. The most recent results for vocational examinations (GNVQ) in Year 11 were in line with the examination board average. The school has recently successfully moved to GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11. This has brought significant improvement in Years 10 and 11, where standards are now above average. In Years 7 and 8, achievement is held back

by students' poor literacy skills. By Year 11, however, achievement is good for all students including those with special educational needs.

59. Students show good skill and confidence in using computers. In Years 7 to 9, communication work is well developed, with students producing increasingly sophisticated slide presentations, leaflets and linked web pages. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are affected by poor writing skills, but there is a noticeable improvement in Year 9, where many can tailor their response to specific audiences. Numerical modelling with spreadsheets is less well developed, but satisfactory. Very good development of students' independent learning skills contributes to their good progress in Years 10 and 11. Almost all students in Years 10 and 11 study a GCSE course chosen from an excellent range that covers all learning needs, including those of gifted and talented students. Above average work with spreadsheets and databases was seen in Years 10 and 11. Some lower attaining students follow a good vocational course.
60. Teaching is good overall, and the best is excellent. The great majority of lessons are characterised by good planning, clear learning goals and a good range of strategies. Full advantage has been taken of recent improvements in resources to enhance students' learning. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is used well in question and answer sessions to enhance understanding and in supporting individuals but opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge higher attaining students. Students' learning benefits from the good classroom relationships and teachers' very good management of behaviour. Students receive good feedback about how to improve their work but assessment and target setting are under-developed so students have insufficient understanding of the standard of their work.
61. Leadership and management are very good. Substantial and very cost-effective improvements have already been made, further upgrades are imminent and there is a very clear vision for the future. Performance management is in place and excellent provision for new teachers has a positive impact on teaching and learning. There is a very good team commitment to improvement. Technical support is excellent and includes support for four local primary schools. Internet access is well managed and safe. Resources are now very good and benefit learning. Library provision is unsatisfactory but the department intranet is a rapidly growing learning resource. Since the last inspection there has been very good improvement. All the key issues identified then have been fully addressed. Provision in ICT is making a crucial and growing contribution to the work of the mathematics and computing college, and the department is very well placed to make further progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. ICT provision across the curriculum is satisfactory. The number of up-to-date computers is well above average, but not all departments have full access to them. The school is extending its provision as quickly as it can, making good use of the advantages offered by its specialist status as a computing college. Design and technology make very good use of facilities for computer-aided design and manufacturing. Art teachers make frequent use of the computer rooms to manipulate images. History students develop their research skills via a good database of local 1914–18 war participants. Staff laptops enhance teaching effectively - for example, in geography and mathematics. Some very good use of software learning packages was also seen in mathematics but this was uneven across the department. A new school management information system will soon enhance the storage of and access to assessment data. The school web site is a useful source of information for parents but parts of it need updating.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average; girls achieve better than boys at the highest grades.
- Leadership and management provided by the new curriculum leader are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good, and very good in some lessons.
- Opportunities for fieldwork need to be provided for all year groups.
- Marking and assessment need to be improved, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- There is too little monitoring to ensure consistency across the department.

Commentary

63. Standards are above average in Year 9 and Year 11, and achievement is good. Recent GCSE results have been significantly above average; in 2003, they were similar overall for boys and girls, though more girls achieved the highest grades. All groups of students achieve well. Students are actively involved in their own learning, and make good long-term progress in literacy. By Year 11, coursework makes good use of specialist vocabulary, and is well illustrated with graphs and maps.
64. Teaching and learning are good, and very good in some lessons. Teachers plan lessons carefully, promote good relationships with students, and in most lessons set a good pace of work with good challenge. Work is generally well matched to the needs of all students in the class, though in a minority of lessons higher-attaining students are not fully challenged and the pace of work is a little too slow. The use of ICT is satisfactory, though limited in scope, but fieldwork is under-developed. A good collection of books and resources in the library contributes to independent learning.
65. The subject leader joined the school at the beginning of the term of the inspection, and provides very good leadership and management. He has a clear vision of the future of the department and has already made many changes that are likely to benefit learning. Development planning is ambitious and includes practical plans to improve consistency in teaching across the department. A review of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has incorporated national guidance on schemes of work, and a similar process is planned for Years 10 and 11. There are, however, still weaknesses in marking and assessment, particularly in Years 10 and 11. At the time of the last inspection, geography was a very successful subject, and its overall development since that time has been satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have been well below average, but effective action is being taken to raise standards.
- Teachers encourage students to work hard and take pride in their work.
- Achievement is hampered by some students' weak literacy skills, but these are improving.
- The timetable does not allow enough time for the subject for higher-attaining students in Year 9.
- National Curriculum assessment is good, but day-to-day assessment does not provide enough guidance to students on improving their work.
- There are too few opportunities for students to visit historical sites.

Commentary

66. Standards in Year 9 are average, and achievement is satisfactory because students start school with limited historical skills. Standards at GCSE in 2003 were below average and well below average in 2004, when achievement was unsatisfactory. However, standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are average and the subject leadership has implemented effective measures to raise achievement. All GCSE students are now achieving satisfactorily because there is a stronger focus on improving examination techniques and teachers use a wider range of effective teaching strategies. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls, those who speak English as an additional language, or those with special educational needs.

67. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with many good features. Teachers have a sound knowledge of their subject, set clear learning goals and develop good relationships with their students. They foster interest in the subject, encouraging students to work hard and to take pride in what they do. Where teaching is good, sensitive questioning allows students of all abilities to play a full part in lessons, and most work is closely matched to individuals' needs. However, there are still a few lessons in which teaching and learning are only just satisfactory, because work is not pitched at the right level to challenge students fully, and they have too few opportunities to work independently.
68. Many students have weak literacy skills that limit their ability to write extended pieces of work. Teachers are addressing this issue, and there are signs that literacy standards are improving. The use of guided writing structures and help with specialist vocabulary give students the confidence and expertise to write more extended pieces of work. The recent introduction of testing at the end of each unit of work is helping staff to provide students with more accurate information about their progress. However, much day-to-day assessment does not focus clearly enough on guiding students on ways of improving their work.
69. The subject is well led, and management is satisfactory. There is a clear vision for improvement and recognition of the need to establish a greater degree of coherence across all aspects of the department's work. The department has good resources, but their use is restricted by the shortage of specialist rooms. A well stocked library supports research studies. The achievement of some students is held back by the timetable in Year 9, that does not allow enough time for history for students taking two languages. Students in Years 8 to 10 have too few opportunities to take part in organised historical visits. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, and the department is well placed to make further progress.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching and learning lead to good long-term achievement.
- Students work very well together in groups, and learn to respect the views and beliefs of others.
- There is good leadership of a strong and well-qualified department.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 does not make it clear to students what they need to do to improve.
- Some students have weak writing skills, and there is too little use of ICT.
- There are too few opportunities for students to meet members of different faith communities.

Commentary

70. By the end of Year 9, standards are broadly average. Students know and understand the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and other world religions. They are able to interpret stories and to identify similarities and differences between gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus. Their skills of evaluation are weaker, particularly in the writing down of their ideas and explanations, and students need more practice in this work. In Years 10 and 11, all students follow a course, the great majority taking the GCSE short course. The trend in recent years has been improving and the most recent results are in line with national averages. Girls' results in the higher grades are significantly better than boys', though boys often contribute more to discussion in lessons. Students with special educational needs achieve best when given additional support. This is particularly evident in the GCSE Entry Level course. Overall, the achievement of all groups of students is good.
71. Teaching is good, and often very good. Teachers know their subject well and make very good use of questions. In the best lessons, students are challenged to reflect on religious beliefs

and issues, and this develops their analytical skills well. Teachers foster good relationships with students and manage classes well. Students work very well together in groups and show respect for the beliefs and ideas of others. Marking of students' work is thorough and encouraging. However, the formal assessment of students' work in Years 7 to 9 is not yet linked to national standards, and students are not able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. There are insufficient opportunities for students to use ICT and to encounter members of faith communities.

72. Leadership and management are good. The new head of department has a good understanding of the development needs of the subject. The team has the capacity to respond effectively to imminent local developments in the curriculum. On the other hand, the school's two-week timetable makes the subject more vulnerable to the effects of school closure days, which sometimes interfere with continuity in learning. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good achievement at A* at GCSE, particularly in food technology and resistant materials.
- Teachers know the subject well, and consistently demand students' best work.
- Achievement is particularly strong in food technology, resistant materials, and in the new course in textiles.
- Teachers don't always provide enough opportunities for writing or track students' progress carefully enough.
- ICT is used effectively, but its accommodation is very cramped.

Commentary

73. Some students join the school with good standards, but most begin with slightly below average standards for their age. Achievement from this starting point is very good. Students reach standards that are a little above average in Year 9, and well above average in Year 11. Achievement is particularly good in food technology, resistant materials, and in the new course in textiles. Over nine out of ten students take the subject in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results were above average in 2003 and 2004, with consistently good achievement at A* grade. Girls performed significantly better than boys. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory and sometimes good progress with extra help from teachers and learning assistants.
74. The overall quality of teaching is good; it is very good, and sometimes excellent, in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very secure knowledge of their subjects and plan lessons well. They introduce topics clearly and give skilled demonstrations. They use questions well to clarify students' thinking, and provide very effective help and feedback. As a result, students are keen to learn. In Years 7 to 9, teachers emphasise key words, but do not provide enough opportunities for students to write about some aspects of the subject. They assess work well, but systems to track individuals' progress in Years 7 to 9 are not rigorous enough. The technical content of lessons in Years 10 and 11 is always very well designed and challenging. Students learn to draw accurately and make products with precision. They know how to improve their work and receive very good guidance on examination technique. The pace in many lessons is high. The presentation of coursework is very good and sometimes excellent.

Gifted and talented students are given very good opportunities to develop their skills. Across the school, students make good use of ICT, though the new facilities have had to be placed in a room that does not make it easy for teachers to use them.

Example of outstanding practice

Carefully designed tasks, with a very clear balance of design and making activities and an end product that was highly motivating to students, led to excellent achievement in a Year 10 class.

Students were required to make a toy train from wood, plastic and aluminium, using a design provided by the newly qualified teacher, and to design a candle holder, which could be made from plastic and sold commercially. To make the toy train, students had to produce finger joints to make the engine cab and turn on a lathe the aluminium funnel, wooden wheels and coloured plastic boiler end plate. Boys and girls used marking-out equipment and tools with excellent precision. Some students were designing their candle holder with great flair and producing an orthogonal drawing and card model of their design with high levels of accuracy. Students were excellently motivated by the work, especially as they could give the toy train to a young relative for Christmas. Excellent self-discipline enabled students to work very productively at their own pace, and enabled all students to achieve to a very high standard.

75. Very good leadership and management have led to high achievement in this subject over many years, and the quality of provision has been very effectively sustained and extended since the last inspection. While there is room for further improvement in some aspects of assessment, and in sharing the best work in the department, these issues are far outweighed by the strengths in a department that makes a most important contribution to standards and to the development of students' confidence in their own abilities and enjoyment of learning.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design and music were inspected, though the range of teaching that could be seen in music was limited because of staff illness. Provision in **drama** was sampled. The overall quality of the work sampled was very good, and had excellent features in Years 10 and 11. Teaching seen in Years 7 to 9 was good, but achievement was limited by some students' weak self-discipline.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent planning and subject knowledge enabled a Year 10 teacher to develop a wide range of drama skills in a Year 10 GCSE class, providing excellent preparation for performance.

Beginning with a very well chosen family photograph from the 1960s, the teacher asked students to adopt and pose a character. She then gradually worked back from the scene to have students improvise what had happened at various times leading up to it. The structure enabled her to add new elements of challenge at each stage, while building on what students had already learned and adjusting new demands so that they were never faced with more than they could handle. Working groups were carefully selected to provide a good balance of challenge and support for each student, and an ingenious, quick and informal tracking system gave the teacher a record of each student's development over the term. Students worked co-operatively to a very high standard, listening to each other and arguing points with good discipline on the basis of their contribution to the overall performance. They introduced very effective individual touches in their improvisation, and gradually reduced the frequency of awkward movements and words, developing very good understanding of the demands of television drama in terms of attention to detail in gesture. The teacher's feedback and guidance was sparing and very well timed. By the end of the lesson, students were presenting polished improvisations, with clear development within each scene, and had reached well above average standards

for this stage of their course.

Art and design

Overall provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have led to a strong climate of current improvement.
- Teaching is good overall, and the best is inspirational.
- Attitudes and relationships are very good, and there is strong commitment to equal opportunities.
- Learning outcomes are not evaluated with sufficient rigour in some classes

Commentary

76. Following a fall to well below average levels in 2003, caused by staffing difficulties, GCSE results rose to average levels in 2004. This followed the appointment of a new team of specialists and the introduction of very effective management. Standards are now broadly average throughout the school, and there is a strong trend of improvement. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to others due to effective support, and receive their full share of attention from the school's most talented teachers. Gifted and talented students are identified and work well, though provision to extend their work is not yet planned systematically. Achievement is now good in Year 9, and very good in current work by Year 11. With the most recent examination evidence, this gives an overall picture of achievement that is good and improving rapidly.
77. From the outset, teachers place strong emphasis on the development of drawing and painting skills, and students learn to plan their work in a wide range of materials, including ICT. They learn to understand and appreciate the works of famous artists through well-planned lessons in critical analysis. Homework is well planned, regularly set and marked. By Year 11, students appreciate the importance of research and experimentation. They learn about a wide variety of artists and the traditions of other cultures, and this is reflected in their work. They learn to work effectively as individuals, and to use and mix a wide range of two- and three-dimensional materials with increasing confidence. Attitudes to work are very positive.
78. Teaching is good overall. It is often very good, and the best is excellent. Throughout the school, lessons are well planned, with interesting tasks that engage students and make them want to learn. Where teaching is very good, lessons have very good pace, learning is strongly reinforced by questioning, and there are very high expectations of students' active involvement. One full-time teacher was seriously ill during the inspection, however, and as a result there were a few lessons in which weaker pace and challenge led to learning that was satisfactory rather than good, and where learning outcomes were not evaluated closely enough to identify whether or not students were achieving as much as they should. In other respects, the school's recently revised assessment procedures are thorough, informative and helpful. Aspects of literacy and opportunities for spiritual development are well planned.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent planning, with excellent relationships developed over the year, led to very high levels of critical analysis in a Year 7 lesson inspired by the work of Modigliani.

Students entered promptly and with a sense of purpose. The room was fully prepared with resource materials and close grouped seating, pre-arranged by a teacher determined to make the best possible use of a single lesson. Students were engaged from the outset by the teacher's effective and enthusiastic use of a large visual aid, and by probing questions that tested their knowledge, understanding and retention of critical analysis work so far. Students knew and could clearly explain the processes of analysis, interpretation and evaluation of a painting. As well as a picture for students to discuss and analyse as "learning pairs", a writing frame was provided to help sharpen their thinking and writing skills. Clearly briefed, pairs of students discussed the composition and shared outcomes with each other and with the class before recording their thoughts on each section. The teacher's planning moved the group on at timed intervals in order to cover all elements of the process, maintaining a very lively pace of work and a very productive atmosphere. Very effective time management left good time for a lesson review. The teacher's searching questions provoked many to respond with strong and clearly expressed opinions, which the teacher reinforced by subtly including specialist

vocabulary. Students were highly motivated, and many spoke to the inspector of their sense of achievement in art as the result of the very enjoyable lessons provided by a highly enthusiastic and expert teacher who worked them hard, but with warmth and humour.

79. The present position in the department represents good improvement since the last inspection, and the current rate of improvement is very good. The head of department sets and maintains very high standards and has set up a strong climate for learning. The department makes a very good contribution to students' moral and social development, and there are good extra-curricular activities. The department makes a very good contribution to the school environment and to students' confidence through the quality of displays in art rooms and public areas.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well structured lessons help students gain clear knowledge and understanding.
- Students behave well, have positive attitudes and form good relationships
- Students in Years 7 to 9 have too few opportunities to use ICT.
- Students achieve more in their knowledge and understanding of music than in performance skills.
- Assessment is accurate, but there are some weaknesses in day-to-day marking.
- Partnerships with the county music service and a specialist arts college enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

80. Standards and provision have been affected significantly in recent years by staffing difficulties, but inspection evidence indicated that they are now recovering, and that provision is satisfactory. It was, nevertheless, not possible to report on achievement in Year 11, as no teaching could be observed because of staff illness. Teachers' assessments in the last two years indicate above average standards in Year 9, and this was confirmed by evidence from the inspection. No students have taken GCSE for the past two years. The last results, for 2002, were broadly average, but students in Year 11 during the inspection were reaching below average standards, chiefly because of earlier gaps in provision. Students achieve more in their knowledge and understanding than in the skills of practical music making. The range of standards is wide, but, overall, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good.
81. Students in Year 9 during the inspection understood how variations are composed, recognised musical devices by listening to carefully chosen examples from different styles of music, and used technical language to describe these processes accurately. In a Year 7 class, the teacher demonstrated the melodic, stylistic and harmonic features of pentatonic music from different cultures so that all the students understood technical terms and the important elements of the music. However, students were less successful in demonstrating their good knowledge and understanding through composing and performing on keyboards because their practical skills are less well developed and they do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning. Students in the Year 10 GCSE group worked well together to devise and perform their own arrangement of the song, *Georgie Girl*, making effective use of the range of musical and instrumental skills at their disposal.
82. Observation of lessons, discussion with students, and analysis of their completed work show that the overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers know the subject well, and plan and deliver well-structured lessons that make musical ideas and concepts very clear to all students.

Behaviour and relationships are good, attitudes are positive, expectations are high, and tasks are open-ended so that different students' individual needs are met. Students with special educational needs make good progress, and there were no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in lessons observed during the inspection. Assessment against the attainment levels of the music National Curriculum is very well designed and developed and students have good feedback in lessons, but there are some weaknesses in marking written work.

83. Management is good, and leadership satisfactory. Lessons, resources and accommodation are well organised. The senior leadership team and governors are aware of the needs of the department, and are working to develop it. Provision for instrumental lessons has been overhauled, and opportunities for performance are slightly greater than at the time of the last inspection. The department has effective links with the county music service and with a local specialist arts college; Year 11 students visit the college and use computers to compose minimalist pieces, but facilities for using ICT in music lessons in the school are very limited. In other respects the music curriculum provides broad and balanced opportunities for learning and personal development that are supported by the resources and accommodation available within the department. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements in teaching and in achievement in Year 9, but the department requires significant further development. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching results in positive attitudes and high levels of participation.
- There are extensive opportunities for learning outside lessons, supported by a large number of staff.
- Gifted and talented students achieve high standards in individual sports.
- Opportunities to involve the students in evaluating work are sometimes missed.
- The department does not offer any additional accredited courses.

Commentary

84. Teachers' assessments indicate that standards at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were above average, with no significant differences in standards reached by boys and girls. Standards in the present Year 9 are not as good but are broadly average overall. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in physical education in Year 11, for students not taking GCSE, as lessons were not timetabled during the inspection. GCSE results for 2003 were above average. They dropped slightly in 2004 but from a much larger entry. Examination results have been consistently at or above the national average for several years. Standards among students following the examination course in Year 11 are average. Standards are higher in Year 10, where both the level of skill and the students' application are impressive. Physical education continues to be a popular option at GCSE. Overall, achievement is good from students' starting points in Year 9 and at GCSE. Gifted and talented students reach high standards in gymnastics, football, badminton, hockey, netball, basketball, cricket and athletics.
85. Teaching and learning are good, with very good teaching in individual lessons. Teachers form positive relationships with students, and structure lessons well to enable them to build on their previous learning. As a result of very good class management, students know exactly what is required of them and they respond accordingly. All students, including a minority with behavioural problems, work willingly with their teachers and with each other in order to

improve. Assessment by teachers is good, but there are not enough opportunities for students to comment on the work of others and to use the information gained to improve the quality of their work. In some lessons questions are not used sufficiently to draw information from students. Teachers are starting to use ICT in some theory lessons, but they would welcome the opportunity for further training in its use. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high. Levels of participation are very good, and students enjoy lessons.

86. Leadership and management are good. The small team of teachers work very well together, and the work of the wide range of teachers who contribute to the department's work is well co-ordinated. At present, the department does not offer any accredited courses such as the Junior Sports Leaders Award as part of the curriculum for older students. Accommodation for practical work is very good. The school makes extensive use of the sports hall, both for lessons and for the very wide range of activities outside normal lessons. These are extremely well attended by students of all ages. Links with outside agencies have improved since the last inspection, and the good standards identified in the last report have been maintained.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

87. Vocational courses in child development, hospitality leisure and tourism and ICT were sampled by observing lessons at the school and at a neighbouring college, analysing examination results and discussing work with students and teachers.

88. The quality of work sampled in **child development** was good. One in six students takes the course in Years 10 and 11. All students are girls. Examination results were below average in 2003, but unconfirmed results in 2004 showed significant improvement, and were above average. Teaching and learning observed in Year 11 were good. Students identified the most necessary equipment and layette items needed for a newborn baby to a good standard. Most were using computers to prepare their work. All were enjoying the course, and relationships were very good.

89. The quality of work sampled in **hospitality, leisure and tourism** was very good, with excellent features in its provision for students with special educational needs. Twelve students take the BTEC course at level 1 in Years 10 and 11. All have special educational needs, and many have behavioural difficulties. The course has yet to be examined.

Example of outstanding practice

High levels of motivation, relevance and involvement led to excellent achievement in practical work related to travel agency among Year 10 students with special educational needs. A teaching assistant provided excellent support.

Two visiting speakers from a local travel agent gave an excellent and relevant talk about their work and day-to-day activities. Most students were keen to answer their questions. During the second half of the lesson the teachers led a very effective whole-class discussion. The students were excellently motivated by the work and, although they had very limited spelling skills, were very anxious to contribute and talk about their experiences with travel agents and whilst on holiday. The teacher led the discussion well and used excellently prepared handouts to ensure that students were fully informed about the background to the talk. Students made notes from the board and learned key words and concepts in a very natural and effective way. Students enjoyed the lesson very much and behaved very well. The mature behaviour and constructive attitudes of all, including those with significant behavioural difficulties, represented excellent achievement.

90. The quality of work sampled in **ICT** was very good, with excellent features. Eleven students study the CLAIT course at level 1 in Year 10. All the students have special educational needs and many have behavioural difficulties. This is the first group to take the course. In a good

lesson on word processing students developed their skills in formatting and manipulating text as well as basic literacy and keyboarding skills. The teacher skilfully broke the lesson into short, manageable tasks interspersed with frequent reinforcement of techniques and key words. Very good management of students' behaviour kept all closely involved and enabled them to achieve well and feel pleased with their efforts.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent teaching for a group of Year 11 students as part of the flexible learning programme enabled them to design very good web pages for a fictional company, and developed their behaviour, confidence and concentration.

Students had made excellent long-term progress in this part of their course, and approached the task of designing and creating web pages to market a fictional company with high levels of confidence. All could combine text and pictures confidently, and some could import and play animated graphics. The teacher's excellent feedback, support and class management enabled all to work independently and productively, with high levels of attention to detail. Very good relationships and use of praise raised students' confidence and self-esteem, so that they were keen to have their work displayed on screen. A change of activity brought renewed concentration, with students showing good search skills using key words to obtain a portfolio of relevant images for their company literature. The levels of concentration, co-operation and enjoyment of learning were outstanding, and students left well prepared for the work they were to do in college the next day.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship was inspected fully, and personal, social and health education was sampled. The quality of work sampled in **personal, social and health education** was good. Lessons were well planned and thoughtfully delivered, in an atmosphere that boosted students' confidence and reinforced the values of the school. The course includes good innovations, including a component on thinking and learning skills, though some of its strengths are lost by timetabling that requires a great deal to be covered in a very limited allocation of time.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new leadership of citizenship is good.
 - The allocation of time for citizenship is insufficient and the schemes of work are incomplete.
 - Students' involvement in school and community life contributes greatly to their active involvement in citizenship.
 - The teaching, learning and achievement in lessons are good.
91. Good planning and effective teaching enable the school to make satisfactory provision for citizenship, despite timetabling that allows barely enough time to cover the subject. Standards in lessons and in written work show broadly average standards in Years 7 to 11. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and good in aspects of the subject that have been studied in detail. Students frequently discuss environmental, political, legal and moral issues with confidence and commitment, and a smaller number express their personal opinions confidently about current issues. Occasionally some students are reticent to speak or find it difficult to express their views. Some students write very positively about their personal experiences of citizenship.

92. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a variety of stimulating approaches, so that lessons have good pace and students make good progress. Teachers have very good knowledge of citizenship, give good support and develop positive relationships with students. Students work very well in pairs and groups, and teachers use role-play well to make topics relevant. Teachers use much praise and encouragement, and this motivates students. In some lessons, the input from outside speakers, such as the police, is very effective.
93. The school effectively promotes participation in citizenship. There are numerous opportunities for students to assume responsibility both in the school and in the community. Students who participate in the year or school councils have very good engagement in citizenship. A high proportion of older students act as prefects and as trained mentors to younger students.
94. Leadership and management have recently been reorganised, and steps are being taken to improve provision. Leadership is now good, and satisfactory management is ensuring steady progress in addressing weaknesses. There is a clear vision for the subject, and the departmental plan clearly identifies current strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, while weaknesses, chiefly in the provision of time and in the co-ordination of work between Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 have been identified, they have still to be addressed. New schemes of work are being written, but are not yet fully in place, and there are too few books in the library, though resources for learning in lessons are good. Assessment arrangements have been put in place for the current year and report forms amended to include citizenship. The subject was not included in the last inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	2	50	63.5	0	10.4	10.0	19.8
Chemistry	1	100	70.3	0	13.2	40.0	23.0
English literature	2	50.0	73.6	50	17.4	10.0	26.4
General studies	27	100	73.6	40.7	16.9	42.6	25.5
Geography	2	50.0	75.5	0	20.4	10.0	27.0
History	1	100	82.2	0	20.8	40.0	29.2
Mathematics	2	50	59.9	0	14.1	10.0	20.5
Sociology	3	66.7	72.1	0	19.6	26.7	25.9

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	7	100	98.3	14.3	50.2	60.0	87.1
Biology	5	100	96.6	40.0	40.0	80.0	79.3
Chemistry	6	100	97.7	50.0	50.0	76.7	85.7
Drama	6	100	99.6	83.3	42.8	96.7	85.1
Economics	2	100	98.8	100	54.3	110	89.8
English Literature	9	100	99.4	33.3	44.9	84.4	85.5
Geography	8	100	98.8	25.0	46.4	77.5	85.2

History	12	100	83.3	99.0	45.6	56.7	85.1
Information technology	3	33.3	96.3	0	25.7	20.0	71.1
Mathematics	6	100	100	96.6	56.6	93.3	89.5
Sociology	13	84.6	98.5	15.4	45.3	60.0	84.6

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature

Provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Male and female students achieve well at A-level.
- Students understand texts at a high level, but have some weaknesses in their written work.
- Teachers know the subject very well, and engage students' interest in it.
- Students are receptive, keen to learn and work hard.
- The best marking is thorough and helpful, but some is seriously lacking in rigour.

Commentary

95. A-level results were above average in 2003 and well above average in 2002. National comparisons are not yet available for 2004, but there were significantly fewer A and B grades. AS results in 2004 were broadly average, including the proportion of A and B grades. In work seen during the inspection, students reached above average standards in their spoken answers and discussions, often showing a sophisticated understanding of difficult texts and ideas. They took good notes, but the overall quality of written work was average, partly because of weaknesses in accuracy. Male students do as well as female students, and sometimes better. Overall, achievement is good from students' starting points.
96. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and some lessons are very good. Teachers know the subject well, and are dedicated to imparting it. They make good use of questions, and in the most successful lessons give students good opportunities to present their own research. Occasionally, however, teachers do work for students that students could do for themselves. Some teachers mark work thoroughly and helpfully, but others are too informal in their comments, and do not give enough guidance on accuracy and ways of improving work. Students' consistent hard work and their willingness to engage with complex ideas, make an important contribution to learning.
97. Leadership and management are good. Students' progress is carefully monitored, and teachers choose to provide good challenge and to appeal to male as well as to female students. Progress since the last inspection, when the subject had very recently been introduced, has been good, and the subject is attracting increasing numbers of students.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

98. Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Students are encouraged to be fluent in discussion and to read widely, but less is done to encourage them to write accurately. The library is a useful resource for private study, though there are too few reference books for study in depth.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new curriculum, based on A-level modules, is increasing enrolment and raising standards.
- Most teaching is good or better, and requires high levels of independent learning.
- Students value teachers' good academic support outside lessons.

- Arrangements for enrichment of the curriculum are limited.
- Monitoring and evaluation of some aspects of work are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

99. Too few students took A-level in 2003 and 2004 to allow results to be compared with national averages, but all students passed, four from the five with grade A or B. The standard of work seen in Year 13 was above average, and students' completed A-level modules show good achievement from their GCSE results. AS results have fluctuated but were good in 2004. Standards in Year 12 were above average. Very few students have taken further mathematics but results show a similar overall picture. Overall, standards are above average and achievement is good.
100. Teaching and learning range in lessons from satisfactory to very good, and are good overall. The best teaching is lively and interactive and promotes very good collaborative and independent learning. Students in Year 12 use mini-whiteboards enthusiastically: this extends the interaction generated by the very effective use of the electronic whiteboard by the teacher, and provides rapid feedback on learning. Students sometimes research independently and use graphs and functions software well. Year 13 students enjoy active learning through presentations: this deepens their understanding and is most effective when the teacher provides expert prompts and questions that involve other students. In a minority of lessons, teachers' knowledge of advanced mathematics is not as secure and presentations are less interactive; students' achievement in these lessons is satisfactory, but they are less engaged, and value the work less.
101. Leadership and management are good. The head of department promotes good teamwork among teachers, and is seen by students as a good role model who provides accurate information and good guidance. There is some good monitoring and evaluation of teaching, but this is not always recorded in sufficient detail. As a result, best practice is not always formally shared and some inconsistencies arise - for example, in the frequency and quality of marking. The use of ICT is satisfactory where it is available, but is underdeveloped. Students enter an enjoyable competition based on decoding, and greatly value the additional support and teaching they receive outside lessons. Recent changes to the curriculum provide more choice and flexibility for students who can choose AS, A-level, AS further mathematics or A-level further mathematics. Numbers following the A-level courses have risen, and optional coursework is helping to raise achievement. These new developments put the school in a very good position to develop its work further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

102. The use of mathematics in other subjects is good. Teachers consistently identify aspects of their subjects to which mathematics can contribute, and use these well to enable students to apply and develop their skills. An application of number course at Key Skills Level 3 is challenging and provides good support to students who do not follow a mathematics examination course. Occasionally, however, students in this course are too ready to use calculators. The application of number skills in chemistry is particularly well thought out and leads to good use of complex calculations in experiments.

SCIENCE

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and lessons are well planned and organised.
- Students work hard, and a high proportion complete their courses.
- Some students' achievement is held back by weaknesses in literacy skills and organisation.
- Assessment procedures are effective and support learning.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular activity in chemistry and links with other institutions are not well developed.

Commentary

103. The number of students choosing chemistry is smaller than in most schools, but a high proportion complete their courses. In 2004, all students gained pass grades at A-level, and half passed with A and B grades, but overall results were a little below average. The standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly average, and overall achievement is satisfactory. There are significantly more male than female students, reflecting the greater success among boys than girls in GCSE science.

104. The range of teaching that could be seen during the inspection was limited by its timing, as most lessons were based on revising past examination papers. Teaching and learning seen, and analysis of students' written work, indicate that teaching and learning are satisfactory, and have good features. Teachers know the subject in great detail, plan lessons very thoroughly, and make good use of resources. Students enjoy their work, and levels of expectation and challenge are realistic but high. Chemistry teachers and technicians work very well together with enthusiasm and a common purpose, and students enjoy and respond very well to the range of teaching styles. Their notes, however, are often not well written, and there are gaps in marking in Year 12. By Year 13, folders are up to date and regularly and frequently monitored, with helpful diagnostic comments by teachers, but they could still be better organised.

105. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New schemes of work and supportive material have been introduced and new staff have joined the department. Assessment and its use to inform and support students are well established, though this is not always carried through into day-to-day marking. ICT is under-used. As in the main school, accommodation and resources are barely satisfactory, though health and safety issues are properly emphasised through the use of 'Hazard cards'. Links with other institutions and extra-curricular activities are not well developed. Nevertheless, chemistry is a popular subject. Students are very pleased with the quality of contact and the relationships with their teachers and, given the choice, would readily choose this subject again.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan well, have a very strong knowledge of the subject, and promote good relationships.
- Good leadership and management are attracting growing numbers of students and improving standards.
- The learning environment is very good, and students have good independent learning skills.
- Some students' achievement is held back by weak writing skills.
- Textbook and library resources are insufficient.
- The effective key skills course ensures that all sixth form students have good competence in ICT.

Commentary

106. The subject is now well established in the school, and overall achievement is good. Current Year 13 students are the first to study the subject in school, though a small number of students have previously studied at a local college. AS-level results for the four Year 13 students varied from grades A to E. National comparisons are not yet available but the results were in line with those predicted from students' GCSE grades. They represent satisfactory achievement last year.
107. The school's open access policy means that students start the course with a wide range of prior attainment, which is a little below average overall. Some have weak literacy skills. Most have studied the subject previously to GCSE or GNVQ level. Contact with a local small business develops commercial awareness for students and provides a good setting for coursework. An analysis of the 2004 AS-level coursework showed poor literacy to be a significant negative factor for half the students. They failed to document their website project in sufficient detail despite good design work. In contrast, the highest attaining student developed an immaculately documented website with a high level of aesthetic flair. All students continued into Year 13. The number of students in Year 12 tripled this year and standards are higher for both theory and coursework units. Students are developing a sound understanding of databases and the documentation of their website projects is much more detailed. Standards are broadly average, but above the level expected from students' GCSE results. Achievement is good.
108. Teaching and learning are good, and have very good features. Teachers use their very strong knowledge of the subject to explain difficult concepts clearly and use questions very well to develop students' understanding. Classroom relationships are very good. Students contribute willingly in class and support each other well. Most work well at individual assignments. Discussion with students showed that they have confidence in their teachers. They appreciate the individual attention and feedback received in class. Few students wish to pursue a career in ICT but most feel that the course meets their needs well, and all received good advice beforehand. The transition in learning styles from GCSE is well managed.
109. Leadership is very good and the subject is well managed. There is a very good team commitment and the three teachers communicate and plan well together. Accommodation and resources are good. Good quality learning resources are available online but there are insufficient reference and textbooks. Very good curriculum provision ensures that non-specialists also gain good competence in the subject. With the successful introduction of A-level, and also the effective key skills course, improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Key Skills ICT

110. All Year 12 students follow the key skills course at level 3 unless they already have this level of skill. The course ensures that all students have good competence in ICT. One lesson was sampled. It was very successful, conducted at a brisk pace. Students first learned to animate a slide presentation for marketing their fictional company, and then learned to use a well-chosen desktop publishing project that captured their interest and imagination. Discussion with students showed that they started the course reluctantly but now looked forward to it each week. 'It's really good, and fun', was the consensus. The course makes an important contribution to the school's work as a computing college.

ICT across the curriculum

111. The use of ICT in lessons is only just satisfactory, as most new facilities are concentrated in the main school. Students do, on the other hand, make extensive use of ICT in their own work, and the key skills course ensures that all are equipped with the skills they need. The

school nevertheless needs to ensure that its plans to extend facilities, particularly in science subjects, are carried through as soon as possible.

HUMANITIES

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and are now broadly average; achievement is good.
- Good teaching helps students understand a wide range of sociological ideas and perspectives.
- Students respond very well to teaching, and are strongly committed to their work, though some do not contribute enough to class discussions.
- Relationships are very good, and there is a very harmonious working atmosphere.
- Teachers make good use of contemporary issues, but there is no enrichment outside lessons.
- There are too few books in the library, and ICT could be used more extensively.

Commentary

112. A-level and AS results were below average in 2003, but improved significantly in 2004, particularly at AS. There was also significant improvement at grades A and B. Standards in the present Year 13 are average overall. A small number of students are producing work that is well above average, and higher-attaining students are confident in their oral work. Written work shows a sound knowledge of different sociological perspectives. Students in Year 12 are achieving above average standards for this early stage of their course. Students are beginning to acquire and apply sociological knowledge effectively. They are starting to become more objective in presenting their views - for example, in their work on education.
113. Students do not study sociology at GCSE level. In the light of this and the standards that they are reaching, their achievement is good. Whilst some students in both groups are very articulate, others are much less self-assured and rarely speak in lessons unless specifically questioned by the teacher.
114. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are good. Lessons are planned very thoughtfully and are intellectually challenging, though in some lessons learning goals need to be more clearly stated. Sociological language is used well. Relationships are particularly good; students respond with interest and commitment. Lessons are also very dependent on the teacher leading discussions, and there are not enough opportunities for group and paired work. Assessment is constructive. Students spoke appreciatively about the help and guidance that they receive. A strong feature of teaching relates to the use of contemporary events. For example, the students' work on the role of the media contains a transcript of a broadcast on the Hutton Report.
115. The teacher who has sole responsibility for sociology is managing the subject well. Resources for use in class are good, but the very limited range of sociology books in the library restricts opportunities for independent study. At present students do not have the chance to take part in relevant visits or hear guest speakers. This has rightly been identified as an area for development, with plans to increase the use of ICT. The potential for further improvement is good, particularly if the subject can be given a permanent teaching base.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

116. One in five students is currently taking design and technology in Year 12, following the re-introduction of the course this year. The overall quality of work sampled was good, particularly when students were able to work on independent designs.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

117. No subjects were fully inspected, but a lesson in critical analysis in **art and design** for a mixed Year 12 and 13 class was sampled. The level of intellectual rigour was very challenging and stimulating. Attitudes were extremely positive, standards were above average and teaching was excellent. Students' coursework shows high levels of creativity and imagination, combined with very strong practical skills. It is often very beautiful.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 12 lesson, inspired by Vermeer's painting *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, led to very high levels of debate and intense exploration of imagery, as a means of improving writing styles in critical analysis work.

The teacher's extensive and outstanding preparation set the tone for the seriousness and intensity of this highly challenging and stimulating lesson. She enthusiastically led the closely gathered group through a highly detailed exploration of the painting. Frequent use of direct and provocative questioning generated a wealth of discussion as she helped the group to unravel the mysteries of pose, structure and composition, symbolism and the effects of tone and vibrancy of colour. The teacher frequently linked analysis of this painting to other works by Vermeer, always making it clear how students needed to connect their analysis and interpretation with the writing style required by the examination. This continuously developed students' awareness of their own abilities in the subject. The teacher also gave frequent examples of how to improve the use of specialist, descriptive vocabulary, constantly challenging students for their opinions, whilst exploring with them the extensive and highly informative research materials she had prepared for them. Students showed a very high degree of concentration and were enthusiastic contributors to group discussion at a high academic level. Relationships were very mature. This articulate and highly motivated group were responding to an extremely stimulating and very challenging teaching style, which led them to become enthusiastic learners and very high achievers.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	2	3

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