

INSPECTION REPORT

BAY HOUSE SCHOOL

Gosport

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116501

Headteacher: Mr Ian Potter

Lead inspector: Selwyn Ward

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th October 2004

Inspection number: 268743

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Foundation
Age range of students: 11–18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 2032

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr David Wiltshire

Date of previous inspection: 12th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bay House is a very large school in the coastal town of Gosport that caters for boys and girls aged 11 to 18. The school is popular and oversubscribed, and both the main school and sixth form have expanded considerably in recent years. All but a very small number of students are of white British heritage. There are no students from homes where English is not the principal language. Taken overall, students' socio-economic backgrounds are average. Although a below average number are known to be eligible for free school meals, students join the school from a wide diversity of social backgrounds with a number who come from very deprived areas. Students are of broadly average attainment when they join the school at the start of Year 7, as measured by their primary school test results. The proportion of students with special educational needs is average, and a below average number have statements of special educational needs. The range of special educational needs covered is broad, and includes several students with complex needs as well as many with both learning and behavioural difficulties. The sixth form admits students from this and the other schools in the Gosport area. Its entry requirements are similar to those of other schools in the country that offer mainly A-level courses, being above average in relation to post-16 providers as a whole. The school has won specialist Mathematics and Computing College status from September 2004 but, at the time of the inspection, early in the autumn term, it was too soon to gauge the effects of this new change in status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector	
25377	Lorna Brown	Team inspector	Music
1503	Terry Browne	Team inspector	Mathematics, Mathematics (6 th Form)
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	French, German, Spanish
30433	Chris Corp	Team inspector	Science, Chemistry (6 th Form), Health & Social Care (6 th Form)
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Physical education
22953	Peter Dacombe	Team inspector	French (6 th Form)
23300	Lily Evans	Team inspector	Special educational needs
32590	Roger Fenwick	Team inspector	Design technology, Design technology (6 th Form)
29742	Patricia Fyans	Team inspector	Physics (6 th Form)
25778	Andrew Hicks	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32231	Adrian Lyons	Team inspector	Vocational education, Economics & business (6 th Form)
32582	Stephen Manning	Team inspector	Psychology (6 th Form)
2447	Faysal Mikdadi	Team inspector	
32987	Mandy Mudd	Team inspector	English, Drama, English Literature (6 th Form)
17808	Sue Orpin	Team inspector	Geography, Geography (6 th Form)
10817	George Rayner	Team inspector	History, History (6 th Form)
35060	Keith Robinson	Team inspector	Religious education
11258	Ivor Rushforth	Team inspector	Art, Art (6 th Form), Citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bay House is a very good school where students achieve high standards. The headteacher and leadership team have been very successful in ensuring that students benefit from a high proportion of very good teaching. Bay House provides very good value for money. The school has recently been awarded specialist Mathematics and Computing College status, although this has not yet had an opportunity significantly to affect the provision for students.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students achieve very well and attain high standards in national examinations
- The teaching is very good, particularly for GCSE and A-level
- The school is very well led and managed
- The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of teaching time
- There is an excellent range of clubs and other out-of-school activities in which a great many students take part
- Students behave very well, get on very well with one another and are very keen to learn
- Some less able students and some of those with special educational needs do not achieve as well as others because they do not get enough support in lessons
- There are very good arrangements for the care and welfare of students
- Legal requirements are not fully met for collective worship or for teaching religious education (RE) and information and communication technology (ICT) to all students

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has successfully tackled most of the issues raised in the last inspection. Standards and the quality of education provided have further improved. However, the school still fails to meet requirements to provide for collective worship and the teaching of RE from Year 8 onwards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Students achieve very well. By the end of Year 9, standards in all subjects are at least in line with national expectations and those in mathematics, science, art and physical education (PE) are above average. This represents good achievement in relation to students' starting point, which is broadly average. Standards in Year 11 are in line with national expectations in design technology (DT), French and for those students who learn ICT. Standards are above average in mathematics, geography, German, Spanish, history, PE, vocational courses and among those who study RE. In English, science, art, music and drama, standards are well above average. This represents very good achievement. When withdrawn for support, students with special educational needs make very good progress but they, and some less able students, do not achieve as well as others because they are not always given enough support in lessons. This is particularly the case in Years 7 to 9. In the sixth form subjects inspected in depth, standards are well above average in English, mathematics, chemistry, physics, art, DT, history, psychology, economics & business, and health & social care. They are above average in geography and average in French. The high standards attained in A and AS level examinations represent very good achievement.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Students get on very well with one another and are very keen to learn.

They behave very well in lessons and around the school. They respond very well to the opportunities they are given to take on responsibility. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is very good. Despite the limitations imposed by current timetabling arrangements which result in mostly four 70-minute lessons each day, students benefit from a good range of, mainly academic, subjects and courses, both at the school itself and, from Year 10 onwards, in conjunction with other schools and colleges. The mix of well-established and new teaching staff is very well matched to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation is very tight but the school is well resourced. Opportunities for enrichment, particularly through clubs and other out-of-school activities, are excellent, and the rate of participation is high. Arrangements for the care, welfare and guidance of students are very good and the school has developed an effective partnership with parents, other schools and the wider community.

Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They relate very well to students and generally manage classes well. Lessons are well planned and, in the most effective lessons, teachers vary activities to ensure students' interest is maintained. Questioning is used very effectively to check that students understand and to ensure that all are fully involved. Although students learn and achieve very well, they do not develop strong enough independent study skills. Work is not always well matched to the range of students' abilities and learning support staff are not always used effectively enough in lessons. Marking and assessment are satisfactory but are too variable; not always providing enough guidance to students on how to improve their work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has a clear vision for driving forward further improvement in a school where its tradition of success might otherwise lead to complacency. The headteacher is well supported by a strong leadership team and an able team of year and department heads. They have correctly identified the areas that need improvement, each of which is already the subject of plans for improvement. Shortcomings in the school's provision for ICT are being remedied as part of the changes being introduced through the school's new specialist status. Monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in proposals to revise and extend the school timetable. Plans show that this will also remedy shortcomings in RE provision. Notwithstanding the curriculum weaknesses, which are in the process of being remedied, governors do a very good job. They have a very good awareness of the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved, and they provide a healthy challenge to the headteacher and staff that is supporting the continued drive for improvement.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and students express positive views of the school. Several parents were unhappy with homework and marking. Inspectors agree that marking could be improved but homework is used well throughout the school. Students raised concerns about the behaviour of others, but inspectors judge behaviour to be very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Implement the plans to revise the school timetable
- Provide more effective teaching and support in lessons for less able students and those with special educational needs

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure that all students in Years 10 and 11 learn ICT
- Ensure that provision for RE meets the requirements of the Hampshire agreed syllabus
- Provide a daily act of collective worship

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bay House has a very good sixth form. It has expanded and improved considerably over the years since the last inspection. With good or better teaching in almost 9 out of 10 lessons, and very good or better teaching in more than half the lessons seen, the profile of teaching is excellent. Students learn and achieve very well. A wide curriculum choice provides very well for the needs and aspirations of the students within the context of an academic sixth form. Students' progress is very effectively monitored and supported but their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although good, is relatively less well catered for. Examination results are well above average. Students have very good attitudes, are very well behaved and are very positive about the school. They are prepared to work hard in all their studies. The sixth form is very effectively led and managed and is very cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Achievement is well above average as a result of the consistently high quality of teaching
- Students are very well supported and guided in their academic progress
- The very positive attitudes of students contribute well to their overall achievement and the ethos of the school
- Students benefit from a wide range of courses that are very well matched to their needs
- Leadership has a clear vision for the future and this is helping to make the sixth form successful
- Students are not given enough opportunities to develop their independent study skills

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 sixth form subjects were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good in English and satisfactory in French. A-levels are offered in English Language, English Literature and Language and Literature. In all these subjects, standards are well above average and students achieve very well. In French, students have not done enough work to achieve the highest grades and there has been a fall in standards.
Mathematics	Very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the very well-motivated students work hard and achieve very well.
Science	Very good in physics, chemistry. In physics, teachers are enthusiastic and use their subject expertise to plan stimulating lessons that excite and challenge the students. As a result, students make very good progress and achieve high standards. In chemistry, the students achieve very well and standards are well above the national level as a result of the very good teaching.
ICT	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Humanities	Good in geography and very good in history and psychology. In geography, results are above average and students achieve well because they are exceptionally well motivated and they are taught well, although at times there are too few opportunities for students to think for themselves. In history, students achieve very well because of very good teaching. In psychology, good teaching and students' enthusiasm for this very popular subject, contribute to the high standards achieved.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Very good in design technology. Students achieve very well because lessons are very well planned and taught. Students have a mature approach to the design process. They produce creative work and develop good independent learning skills

	in this subject.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art and design. Students begin the course with very high artistic skills and they build and extend these skills very effectively during their time in the sixth form.
Curriculum area	Evaluation
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Business	Very good in Economics and Business Studies. Students benefit from well supported independent learning and very good opportunities to improve their coursework, enabling them to achieve very well.
Health and social care	Very good. Standards are well above the national average and the students achieve very well. The students' attitudes are very good and they appreciate the support given by the team of enthusiastic teachers
General education	Not inspected in the sixth form.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Students receive very good support and guidance from a team of tutors and the sixth form leadership team. A characteristic of this sixth form is the very detailed knowledge that the staff have of the students and the priority given to ensuring very good attendance and punctuality. Students receive very strong support with their higher education applications. Students know how well they are doing and in most subjects are given very good guidance on how to improve. Regular individual tutorials help students to review their progress at frequent intervals.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is very well led and managed so that there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher plays an important role in leading the expansion of the sixth form, while provision for the substantially increased numbers has been very well managed. The school leadership and governors share a clear understanding of the place of the sixth form in the overall post-16 provision in the area and the school provides very good provision for advanced level students who value a high level of personal support and monitoring.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very positive about the sixth form and the support they receive. Some students find it difficult to adjust to what they see as rigid monitoring of punctuality and private study time but most value the care and support they receive. Students are very appreciative of the quality of teaching.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards in Year 9 are above average. They are well above average at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form. Given students' attainment on entry to the school, this represents very good achievement and good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Exam results are high
- By the end of Year 11, students do particularly well in English, mathematics, science, art, music and drama
- Sixth form standards are high in almost all of the subjects inspected
- Some less able students and those with special educational needs achieve less well than others because they are not always given enough effective support in lessons

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.9 (33.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.5 (37.3)	35.4 (34.7)
science	34.7 (36.8)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 348 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. The table above shows the average point scores attained by students in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. Each point is roughly equivalent to one term's progress, so the table shows that, for example, in 2003, students at Bay House had, on average, made about a term's more progress in mathematics and science, and about half a term's more progress in English, than students nationally. Throughout this report, where comparisons are made with national results, inspectors have looked at the results from 2003 because, at the time of the inspection, national comparisons for 2004 were not yet available.
2. Given that students' attainment when they join the school is broadly average, students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. Standards are above average in mathematics, science, art and physical education. Standards are at least average in all of the other subjects taught.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	58 (63)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	38.4 (39.1)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 320 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Results in the GCSE examinations dipped in 2003, although they were still above average. In the previous three years, they were well above average. Although, at the time of the inspection, no national data was available against which 2004 results could be compared, the results in

2004 were sharply up on those of the previous year, with 69 per cent achieving A*-C grades, as compared with 58 per cent in 2003. This shows the management of the school has been very effective in identifying and correcting weaknesses in order to raise standards.

4. In design technology, French, and among those students studying information and communication technology (ICT), standards are in line with national expectations. Standards are above average in mathematics, geography, German, Spanish, history, physical education, vocational courses and among those who study religious education. In English, science, art, music and drama, standards are well above average. This represents very good achievement, overall. Students have done relatively less well in design technology and ICT because of shortcomings in resources that are now in the process of being remedied as a result of the school's successful bid for specialist status as a Mathematics and Computing College. In French, although standards are lower than those attained in other subjects, this nevertheless represents good achievement because the school's setting system for modern foreign languages has meant that a higher proportion of those taking this subject rather than other languages have been drawn from lower ability sets.
5. When withdrawn for support, students with special educational needs make very good progress but they, and some less able students, do not achieve as well as others because they are not always given enough support in lessons. This is particularly the case in Years 7 to 9. In many subjects, including in English and science, the lower sets are large and include a large proportion of students with special educational needs. Often though, these classes have no learning support staff assigned to them. Where learning support staff have been assigned to help specific students with special needs, their work is not always adequately planned for, so they are not used as effectively as they could be. The shortcomings in support for less able students are recognised by the school, which is in the process of introducing more support staff with subject-specific expertise.

Sixth form

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	96.5 (96.8)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	53.2 (52.3)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per student	313.7 (296.7)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 134 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. Students, many of whom come from other schools at the start of Year 12, achieve very well in the sixth form. Inspectors looked in detail at twelve of the subjects and courses taught in the school and sampled lessons in the other subjects. In all but two of the subjects inspected, standards are well above average, with students achieving a high proportion of A and B grades in their A-level and A/S level examinations. Standards are above average in geography and average in French. These high standards are the result of the consistently high quality of teaching and of the students' very positive attitudes to learning.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory. Sixth form students have very positive attitudes to their learning and their attendance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' very good attitudes to work and learning are reflected in their high standards of achievement
- The very good behaviour of the students shows that they are developing a strong sense of morality
- Relationships between students and adults and with each other are very good

- Sixth form students have very good attitudes towards the school and their work but they do not develop strong enough independent learning skills
- Attendance is very good in the sixth form

Commentary

7. The school is successful in promoting among students a strong desire to learn. Students interviewed during the inspection were unanimous in their support for the school. They enjoy their lessons and the enrichment activities that the school provides. The quality of teaching is very good and, by planning interesting and stimulating lessons, teachers ensure that students are absorbed in their learning and behave well. However, due to the timetable arrangements, some lessons are too long and teachers are unable to hold the attention of all of the students.

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	1943	128	3
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	17	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	35	2	1

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

8. In their questionnaire responses, quite a large number of students indicated that they did not think that others always behave well. It is evident from the good and very good behaviour seen in lessons and around the school that this is a measure more of students' high expectations of behaviour rather than of any shortcomings. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the students understand exactly how they should, and should not, behave. At lesson changeover, break and lunchtimes students move sensibly along narrow corridors and stairwells and they queue without pushing at the canteen and outside of classrooms. Although students said that there is some bullying in the school, all of those interviewed feel able to talk to their tutor, head of year or their subject teachers. Students are confident that any problems are very quickly resolved. The school takes its responsibilities for social inclusion very seriously and works very hard to maintain students in full-time education. There is a minority of students whose behaviour is challenging but due to the very good support procedures that are in place they rarely disrupt the peaceful harmony of the school. However, at times the school finds that the only option is to exclude a student. The number of exclusions has risen since the last inspection but the school keeps meticulous records, reviews them regularly and has a very good re-integration system through 'Fresh Start' for temporarily excluded students.
9. The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Social and moral development are particularly strong. Relationships are very good and reinforced consistently by the way students' personal skills are developed in lessons, assemblies and during tutor times. The students are strongly influenced by the adults who work with them. All adults are very good role

models; they are considerate, showing respect to students and each other and this helps the students to develop a sense of empathy with others. This was seen during a very good Year 9 religious education lesson. The class imagined their experiences of The Holocaust as the teacher darkened the classroom and described a day in a concentration camp. This imaginative lesson led to a discussion of moral issues and challenged the students to decide whether they would have saved Anne Frank. The school provides very good opportunities for students' social development. The well attended and very popular enrichment activities; Year 8 students taking turns to be receptionists; Year 10 students supporting in Year 7 tutor groups; Year 7 students helping in the library; working in pairs and groups in lessons and the Year and School councils are all helping the students to understand what living and working in a community means. Students' appreciation of their own culture is being addressed well through English, art, drama, history, geography and music lessons and enrichment activities. In art, music, religious education and English literature, students are being exposed to the variety of cultures and traditions that exist in this country.

10. Weekly assemblies for each year group are used well to deliver important messages and to celebrate the diverse talents and interests of the school community. During the inspection week, assemblies involving lively performances by talented musicians were appreciated and enjoyed by each of the year groups and gave an uplifting start to the day. The 'Thought for the Day' is often used well in tutor groups as a focus for the social and personal education programme that is delivered during tutor time, but its use is not consistent enough to fully meet current legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship. This was also a shortcoming identified in the last report.
11. The ethos of the learning support department promotes a positive approach to learning among students with special educational needs, enabling them to gain confidence and make good progress within well-planned sessions in the department, whether led by learning support assistants or teaching staff. The department is open to all students for breakfast club when help is on hand to assist students with homework if needed. Students are appreciative of these sessions which enable them to start the day well. Lunch club is also open to all and is carefully arranged so that those students who need this secure environment may take part in relaxing activities and chat with friends.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	1.1
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

12. Students' rates of attendance and unauthorised absences are in line with other secondary schools. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. A clerical assistant checks all registers daily to monitor who is in school and parents are telephoned on the first day of absence if a reason for the absence has not been received. This close monitoring of students' attendance is reducing the number of unauthorised absences.

Sixth form

13. Students are highly motivated in their studies and very eager to learn. They enjoy this part of their education and this was clearly seen in lessons during the inspection. All of the sixth formers interviewed during the inspection commented on the very high quality teaching that they receive from their teachers. There are high levels of supervision in the sixth form, with staff supervising, for example, private study. Although this contributes to the high standard of work, students are, in many subjects, overly dependant on their teachers and do not sufficiently develop the independent study skills that many will need when they move on to higher education.
14. During the inspection the attendance rate in the sixth form was very good. There is a very thorough system of monitoring their attendance and the students fully understand the sanctions if they do not comply. The very high rate of attendance is contributing to the high standards of work seen during the inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. The curriculum, very good in the sixth form, is satisfactory, despite weaknesses caused by the way in which the school day is currently organised. Students benefit from very good guidance and welfare support, and the school has developed an effective partnership with parents and the local community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge
- Relationships between staff and students are very good and teachers manage classes well
- Lessons are well planned, with varied activities that maintain students' interest
- Questioning is used very effectively to check that students understand and to ensure that all are fully involved
- Students do not have enough opportunities to develop their independent learning skills
- Work is not always well matched to students' capabilities
- Marking is too variable, with much that gives too little guidance to students on what they need to do to do better

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 209 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (2%)	64 (31%)	96 (46%)	39 (19%)	4 (2%)	1 (<1%)	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

15. The table above shows the distribution of teaching grades for the 209 lessons seen. It represents a picture of very good teaching. Teaching is significantly better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Although, in every year group, at least three out of four lessons were good or better, there was a notably higher proportion of very good teaching in the older year groups. In Years 7 to 9, teaching was good overall, with almost a quarter of the lessons judged as very good. In Years 10 and 11, teaching was very good overall, with around a third of lessons judged as very good – a similar proportion to that represented across the school as a whole.
16. The quality of teaching and learning is remarkably consistent across all the subjects of the curriculum. Teaching is good or very good overall in every subject. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is a significant strength of teaching. Subject specialists teach almost all subjects and students respond well to teachers' obvious authority and expertise. In their questionnaire responses, a very high proportion of students in every year group commented favourably on the quality of teaching in the school.
17. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Teachers know and get on very well with their students and this contributes to the very positive ethos of the school. Classes are generally managed well so that, in almost all lessons, students focus sensibly on the work they have been given. In a very small number of lessons, mostly in Years 7 to 9, students in lower sets learnt and achieved less well than they were capable of because their behaviour was not well managed.

18. Teachers plan activities in lessons well. It is a notable strength of the teaching that, even though most lessons are currently around 70 minutes long, activities are varied so that, in the main, teachers are very successful at maintaining students' interest and involvement. Nonetheless, the length of lessons inevitably tests the concentration of students, particularly in the lower sets.
19. In some lessons, work is not as well matched as it could be to the learning needs of the students. Because students are organised into ability sets in many subjects, it is evident from teachers' planning that they sometimes assume that all the students within a class are of similar ability when this is not always the case. Even within sets, there can be quite a wide range of ability, so that where work is not well matched to individual students' needs, it can be too easy for the brightest and too difficult for the least able. Although teaching assistants are sometimes used well in lessons to support the learning of students with special educational needs, too often teachers make insufficient use of this valuable resource. By contrast, students with special educational needs learn well, and often very well, in the sessions they attend in the learning support department, where work is matched very closely to the individual students' needs.
20. Throughout the school, teachers make very effective use of open-ended questions to check students' understanding. Questioning is also used very effectively to ensure that students are all involved, with teachers not just taking answers from those who put up their hands to volunteer but also directing questions at others.
21. Assessment is satisfactory. Although there are examples of some very good quality marking that provides clear guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their work, other marking is less rigorous and some does little more than acknowledge that work has been done. In a number of subjects, marking is identified as one of the key areas for improvement because it is often not as good as the teaching. Assessment within the learning support department is very good, with particular strength in identifying and dealing with students who have degrees of dyslexia. Individual education plans are well focused with clear targets and there is effective work towards meeting these targets for students who have withdrawal support.

Sixth form

22. In the sixth form, almost nine out of ten lessons were good or better and more than half were judged very good or excellent. This represents a picture of excellent sixth form teaching, although teaching and learning overall in the sixth form is judged very good rather than excellent because students are over-dependent on their teachers and do not have enough opportunity to develop independent learning skills.
23. Teaching and learning are very good in all but two of the subjects inspected and in a very high proportion of the subjects sampled. They are good in geography and satisfactory in French. All of the strengths of teaching in Years 7 to 11 are evident in abundance in the sixth form. Sixth form students expressed particularly positive views on the quality of teaching and, especially, on teachers' subject expertise.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. Although it is otherwise broad and balanced, the organisation of the school day does not make the best use of teaching time and has resulted in the school failing fully to meet requirements to teach ICT and religious education to all students. Extracurricular provision is excellent. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for enrichment are excellent and student participation in extracurricular activities high
- The timetabling of the school day is too inflexible and does not enable all *National Curriculum* requirements to be fully met
- The sixth form curriculum offers a very good range of A-level courses
- There is a very good match of teaching staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum

Commentary

24. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum satisfactorily meets the requirements of the *National Curriculum*. It is generally broad and balanced for the majority of students. Students are able to study two modern languages from Year 8 onwards, although those who do so have less physical education time, which students do not like. ICT is taught to all Year 7 to 9 students, which enables them to use their skills satisfactorily to develop work in other subjects of the curriculum. However, the time allocated to religious education in Years 8 and 9 is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus.

25. The school has identified that the present timetable structure, with essentially four 70-minute lessons, does not offer sufficient flexibility to teach the full *National Curriculum* and religious education requirement adequately. The 23.5 hours of teaching is well below the nationally recommended figure of 25 hours. Time is allocated disproportionately between subjects with an adverse effect on design technology, modern languages, physical education, religious education and ICT. Within the constraints of the present structure, the use of available staff and rooms is very well timetabled. The leadership of curriculum issues has been very well managed and very good consultative work has been undertaken to tackle these issues, so that, at the time of the inspection, practical plans were already under active consideration for moving to a five period day.
26. Students in Years 10 and 11 are offered a wide range of GCSE courses and there are newly developed vocational routes established, which a small number of students now follow. The programme of work-related learning is developing satisfactorily. The school has established very good links to the Fareport Training group, where a small number of Year 10 and 11 students undertake an individually tailored curriculum. This is a good innovative development that enables these students, including some at risk of exclusion, to remain in education.
27. Provision for ICT in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory for those who do not take GCSE. The cross-curricular use of ICT is also unsatisfactory. Although the school is well resourced for most subjects, many subjects do not have enough access to ICT. This is a weakness that has been recognised by the school and was part of the governors' rationale in seeking Mathematics and Computing College specialist status. The school has plans to substantially improve ICT access for all subjects over the coming year as one of the benefits of its new College status.
28. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned, including modules on drug abuse, health and sex education. It is co-ordinated well and taught successfully in tutorial time. The GEMS programme is well planned and taught by an experienced team who introduce students to a series of very relevant issues that they will face in everyday life. Students gain much from considering others' views and debating what they believe and why, but not enough time is allocated to this valuable course.
29. Provision for the gifted and talented students is very good. In mathematics, science, music and physical education, particularly, students have many opportunities to develop their skills and abilities to high levels. Provision for support for students with special educational needs is less effective in the classrooms and although students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily, they often do not progress as well as their classmates. The provision for special educational needs students within the learning support department is often very good.
30. Extracurricular provision is excellent and a very high number of students are involved in participation both before school, at lunchtime and after school. The commitment of staff to the provision of these enrichment opportunities is outstanding. An excellent variety of sports activities and team games are very well attended. Talented sports players have very good opportunities to develop high-level skills through work at local centres of excellence. The provision for extra activities in music is outstanding, with more than 500 students taking part. Concerts are highlights of the school year. There is a thriving drama programme with many theatre visits and performances, geography field trips and history visits, for example, to the Western Front battlefields. Students benefit from the opportunity to take part in a range of overseas trips. Very good links with the Royal Navy provide challenging extracurricular work in design technology. Around 150 students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
31. There is a very good match of very well qualified teachers to the demands of the curriculum. They are very knowledgeable about their subjects and there is a good balance of youth and experience. Non-teaching staff make a very important contribution to the life and work of the

school. Technical support is very good and has a positive impact on students' learning. The accommodation is satisfactory but tight, given the number of students using the site. There have been some good recent improvements, including new buildings for mathematics and for the sixth form, but there are particular shortcomings in the buildings used for teaching modern foreign languages and in the inadequate changing facilities on the site used for sports.

32. Although there remain weaknesses in the curriculum, mostly connected with and flowing from the current arrangements for timetabling, the further enhancement of extracurricular provision, the introduction of vocational GCSEs and the broadening of the curriculum in the sixth form that has accompanied its expansion, mean that the improvement in the curriculum has been good, overall, since the last inspection.

Sixth form

33. The sixth form curriculum offers students a very good range of traditional advanced level courses. Two Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses are now running very well. This provides a very good balance that meets the needs of students entering this academic sixth form. Four out of five of the teachers work within the sixth form. They are very well matched and qualified to the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is generally good, but occasionally classes are taught in areas that would benefit from greater access to ICT and other resources.
34. Sixth form students have access to their own social and study areas with subject reference materials and computers, which students greatly appreciate. Daily collective worship is not provided and RE is not taught as required. Satisfactory use is made of computers for researching and word-processing. Students receive very good support when completing their UCAS forms and there are satisfactory links to the careers guidance service.
35. Students have opportunities to take part in a very good variety of optional activities such as the critical thinking course, community service and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. They are also very well involved in the excellent extracurricular programmes, particularly in sport and music.

Work-related learning

Provision for work-related learning is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities are missed to build links between students' work experience and the work they do at school
- There is very good provision for the small number of students who receive off-site education with Fareport Training

Commentary

36. All students in Year 11 have a two-week work experience placement organised by Project Trident who are responsible for ensuring that health and safety requirements are met. Students select five choices and are guided in their preparation by the hard work of the work-related learning co-ordinator. Preparation for work experience is carried out through an assembly visited by a speaker from Project Trident and through briefings in form time by the form tutor. The quality of these briefings is variable. Students are given a booklet with some tasks to complete on the placement but, with the exception of French, the experience is not built into the curriculum of any subject. Indeed, some staff have been discouraged from setting coursework based on work experience. This division between work experience and the school curriculum fails to maximise the value of the time spent out of class. It is only in vocational subjects, offered to a small proportion of students in Years 10 and 11, that lessons relate to the practicalities of the world of work and link theory to practice.
37. A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 spend their week at Fareport Training receiving off-site education. The provision for their needs is very good and the achievement of these students, some of whom might otherwise be at risk of disaffection with school, is raised significantly in this work-related setting. By Year 11, some students have passed entry-level certificates in literacy and numeracy and are working towards NVQ level qualifications in subjects such as information technology. Contact is maintained with Bay House School through

weekly visits by a head of year and monitoring and linking are good. These staff know the Fareport Training staff well and this results in an effective partnership. During the inspection, a head of year provided informed pastoral support and students volunteered that they valued the teachers, small groups and individual attention. They also valued the intensity of the short classroom-based element of the day.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure the care, guidance and welfare of the students are very good. Achievement and personal development are monitored very well. The students have very good opportunities to express their views and to have them acted on.

Main strengths

- The school looks after the students very well
- Students benefit from the high quality personal and academic support, advice and guidance that the school provides
- The school actively seeks the views of the students and does its best to take account of their suggestions

Commentary

38. Bay House School is a very caring community. The adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the students. Health and safety procedures, including fire practices, are good and help to ensure that students and staff are working in a safe environment. First aid and other medical support are very good and child protection procedures are thorough and well understood by the staff. Arrangements for storing confidential records have improved since the previous inspection. The school counsellor, matron, the behaviour support teacher, *'Fresh Start'* and the numerous courses run by the learning support team, Year 11 bullying counsellors and sixth form mentors are all very important and effective elements within the pastoral care system.
39. Tutors and heads of year regularly review students' academic achievements. The grades on the annual progress checks are monitored and alert staff to problems that students may be having. The academic review days introduced for Years 9 and 10 are also having a positive impact on the guidance that is offered to students. Tutors, heads of year, heads of department, subject teachers and the learning support team provide high quality support for students. The learning support staff also liaise closely with outside agencies and use their expertise when needed. Students are becoming more involved in the assessment process and all of those interviewed during the inspection said that their teachers are very good at advising them of how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work. There is a weakness in that not all teachers plan lessons to meet the needs of all of the students and this can adversely affect their rate of learning. The monitoring of students' academic and personal development has improved since the last inspection. Tutors have a good overview of students' endeavours through good work, attendance, attitudes or out-of-school success and these are acknowledged during assemblies and social and personal education. All of these very good procedures are effective in raising students' self-esteem and building their confidence.
40. The school listens well to the students and many of them have the confidence to voice their opinions because they know their views will be considered. Last year, the headteacher used a student perception survey to canvass views on learning styles. These responses have been analysed and incorporated into many teachers' lesson plans, particularly in the history department. The year and school councils provide very good opportunities for students to actively involve themselves in the running of the school. The school council has been given a budget and has decided to refurbish the changing rooms on the 'Cocked Hat' site. During a meeting held in the inspection week, the council was presented with three charity appeals, which they had to debate and choose between. The outcome will be discussed between the headteacher and the council officers during a working lunch. Discussions held with students during the inspection show very clearly that they feel the school values their opinions.

Sixth form

41. Sixth formers interviewed during the inspection expressed positive views of the school. Those that had attended from Years 7 to 11 had chosen to stay here because of the teachers and the reputation that the sixth form has for high achievement. Students who had come from other schools chose this sixth form for the high academic standards and feel that they have made the right choice. It is a friendly sixth form with very supportive teachers who challenge and have high expectations of them. They all said that they are given very good guidance on how to improve their work in all subjects and they were very happy with the support and guidance given to them in making their career and higher education choices.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with the parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths

- Parents are well informed about what is happening in the school and the progress their children are making
- Good links with the community enrich the curriculum
- Good links with other schools and colleges provide many benefits for the students

Commentary

42. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting were positive and reflect parents' confidence in the school. They believe that communication is good between home and school. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or complaints. They are contacted if there are problems with their children and they are well informed about how their children are getting on. Parents are invited to meet their children's subject teachers in the spring term. Year 7 parents are given an opportunity to meet their children's tutors early in the autumn term. Academic reviews have been introduced for Years 9 and 10 and are attended by many parents. There is a good dialogue between tutors, parents and students; progress is discussed and targets are agreed. The autumn term progress checks provide parents with a brief overview of how their children are performing and the annual reports to parents are of good quality. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The reports provide parents with good information of what their children know, understand and can do and of personal effort. In some subjects, reports indicate what the students need to do next to improve. *National Curriculum* levels are also given for each subject.
43. Written information is of a good quality. The prospectus is a well-presented document and newsletters are written in a friendly style and give parents lots of useful information about the school, its successes and a calendar. The study planners and parents' handbooks for each year group provide good details of the school's expectations and of the homework timetables. Parents of students with special educational needs are kept well informed by the learning support department. They are suitably involved in the annual review and half-yearly reviews of individual education plan targets, when theirs' and their children's views are listened to carefully.
44. The school has developed some effective local partnerships. For example, parents support the school through fundraising and organising social events via the parent teacher association (PTA). Year 7 students work closely with senior citizens, visiting and entertaining them both in and out of school. Other students take part in community service as part of the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and many students get involved in fundraising for local charities, including the RSPCA Ark at Stubbington. A joint arts festival at Ferneham Hall involves very large numbers of students. The chair of governors has brought a good partnership with the local church into the school and a youth church worker and the Christian Union lead assemblies. The health service and fire brigade support the good social and personal education programme. Successful work-based learning opportunities have been set up with Fareport Training and some students are receiving life skills tuition from *Teenzone*, which is run by the youth service. A number of community groups use the school facilities. For example, Gosport cricket and football clubs, cheerleading and badminton clubs. Local historians

meet at the school regularly, adult numeracy and literacy classes are held on site and an evangelical church uses the premises every Sunday.

45. There are good links with the main feeder primary schools that help new Year 7 students to settle into school successfully. Parents spoke particularly highly of an introductory concert organised by the school and involving Year 6 students from primary schools throughout the area which provided a very good introduction to the school. The Head of Year 7 and the learning support co-ordinator visit local primary schools to meet the students and discuss their needs with their teachers. A lot of time and effort is put into sorting the incoming students into appropriate tutor groups. The school receives Year 6 test data from the primary schools, which is used by the English department to set the students into English groups early in the new school year. Year 7 students spoken to during the inspection said that they were enjoying their new experiences at Bay House School. The careers officer liaises closely with other post-16 providers in the area to ensure that students in Years 10 and 11 make considered decisions about their futures. Initial teacher trainees and postgraduate education students are welcomed into the school from a number of universities.

Sixth form

46. Partnership arrangements are equally strong for sixth form students and their parents. Bay House is the only school in Gosport with its own sixth form and it therefore accepts quite a high proportion of students from the other schools in the area. It liaises closely with these secondary schools so that students throughout the locality are given good information about the range of post-16 choices available to them both at Bay House and at local further education colleges. Parents are similarly kept well informed, including about the progress their children are making in the sixth form, and sixth form students share in the opportunities made available to them through the various community links that have been developed across the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by a strong leadership team. The school is very well managed. Governance is very good.

Main strengths

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership
- The headteacher is very well supported by a strong leadership team and an able team of year and department heads
- The school monitors teaching and learning effectively
- Governors do a very good job

Commentary

47. There has been good improvement in leadership and management since the last inspection. The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision for driving forward further improvement. Determination in carrying this through is balanced by a realistic awareness of how the school can move forward in a way that is worthwhile, yet manageable. It is complemented by a capability to inspire colleagues to honestly reflect upon the way in which they work and the outcomes that they achieve, share conclusions and ideas and willingly seek to become even more effective. These have been key elements in ensuring that a school that might otherwise have been complacently satisfied with its existing level of success, continues to strive to improve yet further.
48. The headteacher is very well supported by a strong leadership team and an able team of year and department heads. All have very clearly defined areas of activity and objectives. There is a shared willingness to review these regularly and to adapt to new working contexts and needs where necessary. The school's leaders have correctly identified the areas that need improvement, each of which is already the subject of plans. Shortcomings in the school's provision for ICT are being remedied as part of the changes being introduced through its new specialist status. The school's strategic plan is a very helpful tool to those involved at all stages of planning and improvement, with clear links between whole-school, departmental and individual developments.

49. Governance is very good despite shortcomings in the curriculum, as these have been recognised by the school which has plans in hand to remedy them imminently. Governors have a very good appreciation both of the many strengths of the school and of those areas that stand to be improved. They make themselves very accessible to parents. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they provide rigorous constructive challenge to the headteacher and senior staff. In this way, they play a full part in the continuing drive for further school improvement.
50. The school has significantly improved its arrangements for monitoring and evaluating its work, so that they are now systematic and rigorous, to remedy a key issue from the last inspection. It is aware that this work is still in progress, with a need for further improvement in, for example, ensuring that monitoring always provides staff with the clearest guidance on improvement. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in plans, on which the school is currently consulting, to revise and extend the timetable to provide more flexibly for the range of needs of its students. Plans show that this will also enable shortcomings to be remedied in provision for religious education.
51. The school is justifiably proud of its success in attracting capable, well-qualified staff and making them feel that they want to stay. Staff at all levels, whether newly-qualified or experienced, receive very well-organised and effective induction when they join the school. There is a strong commitment towards developing a reflective environment in which all can learn and develop. To this end, the school invests considerable effort into in-house training, based on the research and creativity of its own staff. It contributes strongly to the training of new teachers through very effective links with two local universities.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	6,748,188
Total expenditure	6,479,355
Expenditure per student	3,295

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	146,695
Balance carried forward to the next	415,528

52. Financial planning provides very effectively for the needs of the curriculum and is very well organised. The school always works very effectively to secure the best value for its spending by, for example, taking proper steps to ensure that services are purchased in the fairest and most economical manner and consulting students to ensure that spending has the desired impact upon learning and achievement.

Sixth form

53. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective in ensuring that it makes a strong contribution to the success and popularity of the school. There is a clear determination to make a specific and valuable contribution to the local provision for young people in this age group by providing academic courses of considerable quality for those who need them. The success with which this has been achieved is amply demonstrated by the expansion that has taken place in recent years and by the continued very good academic achievement of the students.
54. The headteacher and those with specific sixth form leadership responsibilities share a very strong vision for the sixth form. There is a full awareness that, as the sixth form has expanded, the structures and methods of leadership and management need to adapt to keep pace, with plans to ensure that this takes place. The commitment towards identifying and meeting the needs of each student is very strong. Very well organised and effective procedures for monitoring the work of students provide staff with detailed knowledge on which to base guidance and help any students who may be at risk of underachieving. The school monitors the work of the subject departments very well. The sixth form succeeds very well in being cost effective and financial management very effectively provides for the needs of the curriculum.

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 good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students learn well because of the very good subject knowledge, classroom management and high expectations of the teachers
- Some less able students do not make as much progress as they could because of the large group sizes and lack of additional support
- Sometimes, particularly in Years 7 to 9, work is not sufficiently matched to students' ability
- Inconsistent approaches to developing writing skills affect the achievement of some less able students

Commentary

55. Results in Year 9 in 2003 were average. 2004 results show a sharp improvement. Girls do better than boys, but by a smaller margin than nationally. In Year 11, English language results are well above and literature results in line with those nationally. Students achieve well in relation to those of a similar ability in other schools. In Year 11, girls' results are better than boys' in the school. In relation to the national picture both do equally well. The progress of less able students is satisfactory but not as good as that of those of middle and high ability.
56. Students learn well because they are taught by experienced and enthusiastic teachers. In the most successful lessons, students make good progress because learning is well structured and a fast pace is maintained. Good classroom management skills ensure smooth transitions between activities which keep all focused on their work. Teachers use questions effectively to check and extend learning, as in a Year 7 reading lesson where the teacher's questioning lifted a student's presentation from straightforward retelling of the story to something reflective and evaluative. In less successful lessons, particularly with lower ability groups in Years 7 to 9, work and teaching strategies are insufficiently matched to individual needs. The large group sizes and lack of effective classroom support make this challenging for teachers, although when support is available it is not always well used because teachers do not always plan the work of the learning support staff who will be in their lessons.
57. Students read fluently and private reading is given high status, with recommended book lists and clear systems for monitoring reading. Students make perceptive comments about writers' use of language. This language awareness is also evident in many students' personal writing because the most effective teaching makes connections between close reading skills and students' own writing. Vocabulary is lively, and critical vocabulary well used. Most students write accurately with a strong sense of audience, though the lower-attaining students struggle with spelling and punctuation. Though their accuracy improves over time, the style and substance of their work remains too limited because of inconsistent approaches to developing writing. Where there is explicit focus on stylistic and vocabulary choices, such as in the preparation of "a diary from the trenches", the rich stimulus and close focus on language and structure enables students to produce work of a high standard. Students take pride in their work and presentation is good. When given the opportunity, they comment maturely and perceptively on each other's work. Many students have developed effective drafting skills which substantially improve the quality of their work. Teachers are encouraging and often provide

good guidance to students on how they can improve their work, but they are not always precise enough, so that some students simply copy out their first drafts.

58. The department has good accommodation and resources, though limited access to ICT means that there are currently few planned opportunities for students to develop and consolidate these skills in English lessons. The subject is well led and managed. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the department is well placed to further build on its current success.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Students' literacy skills are good and allow effective learning. In some subjects, there are good opportunities for independent extended writing and well-prepared materials to support this. Teachers also provide good and explicit teaching of note-taking and planning skills. Several subjects develop students' formal and technical language through key word lists. These approaches are not yet consistent in every subject, however. Private reading is effectively promoted through tutor periods. Good use is made of the library to help develop students' research skills and all students benefit from training in using the library. The school's policy for literacy across the curriculum includes literacy targets in marking but these are not used consistently.

French

Provision in French is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and students make good progress in lessons
- GCSE results have been below those of other subjects
- Assessment of students' work has improved and is now effective

Commentary

60. Students enter the school in Year 7 with little or no previous experience of French. Within weeks of starting the subject, students' speaking and listening skills enable them to respond accurately to everyday commands and questions. By the end of Year 9, their attainment is in line with national expectations. Until the current academic year, the school required all Year 11 students to enter GCSE examinations in French. This, coupled with a number of staffing difficulties, led to a drop in standards in 2003, with 31 per cent of students gaining A*-C grades against the national average of 45 per cent. Almost all students gained A*-G grades, which was above the national average. School records indicate that in 2004, passes at A*-C grades remained similar, with girls achieving higher results than boys.
61. For those following the examination syllabus, there is a marked improvement this year in the achievements of students in Years 10 and 11. Students are now achieving well and standards are above average. They develop their vocabulary, using dictionaries for accuracy and spelling. They engage in role-play exercises, preparing questions for their peers on, for example, future careers plans. Their written work is less well developed, although more able students write good accounts of holidays and local events. Less able students achieve well orally but do less well in written exercises because they receive insufficient support in the classroom.
62. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall. Teachers have very good subject expertise and students expect to hear and speak French throughout the lesson. Imaginative planning captures students' interest, and relationships between staff and students are very good. Literacy is promoted well through speaking and listening, and reminders for care with written presentations. Overhead projectors and cassette recorders are a regular

feature of lessons but little use is currently made of computer technology to enhance the subject. Foreign language assistants are well deployed and support students' cultural development. However, the needs of less able students are not always well met. Where teaching assistants are present, they do not always provide enough support. Teachers have a good knowledge of students' individual needs, and some provide extra worksheets and prompts for students with special educational needs. Similarly there are examples of planned extension work for the more able. However, this practice is inconsistent. In the best lessons, students work hard and behave well, but where teaching is unsatisfactory, they show little respect and lessons are noisy and disruptive, with little learning achieved. A small number of Year 9 students have lost their enthusiasm for French and their inappropriate behaviour impedes the learning of others. However, the majority of students participate and work well.

63. Improvement is satisfactory, although progress has been impeded by the relatively high number of staff changes in modern foreign languages. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership, new this term, has reviewed the curriculum and introduced effective marking and assessment which enables students to know what they must do to improve their learning. Schemes of work are satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched by residential visits to Le Touquet, and the department is currently working on establishing email and exchange links with France. This large modern languages department has experienced a number of difficulties since the last inspection. However, the staffing situation has now stabilised, although the school has identified the further need for a subject manager for each language and for a second in department. This is essential if the current head of department is to continue his heavy teaching commitment. Resources are adequate although little use is made of computer technology. The accommodation is poor. The demountable buildings designated for languages have no access to running water and there are no nearby toilet facilities for staff or students.

German

Provision in German is good.

Main strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- GCSE results are well above average
- Assessment of students' work has improved and is now effective

Commentary

64. More able students in Year 8 have the option to study a second language. They have little or no previous experience of German. By Year 9, standards are average. In GCSE examinations for 2003, 93 per cent of students gained A*-C grades, which is considerably above the national average of 51 per cent. All students gained A*-G grades. School records indicate that in 2004, passes in A*-C grades were 83 per cent with girls achieving higher results than boys. These results represent very good achievement. Standards seen during the inspection were above average.
65. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good or better. Teachers have very good subject expertise. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very well, and students are well motivated. Relationships between staff and students are very good and there are good levels of humour which create a pleasing learning ethos. Literacy is well promoted through speaking and listening, and reminders to take care with written presentations. However, teachers make insufficient use of computer technology to enhance the subject. Students' work is dated and marked, and this has improved recently, with marking showing *National Curriculum* levels or predicted examination grades.

66. Resources are adequate and the curriculum is enhanced by residential visits to Germany. The accommodation is poor. The demountable buildings designated for languages have no access to running water and there are no nearby toilet facilities for staff or students. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although there is no specific subject leader for German. German was not reported separately in the last inspection and so inspectors are unable to make a judgement about improvement in this subject.

Spanish

Provision in Spanish is good.

Main strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- GCSE results are well above average
- Good use is made of assessment in lessons so that students know how to improve their work

Commentary

67. More able students in Year 8 have the option to study a second language. They have little or no previous experience of Spanish. By Year 9, their attainment is average but with very good oral skills. In GCSE examinations in 2003, 82 per cent of students gained A*-C grades, which is significantly above the national average of 48 per cent. All students gained A*-G grades. In 2004, 87 per cent of the students achieved passes at A*-C grades. There has been a steady increase in percentage results over the last three years. Standards seen during the inspection were above average. Students' achievement has been very good.
68. The quality of teaching and learning was good or better in all lessons seen. Teachers' subject expertise is very good and this inspires students with confidence. Students respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour. Relationships between staff and students are very good, and this contributes to students' very positive attitudes. Lessons are well balanced and structured to include elements of speaking, reading writing, with an assessment slot at the end of the lesson. This enables students to recognise what they have learned and what needs to be improved.
69. Accommodation is poor. Resources are adequate, although not enough use is made of computer technology as an aid to learning. The curriculum is enhanced, however, by residential visits to Spain. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although there is currently no specific subject leader for Spanish. Spanish was not reported separately in the last inspection and so inspectors are unable to make a judgement about improvement in this subject.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because they work hard and the teaching is good
- The positive attitudes of the students reflect the encouragement and help given by the teachers
- The mathematical expertise of the teachers enables students to gain very good GCSE results
- The range of teaching styles continues to be narrow

Commentary

70. In 2003, the Year 9 results were above the national average, and the GCSE results were well above average, both when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. Results in 2004

were even better. Achievement is very good, given that standards are average when students start in Year 7 and results well above average in Year 11. In response to the good teaching, the students behave well, are attentive and work hard both in lessons and at homework. Students' enthusiasm contributes strongly to their very good achievement. Work in each year group shows overall standards are above average across the areas of number, algebra, geometry and statistics. In particular, the students are accurate numerically and in applying routine methods. They present work logically, reflecting the rigorous teaching of techniques. For example, in GCSE work on the sine rule, students carefully draw a diagram and show their method, leading to an answer which they confidently round to a required degree of accuracy. However, because they tend to rely on teacher instruction, students are less confident when having to think for themselves, explore ideas or explain the mathematics they are doing. Also, as work is mainly focused on examination success, the students have less opportunity to fully enjoy the subject or to appreciate the spiritual, cultural or historical aspects.

71. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers are very conscientious and have good subject knowledge, and these are key factors behind the very good results. Schemes of work are detailed and expectations of all groups are high. Good behaviour is assured by firm classroom discipline, complemented by very good help given to individual students. Lower ability students are in smaller sets than in other subjects and benefit from the greater attention they receive. Teaching is well organised, and teachers' expertise ensures explanations are clear. Learning is most effective when there are well-chosen activities. For example, a Year 7 lesson included a board game during which students in small groups learnt about new algebraic expressions through their discussion. In some lessons, computers are used well. Students complete regular homework, knowing that teachers will chase this up vigorously but also will provide extra help if needed. However, a relative weakness is that the range of teaching styles continues to be narrow as at the last inspection. Teacher talk predominates, with little student discussion or variety in activity to enhance learning. The department recognises the need to better co-ordinate the use of existing ICT and to improve assessment by involving students more in the process.
72. The subject is very well led and managed. Leadership sets high aspirations and provides a good role model for staff and students. The strong and hard-working team of staff support each other well. This ensures a successful department, with the added benefit of excellent accommodation. The very good organisation of teaching and testing contributes to raising achievement. Monitoring has been improved, but there is scope for further improvement in the analysis of performance data. Although the range of teaching styles remains narrow, improvement since the last inspection is good because results have improved substantially.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Students have good competency in numeracy and they use their mathematical skills very effectively in other subjects. For example, in science the very good graphical skills help students understand rates of reaction. In business studies, the students used calculators skilfully for work on profit. In design technology, students are accurate in measuring and using scales in drawings. In various subjects, the students confidently collect, display and interpret data. However, all this is little co-ordinated, so numeracy across the curriculum is an appropriate priority for development, alongside improving links with primary schools, within the very recently acquired specialist status.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are well above national levels
- Students learn and achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching
- The attitudes and behaviour of students are good especially in Years 10 and 11
- The achievement of some less able students is lower than expected

Commentary

74. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above the national average and the trend has been upwards since the last inspection. The results in 2004 were slightly down. The department has undertaken a very detailed analysis of these results and has implemented extra support to raise the attainment of these lower-attaining students. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were well above the national average and again the trend has been upwards and continued in 2004. Standards of work are currently above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11.
75. Students are broadly average when they join the school and their GCSE results show that they achieve very well. The most able students are suitably challenged and gain the highest grades possible. Students' very good achievement is due to two major factors. Firstly, the teaching and learning are very good and secondly, teachers and students share very good relationships. In the most successful lessons, the teachers have very good class control and the lessons are well planned with challenging activities. The pace of these lessons is good and engages the students' interest. The few occasions where lessons were less successful were with less able students. The attitudes of some of these students to learning were not as good as the majority of students and they were not fully attentive in lessons. The relatively large numbers of students in lower-attaining classes with little learning support resulted in teachers being unable to give sufficient support and guidance.
76. The leadership and management are very good. The large team of teachers are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. The courses are well planned with a good range of teaching and learning styles. A recently introduced extension to enable students to follow separate sciences to GCSE is very successful, with large numbers of students choosing to attend after-school lessons to complete the course. The use of computers is insufficient due to the lack of suitable equipment. This provision is due to improve in the very near future with the arrival of a wide range of equipment and computers linked to the school's specialist status. The team of technicians provides good support to the teachers by ensuring all the required equipment is available when needed. The improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards are higher, achievement is better and the monitoring of students' attainment is now good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is inadequate provision for ICT across the curriculum
- Specialist ICT teaching is good and the very good new accommodation and resources contribute well to students' achievement
- Students are given good opportunities to work independently and to use their initiative
- Assessment for students in Year 7 to Year 9 is unsatisfactory and monitoring of GCSE performance is not used well enough to guide planning

Commentary

77. Leadership and management of ICT is satisfactory. Concern over the accuracy of previous systems for tracking students' progress in Year 7 to Year 9 led the ICT department to set up new procedures last year. However, teachers still lack confidence in using them. Consequently, assessments of students' attainment and achievement by the end of Year 9 in 2003 and 2004 are unreliable and it is not possible to judge standards at those times. Inspection evidence indicates that current Year 9 students are on track to attain average standards and to achieve satisfactorily by the end of the school year.
78. GCSE results in 2003 were below the national average. They improved markedly in 2004. Nearly half of students achieved A*-C grade passes, which is broadly in line with national expectations. In both 2003 and 2004, girls outperformed boys. Teachers keep good records of students' progress throughout the course, but there has been no analysis to explain why boys and girls perform differently. The department is therefore in a weak position to prevent the situation reoccurring. Students just commencing Year 10 are working at the standards expected and are on course to attain average standards. There is currently no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls. Students achieve satisfactorily.
79. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Careful selection of units of work from the *National Strategy* for students in Years 7 to 9 ensures that all aspects of ICT are now taught. This is an improvement since the last inspection and *National Curriculum* requirements for students in these years are met. Teachers have high expectations and explain work well, using the resources from the *Strategy* effectively. Students taking the GCSE course also receive good guidance. Teachers use the examination board's coursework marking criteria from the outset and marking is good. Consequently, students are well informed about their progress and know exactly what they need to do to improve work.
80. The small number of less successful lessons is due to a variety of factors. In one, the teacher did not adapt the learning materials or adjust the teaching approach sufficiently to meet the needs of the large number of students with special educational needs. No additional support was available to manage the sometimes noisy behaviour. Consequently, students made less progress than they could. In another, teaching focused too much on ICT skills at the expense of developing students' understanding of the environmental issues that they were developing in their group newsletters.
81. The new well-appointed, spacious ICT suites are excellent, although some of the older suites are a little cramped for larger classes. Students nearly always have individual access to a computer and lessons provide plenty of time for practical work. At its best, this arrangement works very well. Nearly all students have very good work attitudes and behave responsibly. This allows teachers and support staff to respond to individual students' needs as they arise in practical work. Support is good, ensuring that all students, regardless of ability or any special educational need, make equal progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Throughout the school there are currently insufficient opportunities in other subjects for students to use and develop their ICT skills. Provision is good in music, where students use specialist equipment well, for example in developing multi-part compositions. Provision is also good in religious education, where each unit of work includes ICT, for example to prepare multimedia presentations of Navajo sand paintings. However, in many other subjects, students and staff have had insufficient access to ICT in the past to enable them to use it effectively. Some students use ICT to present GCSE coursework, but this is not planned and monitored systematically as part of overall ICT provision. Weaknesses in control technology and the use of ICT for automatic data recording and measuring were identified at the last inspection and have not been remedied. *National Curriculum* requirements for ICT in Years 10 and 11 are not met. As a result, only the small proportion of students who take GCSE ICT achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards. Attainment for the vast majority is below average and many students underachieve.
83. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards of work and the quality of teaching are similar to those reported at that time. The curriculum for students in Years 7 to 9 has improved, but weaknesses in cross-curricular provision for older students remain. The school is very aware of the deficiencies and good steps are now being taken to remedy the position through the implementation of the school's specialist Mathematics and Computing status. Facilities for ICT have recently been improved significantly and a programme of professional development for teachers in all subjects has just begun. However, developments are in their infancy and it is too early to assess their impact on the curriculum overall and on students' achievements.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are above average and students achieve well
- Students benefit from good teaching by a well-qualified team
- Assessment and target-setting do not give students enough information about what they need to do to improve
- The curriculum is broad, varied and interesting but students have too few opportunities to use ICT to help them learn

Commentary

84. Results from teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 (were average and they improved in 2004. The school results at GCSE in 2003 were above average and in 2004 they improved sharply. Students' work at the end of Year 9 shows satisfactory achievement, with standards in line with those expected nationally. The standards of students' work by Year 11 are above average, and this represents good achievement. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are learning well but their achievement is only satisfactory because recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum are only just beginning to have an impact. Students throughout the school are highly motivated and keen to do well because the effective use of visual and relevant material, together with the use of fieldwork, provides interest and makes lessons memorable. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, students were taken to consider the environmental qualities of various locations around the school. As a result, they began to be able to evaluate their local environment in a critical and objective way.

85. Teaching and learning are generally good, but there is more variation in teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teachers know the subject very well and usually provide clear explanations and very structured lessons, so that students' knowledge and understanding are extended well. Relationships are often very good and, in most lessons, students are managed well. However, in those few lessons that are not as good, the level of challenge for some students was too low, and the teacher was too restrictive. Despite students' enthusiasm for the subject, teaching methods sometimes encourage students to be overdependent on the teacher, with the result that they rely on the teacher's questions and are reluctant to ask questions for themselves. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is more consistently good. Teachers expect students to achieve well and usually this is reflected in the challenge of the work. Teachers generally manage their students well so lessons are orderly and focused on learning. Students are very keen to learn and they contribute readily when given the opportunity. In a Year 10 lesson about rural-urban conflict, the teacher encouraged students to take part in a debate by allocating them the roles of interested parties. This encouraged students to select from the available information, use their imaginations and begin to challenge the differing views. Teachers mark and assess students' work regularly and assessment is used well to measure their progress. However, there is too little information given to students to tell them how well they are doing and what they need to do next in order to improve their work.
86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and improving. Recent improvements to the subject, such as the new schemes of work for Years 7, 8 and 9, and improved assessment and target-setting procedures for Year 7, are already beginning to make a difference, although these are still at a very early stage. The new plans for the subject ensure that different aspects are integrated well and enable students to understand and make links more easily. Fieldwork, map work and visual material make a good contribution to students' learning, but there is not yet enough use of ICT so this aspect of students' achievement is limited. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Although progress has been slow in tackling some of the issues identified in the last inspection, provision is now good and students are achieving well.

History

Provision in history is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in history because lessons are well planned and taught
- Students with special needs often receive good individual support, but work is not always specifically planned for their needs
- Marking does not give students enough guidance on how to improve

Commentary

87. The 2003 GCSE results were below average. This was because, while the A*-G rate was above average, the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C was significantly lower than average, especially for boys. Generally, students did less well in history than in their other subjects. Following very resolute and effective action by the department, the 2004 A*-C rate was considerably better and the margin between boys and girls much narrower. The subject has been very popular for several years, with a much higher proportion choosing the GCSE course than in most schools, including many who do so because they enjoy it, even though some may not be particularly good at it.
88. Most students enter the school with average standards in history. By Year 9, they achieve well, attaining above average standards, and this provides a strong foundation for continued good achievement and above average standards in Years 10 and 11. History provides good opportunities for students to use, practise and improve writing skills, in which most students show above average fluency.

89. Teaching and learning are good overall, and are often very good. In most lessons, teaching very skilfully maintains a balance between a relaxed and sensitive approach, but with firm control and clear direction. This, and the generally very good attitudes and behaviour of students, results in very good relationships, that are strongly conducive to learning and achievement. Lessons are planned effectively to give students very good opportunities to refer back to and build upon their earlier learning. Stimulating starter activities get most lessons off to a brisk, motivating, start. Teachers are improving the way in which they make use of *National Curriculum* and GCSE criteria to inform students about how well they are doing, although marking does not always give clear enough guidance on how they can improve. Because teachers know their students well and generally work effectively with support assistants, those with special educational needs usually receive good individual support during lessons. However, more work specifically planned for lower-attaining students is needed to help them to work more independently. The length of lessons sometimes reduces achievement when, for example, some students find it difficult to maintain full concentration in the later stages of 70-minute lessons, or the very occasional 35-minute lessons limit opportunities to discuss points in depth.
90. The subject is managed in a very efficient and well-organised way. This results in, for example, very effective monitoring and improvement of teaching and learning. Leadership is very good, setting a good role-model for teachers. A very effective staff team has been created, strongly equipped to contribute fully to the school's goals. This results in a popular and successful department and a good rate of improvement since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education (RE) is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school does not meet the requirements of the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus
- Very good teaching leads to high achievement for those who study the subject to GCSE
- There is good use of ICT
- Marking does not always give students enough guidance on how to improve their work

Commentary

91. Although students in Year 7 arrive with varied experiences, the overall standard on entry is average. In Years 9 and 11, the standards seen in lessons are also average. Despite the high quality of teaching, progress is limited by the insufficient time available for RE. In the GCSE group, standards are above average. Achievement overall is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and very good in the GCSE group.
92. Teaching and learning are very good. In Years 10 and 11, a specialist team of teachers delivers an imaginative guidance course but this does not satisfy the requirements of the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus. In general, students respond well to the teaching, which often challenges them but is always supportive. Lessons are well planned and have a range of activities that ensure a good pace of learning and, as a result, achievement is high. Opportunities for the use of ICT are included within each unit of work. The marking scheme provides an effective means of informing students of their progress, however its application is inconsistent and students do not always know what they have to do to improve.
93. Leadership and management are good. The development plan correctly identifies the key issues for further development although there is insufficient focus on monitoring and evaluating the work of the department. Leadership has been effective in raising the profile of RE within the school and introducing the subject as a viable GCSE option. There is now a very able team of specialist teachers who have the capacity to both raise further the profile of RE and to improve the attainment of students. Although good progress has been made with regard to some of the issues identified in the last inspection, there is still insufficient time to meet the requirements for the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus for RE and as a result the overall improvement is

unsatisfactory. The school does, however, intend to provide discrete RE for all years from September 2005 as part of its planned reorganisation of the school day.

TECHNOLOGY

Design technology

Provision in design technology is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good
- Results are above average but girls do not do as well as expected
- Differences in the quality of provision in the two separate departments affect the achievement of students
- Students are not achieving as well as they could because of a lack of ICT resources and a shortage of specialist teachers

Commentary

94. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 are high. The very limited sample of Year 9 work offered did not enable comparisons to be made with other similar schools. Girls did better than boys in these assessments. GCSE results were above average overall in 2003. Girls did less well than boys, less well than in their other subjects, and less well than girls in other schools. Boys did better than boys in other schools. In 2004, the results improved. There have been fluctuating yearly trends between the different aspects of the subject; the overall trend though is one of improvement, with resistant materials declining very slightly over the last four years. The school enters most Year 11 students for the subject.
95. Students join Year 7 with average but varied previous experiences in the subject. They make good progress in gaining new knowledge in graphical techniques and very good achievement was seen in Year 7 electronics work. By the end of Year 9, the limited work sample showed that students were well above average in making electronic devices.
96. Food and textiles are taught in a separate building and GCSE students taking these subjects have suffered from variations in the quality of resourcing, accommodation and teaching because of staff shortages. Less time is given to food and textiles in Years 7 to 9. This is affecting standards and achievements of all students, but girls, in particular, who tend to choose these subjects. GCSE work folders show wide differences between the standards and achievements of students taking graphics, resistant materials & electronics, and those who study food and textiles.
97. Teaching and learning are good overall, but there is quite a wide range in the quality of teaching and it is generally better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Very good teaching was seen in Year 9 electronic products and Year 7 graphic design where the teachers have expert subject knowledge. There is very good emphasis on teaching the safe use of equipment and illustration of techniques. When non-specialist teachers are used to fill staffing shortages, the quality of teaching becomes unsatisfactory. Younger students do not know what level they are working at and cannot help themselves to improve because they do not know what they need to do to reach the next level. There are insufficient computer-aided manufacturing facilities that are a requirement for all students to experience. In the students' GCSE work, their evaluative thinking is not linked sufficiently to the specification of the product.
98. Leadership and management are good. There are very good role models and very good daily management but the subject is managed as two separate departments, which is unusual and causes differences in approaches and standards. The good practices from each area have not been shared. There is a lack of corporate identity in the subject and health & safety monitoring is not formalised sufficiently. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very good GCSE results because of the very good teaching
- Students have very good attitudes in art and design and enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers
- Art and design makes a very positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development both in lessons and the extracurricular provision
- Students' skills in using ICT in their practical work in art and design are restricted by a lack of access to computers in lessons

Commentary

99. On entry to the school in Year 7, students are of average ability in art and design. From Years 7 to 9, they make good progress and their results in teacher assessments are above average. In 2003, the GCSE results at A*-C were well above the national average for all schools, and they rose significantly higher in 2004.
100. By the end of Year 9, most students achieve well and make good gains in their practical art skills in drawing, painting and ceramics. They acquire and use their knowledge and understanding of artists, designers and other cultures to produce imaginative and lively artworks. They develop good skills in using a sketch to record their researches and ideas. Their use of the internet is competent when finding out information about different artists. However, in lessons students have very little opportunity to use computers creatively in making artwork due to limitations in provision and access to the ICT rooms. In Year 11, most students have made good gains in improving their skills and can draw, paint and construct with high technical ability so that their achievement is very good. Sketchbooks are used effectively for a variety of purposes and show very good evidence of strong knowledge and understanding of the subject.
101. Teaching and learning, good in Years 7 to 9, are very good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are well structured and planned, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where they are very well focussed on meeting the GCSE objectives. Assessment is used well and in GCSE lessons clear targets are set that show students how to improve their work. Teachers have very positive relationships with their classes and, as a result, students enjoy their lessons and behave very well. Students work well together and are keen to do well and this is reflected in their high achievement.
102. Art and design is very well led and managed with a strong vision for improvement. The staff work effectively as a team and all contribute to subject development using complementary areas of expertise. Subject performance is evaluated in detail and areas for improvement identified in the development plan. A very good curriculum enrichment programme has been introduced to support gifted and more able students outside lessons and this, together with regular exhibitions, high quality displays and study visits, helps to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Examination results and assessment processes have improved. Teaching remains a strength but the weakness in ICT provision has still to be tackled.

Drama

Provision in drama is very good.

Main strengths

- Students learn very well because of the very good teaching of performance skills and the effective use of self and peer assessment
- The rich and varied extracurricular provision makes a significant contribution to the cultural life of the school
- The high standards mentioned in the last report have been maintained and improved upon

Commentary

103. The high standards identified in the last inspection report have been further improved upon. Students achieve very well in drama because of very effective teaching and the extensive extracurricular provision. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, high expectations, good strategies for building confidence, and effectively develop planning, performance and review skills so that all students try hard to give their best. Teaching is well planned with plenty of sharing of ideas that creates an inclusive atmosphere. Rehearsal time is well managed with timely teacher intervention to refocus and further refine students' skills. The showing of work and final performance are given high status. The foundations laid in Years 7 to 9, together with the student-friendly assessment criteria, empower students to assess their own and others' work, leading to high levels of achievement by the end of Year 9.
104. Drama is a popular option in Years 10 and 11, particularly with girls. Results are well above those nationally with a very high percentage of A*/A and B grades. Written work shows a good understanding of stagecraft and that effective evaluative skills have been well developed. Marking is encouraging, with clear advice on how to improve. Less able students find the literacy demands of the course challenging but frameworks have been developed to support them with these. This and the good alternative methods of recording enable all to achieve well.
105. The drama curriculum makes a good contribution to citizenship in Years 7 to 9 and significantly enhances the social and cultural life of the school. Participation rates in extracurricular provision are high, with students striving to achieve excellence because the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff is so infectious.
106. The subject is very well led and managed. Schemes of work are detailed and supportive for new staff members and clearly identify assessment criteria and opportunities. The accommodation and resourcing of the department are very good. The environment is well maintained and display supports students' learning. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, evident particularly in the strong rise in GCSE results.

Music

Provision in music is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The expertise of all the teachers ensures the systematic development of musical skills, knowledge and understanding
- Students' sense of achievement is very high and the plentiful opportunities for involvement in extracurricular musical activities further develop their confidence and extend their knowledge
- Day-to-day assessment and monitoring of students is very good but not enough use is made of assessment data to further improve teaching
- The very creative use of the departmental multi-media website provides students with imaginatively designed music homework

Commentary

107. Year 9 students' attainment reaches national expectations. The involvement of so many students in the very well developed range of peripatetic singing and instrumental lessons on offer leads to the very good achievement of all students. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average, with a further improvement in 2004. Students in Year 11 exhibit highly developed performance and listening skills whether critically reviewing a Mozart trio heard in assembly, or a Beethoven sonata played by one of

the class. They identify compositional techniques, such as the use of parallel sixths or counterpoint when listening to *'Fanfare for the Common Man'*, which they then develop in their own compositions. Students behave very well and clearly enjoy their music which they continue through supporting a very large number of extracurricular musical activities during lunchtimes and after school.

108. Whilst teaching is good in Years 7 to 9, the overall standard of teaching is very good because of the high quality of provision in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' high levels of expertise enable them to select stimulating excerpts and resources to engage their students and develop their knowledge and understanding. Literacy and numeracy opportunities are taken whenever possible. Students concentrate on completing very challenging tasks because the classes are well managed. However, in some larger classes, despite the very good help and support of the teacher, some students with special educational needs intermittently drift off task when they are not given immediate assistance. Very good assessment allows students to understand the criteria for success and what they need to do to improve. The recording and monitoring of students' work is very thorough, though marking could be more detailed and not enough use is made of assessment information to plan subsequent lessons. The use of ICT is very good, with excellent use of the department's website to create imaginative homework schemes clearly engaging the students in Years 7 to 9. The contribution made by music to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students in this school is very good.
109. The leadership and management are very good. The leadership has been very successful in developing and raising the profile of music so that there is a very high level of involvement across the school community and in links with other schools. The very good links with local primary schools, through workshops and concerts, help to raise aspirations in music from Year 7 and was strongly praised by parents for its contribution to their children's induction into the school. Accommodation and resources are just sufficient although the music library is outdated. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an excellent extracurricular programme of competitive team games and individual sports in which a high number of students of all ages are involved
- The teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and their planning of lessons enables students to learn well through a variety of carefully structured and interesting activities
- Students' enthusiasm for their work is very good and they try very hard to achieve their best
- Students in Years 7 to 9 are not given enough information on how to improve their performance and compare their skill levels to the *National Curriculum* criteria

Commentary

110. Results in 2003 teachers' assessment in Year 9 were above average. GCSE results were below national averages but they rose significantly in 2004. By Year 9, students' knowledge and understanding of performance are average, but their standards in performance, particularly in sports, are above average. Their achievement is good. Standards for non-GCSE students are generally above and those of GCSE students well above average. The overall achievement of Year 10 and 11 students is good.
111. Good achievement results from the teachers' use of their very good subject knowledge to plan activities that are matched well to the needs of all students. Teachers usually skilfully demonstrate exactly what students need to do. Accurate passing, very good calling and movement off the ball in a Year 7 football lesson resulted from the continuous praise and skilled coaching of the teacher. Older students achieve well, experimenting by leading warm-ups and planning their teams' match tactics. Accurate passing and skilled tactical play in netball lessons result from students' willingness to listen and act on the teachers' very good coaching. Teachers skilfully combine written tasks with practical activities, helping students with special educational needs to achieve as well in GCSE theory work as their classmates. Personal exercise programmes are particularly well produced. Students with special educational needs are well supported in this work. The standards of final plans are often well above average. Assessment of GCSE is very good and played a significant factor in the improved results in 2004, but assessment in Years 7 to 9 does not always give students enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their performance.
112. The good curriculum provision in Years 7 to 9 is adversely affected in Years 8 and 9 when a significant number of students lose two sessions to take either Spanish or German. They feel that this is unfair. The range offered in Years 10 and 11 is very good. The GCSE programme is taught to single sex groups and this has greatly increased the uptake by girls. Extracurricular sports activities are excellent, with high numbers taking part in a very wide range of activities. Representation at County level is good and many students identified as talented sports players develop their skills at centres of excellence or local sports clubs. The open door policy for sports' clubs is very good and many students participate for fun.
113. Leadership and management are good. A strong, well-qualified team works together well to ensure that the day-to-day running of a very large department is very well organised. The teachers are good role models and have a very high level of commitment to extracurricular work. The changing areas are totally unsatisfactory to cope with the numbers of students and the rooms at the playing fields, where only one toilet block is available for mixed groups, are poor. The department has built well on its good performance at the last inspection, even though there has been a considerable turnover of teaching staff in the department.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

114. Whilst GCSE business studies has been running for some time, the school has recently introduced two applied GCSEs. The focus of the inspection was on GCSE business studies, but the vocational subjects of leisure and tourism and health and social care were sampled. There are no results for either of these subjects as each is in its first term of delivery for Year 10.

115. In the **leisure and tourism** lesson observed, students achieved well, benefiting from clear teaching in a well-planned lesson based on a visit to the local leisure centre. Good relationships and interesting activities consolidated students' learning in a positive hard working environment. Students responded well and produced informed presentations, although their skills of presenting to an audience need development.
116. In the **health and social care** lesson observed, students achieved very well because of well informed, confident and stimulating teaching which was well matched to the abilities of the students. Good behaviour management led to a positive and productive learning environment where all students were engrossed in their work on planning a balanced diet. In both vocational courses offered in Year 10, students were engaged by the subject material and enjoyed their learning. The courses are proving successful in raising the achievement of students who may perform less well in traditional subjects.

Business studies

Provision in business is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good subject teaching from a team of well-qualified specialists with relevant business experience raises achievement
- Assessment is used well to raise achievement
- Students do not have enough opportunities to link the subject to the real world of business through visits and speakers and through greater use of ICT

Commentary

117. In 2003 results were in line with the national average. Results in 2004 were similar to those of the previous year. Observation of lessons and analysis of students' work suggests that standards are now above average. Students achieve well because of well-planned lessons with a clear focus on assessment and examination requirements. The clear vocational context enables students to relate their learning to the real world and this is enhanced by the real business experience of teachers. Students are able to construct a financial plan for a business, setting out cash-flow projections, sources of finance, calculating the cost of borrowing and make reasoned recommendations. By Year 11, more able students can use the analysis of financial information to compare the performance of businesses.
118. Teaching and learning are good and the background and experience of the teaching team complement one another well. Students do not benefit, however, from enough opportunities to experience visits and guest speakers, nor do they have enough opportunities to use ICT. Students use it for research and to type up their coursework but a lack of access to ICT in many lessons prevents its further integration into classroom teaching. Marking and assessment are very good. Feedback has been developed which students find very useful. Assessment objectives are made clear to the students and this is helping them produce good coursework. The material used in lessons is varied according to the ability of the class as a whole and so lower sets have less complex tasks to complete. For example, the lower set in Year 11 typed information into a spreadsheet very happily but many students were less keen to use the information to solve problems. On the other hand, in the top set, students responded well to the challenge of using ratios to compare the performance of businesses; an activity more commonly found in advanced level classes. However, the needs of different groups of individuals within each class, such as students with dyslexia, are not sufficiently planned for.
119. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following a period of staffing turbulence, the organisation of the department now has coherence. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The School Council and the Year Group Councils provide a good opportunity for all students to be involved with the democratic processes and decision-making in the school
- The school is fully committed to citizenship permeating the whole curriculum rather than being the responsibility of a small group of teachers
- The coverage of the citizenship curriculum is not sufficiently well monitored to ensure that subjects explicitly teach those aspects allotted to them in order to meet *National Curriculum* requirements
- Tutor time discussions vary too widely in quality

Commentary

120. Citizenship has recently been introduced as a *National Curriculum* subject and it is taught across the curriculum in Years 7 to 11. A core of subjects, including personal and social education, English, religious education, science, history and drama teach different aspects of the course within their own programmes. In Years 10 and 11, citizenship is being taught through a programme of special events and activities involving a variety of community resources alongside the personal and social education programme. An audit has been carried out to establish citizenship opportunities across all subjects of the curriculum.
121. In Years 7 to 9, students' achievement is good. In Year 7, they learn about the beginnings of democracy from the *Magna Carta* and relate this knowledge to the school rules. In history in Year 8, they understand the social hierarchy of life on a slave plantation in America and the lives of the black slaves working there. By Year 9, students work well in small groups to explore ideas and opinions on genetic modification (GM) gathered from reading articles in newspapers and improve their understanding of the use of the media in the GM food debate in science. Student discussions on issues such as anti-social behaviour in form time are, however, teacher dependent so they vary too widely in quality. Some are very good but others make poor use of the time.
122. In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement is good. In science in Year 11, students consider the effects of drugs on our bodies whilst thinking about the tragic experience of Leah Betts. Skilful teaching helps them to discuss difficult issues confidently, making good links to other subject areas including alcohol abuse.
123. Whole-school activities help to develop students as active citizens in a variety of ways. The School and Year Councils, onto which all students vote class representatives, is a powerful forum for students to influence the life of the school. Communication between the councils and students are good and students are well informed about their work. The school council has a budget to which representations are made for support and decisions taken by the group, chaired by a Year 11 student. Students have many other good opportunities to undertake responsibility, including being hosts at school events, older students supporting younger classes in form time, library helpers and student mentoring.
124. Despite the variation in the quality of tutor periods, teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, citizenship objectives are explicitly shared with students, teaching materials are stimulating and teachers use a variety of learning strategies, including ICT. In a few otherwise satisfactory lessons, whilst citizenship objectives were present in the subject content, the teachers did not make these clear to the students. Assessment procedures in citizenship are satisfactory. They are based on students' keeping track of their own progress on a 'map', with self-assessment moderated by teachers. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good and this helps promote good achievement.
125. Leadership and management are good. The subject has been successfully introduced and there is a positive vision for its further development, but procedures to monitor the successful teaching of the subject are not yet in place.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, twelve 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 2003, which is the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	2	50.0	80.1	50.0	23.1	25.0	29.9
Biology	17	100.0	65.2	17.6	11.1	37.6	20.6
Business Studies	1	100.0	76.4	100.0	16.3	60.0	26.2
Chemistry	9	100.0	72.7	33.3	13.9	42.4	24.1
Classical Studies	3	100.0	87.4	66.7	34.3	46.7	35.2
Drama	1	100.0	86.5	100.0	19.6	50.0	30.6
English/ English Language	6	100.0	82.9	33.3	17.5	35.0	28.7
French	4	25.0	78.2	0.0	18.9	5.0	27.6
Design and Technology	5	100.0	74.9	0.0	15.1	28.0	25.3
General Studies	20	85.0	73.9	5.0	17.8	25.5	25.7
Geography	9	88.9	74.3	33.3	19.8	34.4	26.5
German	1	100.0	81.5	0.0	19.3	30.0	28.9
History	5	100.0	80.7	80.0	19.5	48.0	28.6
Information Technology	9	77.8	67.0	0.0	10.9	24.4	21.4
Mathematics	6	100.0	61.9	16.7	17.1	35.0	22.1
Other Sciences	4	50.0	71.4	25.0	15.8	22.5	24.3
Other Social Studies	10	100.0	69.7	50.0	16.7	43.0	24.1
Physics	9	88.9	68.6	11.1	14.4	26.7	22.7
Sociology	7	85.7	71.8	42.9	18.4	35.7	25.4
Spanish	2	100.0	78.5	50.0	17.7	45.0	27.3
Sports/ PE Studies	9	100.0	73.2	66.7	11.4	50.0	23.1

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	11	100.0	98.6	54.5	50.2	89.1	87.5
Biology	26	100.0	96.4	53.8	39.2	88.5	78.6
Business Studies	5	100.0	98.7	60.0	36.8	96.0	80.1
Chemistry	12	91.7	97.6	66.7	49.0	90.0	84.9

Classical Studies	13	100.0	99.5	69.2	55.9	101.5	90.9
Drama	12	100.0	99.5	83.3	40.1	106.7	83.6
English/ English Language	31	100.0	99.4	51.6	36.3	87.7	80.9
Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
English Literature	11	100.0	99.5	100.0	46.5	110.9	86.5
French	5	100.0	98.8	80.0	51.5	96.0	87.6
Design and Technology	19	94.7	97.8	36.8	35.0	75.8	77.9
Geography	26	100.0	98.7	26.9	44.5	86.2	84.0
History	20	100.0	99.0	65.0	44.6	98.0	84.6
Information Technology	5	100.0	95.6	0.0	24.6	68.0	69.5
Information Technology (AVCE)	10	70.0	77.9	15.0	23.4	44.0	64.9
Mathematics	40	100.0	96.7	55.0	55.6	94.0	88.8
Music	3	100.0	98.8	100.0	38.9	100.0	81.1
Other Sciences	6	100.0	97.3	33.3	41.5	80.0	80.3
Other Social Studies	59	100.0	97.4	88.1	42.7	109.5	81.8
Physics	18	100.0	96.7	66.7	44.6	96.7	81.7
Sociology	23	100.0	98.2	73.9	44.3	100.0	83.6
Spanish	1	100.0	98.3	100.0	50.2	100.0	86.9
Sports/ PE Studies	21	100.0	98.0	71.4	30.9	100.0	75.2
Travel and Tourism	26	100.0	71.8	68.8	14.5	98.8	62.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

126. English literature was inspected in detail. English language and the joint English language and literature courses were sampled. Results in **English language** are well above those nationally and this represents very good achievement for all students. The study of English language at A-level represents a significant change from the demands of GCSE. Students find this challenging but new learning is carefully paced, with the result that students quickly become confident with the new approaches. In the lesson seen, students were given clear guidance and helpful pointers about their independent language study that enabled all to make good progress. Students had been guided towards topics and approaches that meant all were suitably challenged.
127. Results in **English language and literature** are well above those nationally. This represents very good achievement for all students. In the lesson seen, students' personal contributions were valued, allowing room for alternative interpretations. Students expressed themselves confidently and used critical terminology accurately. The respectful atmosphere led to mature debate and enabled students to use their personal experiences and knowledge in ways that extended learning for all.

English literature

Provision in English literature is very good.

Main strengths

- The very good teaching, with its emphasis on supported independent study and collaborative learning, leads to very good achievement and prepares students well for higher education
- Teachers' detailed marking and helpful suggestions are an important motivator for students and enable them to take control of their learning

- Rigorous analysis of results, the outcomes of which are fed back into curriculum planning contributes to the consistently high standards in sixth form English

Commentary

128. Results in English literature are well above those nationally: pass rates are regularly 100 per cent and the percentage of A and B grades is very high. Although students join the course with above average attainment at GCSE, this represents very good achievement for all students. Standards seen were similarly high.
129. Students enjoy their lessons greatly and respond well to the increased challenge and responsibility. New students feel well supported into the course and develop confidence in their critical capacity so that by Year 13 all have recognised the importance of self-directed preparation before lessons, seeing this as adding to their enjoyment of the subject. Teaching is effective because it supports students in focusing in depth on aspects of language and style. The excellent subject knowledge of the teachers enables both clear explanation of new material and contexts as well as skilful facilitation of independent and group learning. There is a strong sense of collaborative learning. This encourages independence and also contributes to the good pace of lessons.
130. Students' folders show a great deal of pride in their work. Notes are well organised and clearly and personally annotated. Literature essays show great depth of understanding and sophisticated analysis of language, with clear evidence of progress during the course, particularly for weaker students. The coursework demands are sensitively managed with clear deadlines and redrafting time supporting very good achievement for all. Teachers' marking is detailed and helpful, with clear guidance for improvement and individual question grids relating to the examination mark scheme which shows how marks are awarded. The detailed, quickly turned-around marking, and the approachability of the teachers, are greatly valued by the students and help to keep them very well motivated.
131. Take up of English literature post-16 is very good and most students complete both AS and A2 aspects of the course. Over the two years, students develop a strong sense of themselves as English students and make very good progress. Not surprisingly, quite a high proportion opt for English-related courses in higher education.
132. The leadership and management of the sixth form courses are very good. There are clear systems in place for moderation and a common planning framework to ensure a similar pace is maintained across all teaching groups, while still allowing flexibility for teachers to choose texts so that their specialisms and interests enhance the quality of students' experience. Exam results are rigorously analysed and the outcomes fed into planning of particular topics so that students are even better prepared for examination. Student numbers and the range of English courses have grown significantly since the last inspection. The consistently high results and very good quality of provision has been maintained and extended. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

133. Students' literacy skills allow effective learning. Students are fluent writers, though the work of weaker students still contains some technical and stylistic errors. Independent research skills are well promoted in some subjects though this is too inconsistent and is a key weakness in some subjects. All students receive induction into the research skills necessary to support sixth form work at the start of Year 12 and facilities for these in the dedicated sixth form library space are good.

Modern languages

134. French was inspected in detail. German and Spanish were sampled. One Year 13 **German** lesson was observed. Teaching and learning were good and standards of achievement average. The lesson was carefully prepared and covered listening, reading and speaking. In the main part of the lesson, students studied some articles about social problems in Germany

and then explained them to one another in German. This gave them good opportunities to develop confidence in speaking. However, the activity went on a little too long and there was not enough opportunity for students to discuss the texts more widely and offer their own opinions.

135. One Year 13 **Spanish** lesson was observed. Teaching and learning were good and standards of achievement average. In the first half of the lesson, students worked independently on listening tasks using headsets. In the second half, students debated the issue of drugs, working initially from prepared scripts. However, as the debate progressed, they increasingly had to listen to each other and think on the spot to defend their points of view. Students learned very well in this part of the lesson, helped by the high expectations of the teacher who insisted that students had to express their ideas without further help.

French

Provision in French is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the 2003 A-level examinations were above average, although they were not as good in 2004
- Teachers are enthusiastic but relatively inexperienced
- Students are not doing enough assessed work or enough independent work

Commentary

136. In the 2003 A-level examinations, results were above average with almost all students gaining A or B grades. At AS level, the overall pass rate was average, but the proportion of students gaining higher grades was below average. Provisional results for 2004 are lower, with relatively few students gaining higher grades in either the AS or the A2 examinations. Nearly a quarter of students did not pass the AS level. Students in Year 13 have good listening skills and can easily follow lessons conducted in fluent French. Their own spoken contributions are initially a little hesitant but improve as the lesson progresses. Standards are average as is students' achievement. In a Year 12 lesson seen, students did not achieve as much as they could, mainly because they did not have enough opportunities to participate actively.
137. Within the last two years there have been significant changes in the team of sixth form teachers. The current team is enthusiastic but relatively inexperienced. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good language skills, but do not use a wide enough range of teaching methods. For example, when working from the textbook, too much time is spent with just one student reading or translating. This means that the majority of students are not learning actively and the pace of the lesson is slower than it could be.
138. Students' files from the first year of their course contain some good pieces of written work. However, the total quantity of work done by students over the course of a year is not enough to ensure success at higher grades in examinations. For example, students are not set enough pieces of assessed written work. As a result, they are not receiving sufficiently regular feedback about their work from teachers' marking. Similarly, students are not doing enough independent work, for example, by practising grammar points or reading more widely.
139. Staffing turbulence has led to shortcomings in the leadership of the subject. New leadership this year has already resulted in a number of important changes. A results analysis has been produced and areas of concern identified. Systems are being put in place to monitor students' progress more closely and a sixth form working group has been set up. This is a promising start, although it is too early to assess the impact of these measures. Leadership and management are therefore currently satisfactory as is the improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

140. The focus of the inspection was on AS and A2 mathematics but further mathematics was also sampled. Students achieve very well in **further mathematics** and standards are high. In a very good Year 13 further mathematics lesson, the students intelligently debated the validity of the particular model they were using for mechanics. As with mathematics, an increasing number of students have opted to study further mathematics in the years since the last inspection.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are highly motivated and work hard to gain very good A-level results
- Teacher expertise and dedication contribute substantially to the very good achievement
- The popularity and success of the subject have improved over time
- Students currently have too few opportunities to take responsibility for their learning, to be involved in their own assessment, or to extend their mathematical thinking

Commentary

141. Results in A-level mathematics were above average in 2003 and rose even higher in 2004. The numbers of students studying mathematics have increased over time, despite a dip in numbers in 2004. Good proportions of students continue from the AS to the A2 examinations. In recent years, many have gone on to continue to study mathematics at university.
142. Standards are well above average and achievement very good. The students have very positive attitudes and conscientiously produce large volumes of work for the various A-level modules. They rapidly build up algebraic skills as seen in work for both pure mathematics and mechanics. In a very good Year 13 lesson, the students had a very good recall of trigonometric identities and understood how to apply these in solving equations. In mechanics work, the students systematically use well-labelled diagrams to tackle problems involving forces and carefully apply routine methods to arrive at a solution.
143. Teaching and learning are very good. The teachers' knowledge and experience, coupled with high expectations and plentiful extra help, ensure students achieve very well and produce written work that is mathematically rigorous. Teaching mostly involves instruction and practice that is very effective, although there is insufficient demand for students to read around the subject or to make use of resources beyond the textbook. However, in a very productive Year 13 lesson, students had to just outline the method they would use to tackle particular problems, rather than spending time unnecessarily on whole solutions. Teachers share their enthusiasm of the subject and their positive relations with the students generate a strong work ethic. Students concentrate hard, make notes and diligently complete set work in and out of school.
144. Leadership and management are very good and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Leadership sets high expectations of the students who respond well. Course organisation is very good, with careful coverage of modules, regular checks on progress and provision of extra support as needed in "essential skills" sessions. Examination results are analysed well, although students are not as involved as they could be in evaluating their own progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

145. Students have good skills in mathematics, which they apply when individually needed. For example, they accurately handle calculations and interpret statistical data. A particular strength is the mathematical aspect of mechanics work for those students studying science and design technology subjects.

SCIENCE

146. The focus was on chemistry and physics, but biology and environmental studies were also sampled. In **biology**, examination results were well above average in 2003 and students did very well considering their GCSE results. One lesson was observed which provided a very good opportunity for students to collect and analyse the results of a field study. One

environmental studies lesson was seen. In this satisfactory lesson, students remembered and used technical terms well but were not sufficiently challenged by the activities provided.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because the teaching is very good
- Marking gives students good guidance on how to improve their work and assessment is used effectively to identify where students need more help
- A very few lower-attaining boys fail to reach their potential grades

Commentary

147. The results at A-level in 2003 were above the national average and rose in 2004. The trend has been upwards over the past few years, along with a dramatic rise in the number of students. The standard of work seen in the current Year 13 is well above the national level. The AS results in 2003 were at the national average and higher in 2004. The standards seen during the inspection in Year 12 was above the national average.
148. Students enter the sixth form at the national average and they achieve very well. A team of well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers gives the students very good support. Students appreciate this and feel they are making very good progress. The teaching and learning are very good. Teachers and students share very good relationships and work in a very co-operative atmosphere. The students' work is marked in detail and indicates where students could improve. The progress of all students is closely monitored and any student found to be struggling is given further support. Despite these procedures a few students, mainly boys, still underachieve. The department has recognised this issue and has introduced procedures to assist these students further.
149. The leadership and management are very good. The teachers are fully aware of the examination requirements and use this knowledge to plan and prepare lessons very well. The science technicians provide very good support and ensure the wide range of equipment is available to the students. The team of teachers holds regular review meetings to discuss their lesson planning and students' progress. The department have formed a very constructive link with Southampton University that provides very good additional support to the students. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

Physics

The provision in physics is very good.

Main strengths

- Students are above average when they start the course and achieve very well to reach well above average A-level results
- A very well-qualified, enthusiastic team provides stimulating and challenging lessons which excite students
- Students find the subject interesting and fun and work hard as a result

Commentary

150. Results in 2003 were well above average. 2004 results are similar, overall, but with an increase in the percentage of A and B grades. The course attracts students of above average ability. At the time of the inspection, students had recently joined Years 12 and 13. In the Year 13 lesson seen, students worked at above average standards as they carried out investigations in pairs. They discussed their work using technical vocabulary. They used equipment with confidence, considering the accuracy of the work they were doing. Students had the literacy and numeracy skills to interpret their results. In a Year 12 lesson, the teacher

had high expectations of the students to which they responded well, including those who had recently joined from other schools. Their work shows standards are well above average and students are achieving very well.

151. Very good learning results from very good teaching. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and an obvious enthusiasm for the subject. Lessons are carefully planned and timed so that the pace is brisk and challenging. Teachers are very good at explaining ideas and encouraging students to use and improve their study skills. This was evident in a Year 12 lesson, where students learned an approach to problem solving. In a Year 13 lesson, very effective use was made of practical work to promote independent learning. Learning is assessed during lessons in order to check individual progress. Students are well supported by staff. They see them as enthusiasts and are excited by the ideas to which they have been introduced. Students feel privileged and proud to have an understanding of the ideas of modern physics.
152. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for the department which the whole team shares. Although ICT is used in the department, developments have been frustrated due to lack of availability of equipment. The staff provide very good role models for students. Staff use assessment very well to keep track of students' progress and identify underachievement. However, not enough use is made of the data to set targets for all students. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have improved and numbers have risen from 11 to 45. More students now wish to study physics than the department can accommodate.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

153. Information and communication technology (ICT) in the sixth form was not a focus subject. AS **computing** was sampled. Students had made a good start to the course. Their knowledge of programming and their understanding of computer software are above the standard expected. The lesson seen was well planned, and teaching of programming skills was good. Students had excellent attitudes to work and good individual support was provided.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

154. The ICT skills of students are below average. Most students have learned their ICT skills from the sharing of knowledge amongst peers or from bringing skills learned in other schools before they entered the sixth form. Students use computers to word process coursework and import pictures from the internet but they often lack any skill in manipulating these images and are only comfortable with a very narrow range of programs. A Computer Literacy And Information Technology (CLAIT) basic ICT qualification is offered for sixth formers who choose to take it but this is quite a low level of qualification for students of such high attainment in other areas.

HUMANITIES

155. The focus of the inspection was on geography, history and psychology, but classical civilisation, government & politics, philosophy and sociology were sampled. In the **classical civilisation** lesson observed, students consolidated their understanding of Plato and his ideas through debate. Students achieved well but their independent research skills were less developed than might be expected. In the **government and politics** lesson sampled, students and teachers alike clearly enjoyed a session of "catch out the teacher". This required students to find a current political story from a newspaper and find a question about it that the teacher was unable to answer. This led to very good relationships and encouraged independent learning. The central part of the lesson required students to work together in groups on a 1000-word report on aspects of the last two general elections. Clear references to the examination specification and requirements helped students achieve very well. In the **philosophy** lesson observed, exceptionally high teacher expectations and challenge coupled with confident subject knowledge led to excellent achievement by students. Students gained a very

good understanding of philosophical approaches to the Descarte's concept of God. In the **sociology** lesson sampled, a range of varied activities helped students to achieve very well. Clear and fast teaching to well-behaved students helped them learn very successfully about the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods used in studying the media.

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are above average and students achieve well because their level of motivation is excellent and they are taught well
- Students have too few opportunities to think for themselves
- Assessment does not consistently give students enough information about how well they are doing and how to improve

Commentary

156. A-level results in 2003 were above average, as they have been over recent years. The results in 2004 represent a similar picture, with an increased proportion of higher grades achieved. The standards seen during the inspection are above average. Students achieve well because they are interested and stimulated by the lessons and they are taught well.
157. Teaching and learning are good because teachers know the subject very well and use visual material, videos, maps and fieldwork effectively so students find the work relevant and stimulating. The students enjoy the subject, feel well taught and want to learn, some planning to continue learning the subject in higher education. Teachers expect students to achieve well and gain high standards, and this is reflected in the challenge of the work. Lessons are carefully planned to meet students' differing needs. In one Year 13 lesson, students were shown a clear and detailed explanation of the causes of storm surges. They then watched a video clip about the flooding and devastation of 1953, which they found moving and memorable. Through these different approaches, students gained not only factual understanding of the physical events, but also an insight into the complex relationship and balance between man and the environment.
158. Despite students' enthusiasm for the subject, some teaching methods encourage them to be overly dependent on the teacher so that they rely on the teachers' questions and are sometimes slow to ask questions for themselves. However, when given the opportunity, for example, when using ICT for research purposes, students show they have the capability to use their knowledge to consider different points of view and sets of data. In a Year 12 lesson about hurricanes and tornadoes, the lesson began with good visual material and a brisk pace, maintained by the teacher's very good use of questions. However, during the second part of the lesson the pace slowed as the students became more dependent on the teacher to think for them and the lesson became more focused on simpler factual knowledge rather than higher order deliberation.
159. Teachers mark and assess students' work regularly and assessment is generally satisfactory. However, there are variations between teachers, so at its best there are clear detailed comments about how well students are doing and what they need to do next, but in other books, marking is more erratic and comments are vague, giving little information about how to improve. The subject is led and managed well. Monitoring is effective, both through checking students' work and sharing approaches to teaching. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is very good.

Main strengths

- Students succeed very well because teachers are very knowledgeable
- Students' very good attitudes contribute fully to their learning
- Students express particular confidence in the guidance and feedback they are given

Commentary

160. A-level results were well above average in 2003. A much higher proportion of students than average gained A or B grades. Results were maintained at a similar level in 2004. Standards on entry are generally average for an A-level course. By Year 13, most students achieve very well by reaching standards that are well above expectations. Students are able to analyse sources to identify such factors as the motivation of key individuals, many to a standard that is well above expectations. They present their conclusions and discussions in well-argued essays or verbal discussions.
161. Teaching and learning are very good. Very well-planned tasks provide challenging and stimulating activities and a highly appropriate depth of study. Teachers' use their considerable subject knowledge very effectively when questioning: skilfully prompting and probing to help students to improve their responses. They provide a range of useful historical sources, so that students improve both their understanding of the periods and events studied and their skills in analysing evidence. Lessons provide regular opportunities for students to learn independently by investigation, often collaborating in groups. Occasionally the management of students is less good than normal when, for example, the organisation of discussion sessions at the end of a lesson does not allow all groups to feed back their findings.
162. Students' attitudes make a very positive contribution to their achievement during lessons and individual work. In a discussion during the inspection, students expressed very positive opinions about the course and the quality of teaching. They are particularly appreciative of the standard of individual feedback and the guidance that they receive about how well they are doing and how to improve. They find the way that important messages about, for example, the most effective way to carry out an investigation and present work, are constantly reinforced and this is very helpful for their achievement and confidence.
163. Management is very well organised and leadership succeeds very well in securing a high quality of teamwork by those who share the teaching. These characteristics have been important factors in providing a successful department and a popular course. Because prior strengths in achievement, teaching and learning have been maintained and further built upon, improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Psychology

The provision in psychology is very good.

Main strengths

- Students achieve very well and attain high standards in this very popular subject
- The teaching is good because teachers are expert and well-qualified
- Progress and achievement are very effectively monitored

Commentary

164. Examination results at A-level in 2003 were outstanding. Results in 2004 were not as good, but were in line with results in other subjects at the school and what would be expected nationally. The standard of work seen in the inspection was well above average.
165. Teaching is carefully planned and clearly directed to the attainment of good examination results. The students are willing and eager to enter discussion and to raise and answer questions. Teaching strategies are effective, although in the lessons observed there was not enough targeted individual questioning and development of answers by the whole group so that students were all challenged to think for themselves. The students concentrate and apply themselves with a high degree of motivation and eagerness to learn. Their note-taking is very well organised and shows very good progression and learning. Students are supported to enable them to achieve very well. Relationships in lessons are relaxed, adult and mutually respectful, leading to a working climate which is highly conducive to learning.

166. The subject is well led and managed. The leadership and management demonstrate the vision and commitment to drive the department forwards and further improve its already high standards. Although the subject draws teachers who work in other departments, they work closely together and are supported in the development of teaching and learning strategies and the provision of resources. Coverage of the syllabus is thorough, equipping the students with what is needed to attain the highest A-level standards. Progress is monitored through regular assessments and marked according to cross-departmental schemes and criteria. Attainment is centrally recorded and individual students' performance judged in relation to expectations. Guidance and support are given to those judged to be underachieving. Resources are good, although the department recognises the need to incorporate more ICT into lessons. This year, psychology has been the most popular AS level subject, attracting more than a hundred students. The subject was not inspected last time and so it is not possible for inspectors to judge improvement since the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

167. The focus subject of the inspection was design technology: product design. The department also offers an art and design **graphics** course that was sampled. In the Year 13 lesson seen, students were working on producing a range of designs for stamps with themes of explorers, discoveries and inventions. Research was mainly from the internet and printed matter. The students' sketchbooks showed that ethical, commercial and cultural influences were not featuring as strongly as expected. Students received very good individual feedback in the lesson from the teacher. Many students spoken too were unaware of the examination criteria, and therefore were not as fully informed of the route to success as might be expected. Many students go onto follow further study of art and design through foundation and degree courses.

Design technology

Provision in design technology is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- More able students produce exceptional work and students with special educational needs also do well
- The teaching is very good because teachers have excellent subject knowledge
- Students do not gain wider insight into the subject by making visits and linking with local designers as part of the planned programme
- The product design workshops lack sufficient ICT resources

Commentary

168. A-level results in 2003 were average. Boys did slightly better than the girls. There is an improving trend and results showed strong improvement in 2004, with current standards well above average. Students' achievement is very good. They gain confidence rapidly in using architectural and illustration techniques through observational drawing of the built environment. They gain good knowledge of how to build up designs using professional drawing methods. The result of very good teaching is that the final examined portfolio work is well above average because of the attention to these techniques. Some of the coursework samples seen from the 2004 Year 13 examination group displayed the very highest standards and achievement. The prototype products in both Years 12 and 13 all showed a very high standard of finish. ICT had been used very effectively to produce the design portfolios and the investigative reports had a very good style of report writing and use of literacy. Numeracy featured strongly in the work when students had considered the mechanics and forces acting on their designs. Students with special educational needs have done better than expected because of the individual support and the very good use of ICT.

169. Teaching and learning are very good. The teachers have excellent subject knowledge to enable them to teach very competently at this level. They are able to demonstrate techniques confidently to students and call upon a wide range of technological and designing principles. This gives the students a feel of working with professional designers. The work done by students is well matched to their abilities and provides considerable challenge. The department has insufficient links with local designers and manufacturers that could form a useful bridge for students who struggle to get good feedback from design clients in Year 13, particularly when their research and evaluation is a tentative link over the internet. Nevertheless, the department has made a strong team entry to the Royal Navy Engineering Academy scheme and successfully presented their designs and built a prototype desalination water filter.
170. The product design course is well led and managed and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. In contrast to those studying graphics, students working on the product design course do not as yet have the benefit of good ICT facilities when working in the technical workshop areas.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

171. The focus of the inspection was on art and design. Music and theatre studies were also sampled. In the **music** lesson observed, the teacher's confidence and subject expertise, coupled with high expectations of students led to good achievement. There was very good illustration on the piano of how the same chord could be written to sound differently in passages of music. Outside of lessons, sixth form students have many excellent opportunities to develop their skills through participation in ensembles. Teaching in the **theatre studies** lesson seen was very good and enabled students to gain a clear understanding of Brechtian *Gest* techniques and how this approach differed from method acting. Final portfolio work showed very good understanding of stagecraft as well the themes and stylistic features of texts and how presentation could contribute to an audience's understanding of these. Results are consistently well above those nationally with many students obtaining A and B grades.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high because of very good teaching and learning
- Students have very good attitudes to learning, relationships with teachers are very positive and this contributes to their very good achievement
- Extracurricular opportunities are very good
- There are not enough opportunities in lessons for the creative use of ICT

Commentary

172. Examination results at A-level in 2003 were average but they rose significantly in 2004. Students achieve very well, extending their technical expertise in observational drawing and in expressive painting and sculpture. As a result of very skilled teaching, they successfully make the transition from GCSE to the more independent, facilitated learning in Years 12 and 13, to which they respond well. Students achieve high standards because they are encouraged to work on a large scale, to experiment and take risks. They research contemporary art practice very well and this informs their own work as shown by the range and quality of visual research in work journals. Students' knowledge and understanding of art and design is actively enriched by regular gallery visits, the links with the Southsea Studios as well as the annual summer exhibitions in school. Good use is made of the internet for research, and increasingly students present their work in progress using PowerPoint™ but they do not currently have enough opportunities to make creative use of ICT in lessons.

173. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. The teaching style is varied and well matched to the needs of the students. Assessment processes are effective and feedback from teachers clearly helps students to improve. Short-term targets are agreed with students and regularly monitored. Students and teachers work very well together and relationships are very positive. This creates a climate of mutual trust and respect which promotes very good learning attitudes and very good motivation. Recruitment onto the sixth form courses is increasing and progression into higher education after Year 13 is good.
174. Subject leadership and management are very good, with a strong vision for subject development which is inclusive and supported by all the staff. Results and subject performance are carefully evaluated and an improvement plan exists to address areas for development. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Results have improved further whilst teaching and learning strengths have been maintained.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

175. No subject in this curriculum area was inspected in detail. The advanced vocational certificate in education (AVCE) in **travel and tourism** was sampled. In the lesson observed, students worked hard and produced user-friendly guides to Howarth and Bronte country. The achievement of students in relation to their abilities is excellent. In **physical education**, results in 2003 were high. Teaching observed was good and students clearly enjoyed their work and achieved well. Opportunities for independent learning are not developed enough.

BUSINESS

Economics and business

Provision in economics and business is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular tutorials and support for independent learning together with supportive relationships lead to very effective learning
- Students' attitudes to the subject contribute to their very good achievement
- The subject makes an excellent contribution to students' social and moral and citizenship education
- There are not enough opportunities to link the subject to the real world of business through visits and speakers

Commentary

176. In 2003, only five students took the subject and they all gained grades A-C. These numbers were too small for meaningful comparisons to be made with other subjects or standards in other schools. In 2004, a larger group attained the full range of pass grades and there was considerable improvement in the top grades. Analysis of students' work shows standards in A-level economics and business are well above course expectations, and students' achievement is very good. Many students build on the successful GCSE course in business studies, but a substantial proportion begin Year 12 with very little knowledge of the subject. During the first term of the course, they move quickly from this base to a point where they have a good awareness of economic and business terms and concepts due to clear and well-structured teaching. By Year 13, students have carried out a range of coursework investigations. Students produce interesting and detailed investigations using economics and business concepts to explain issues. These activities and the material covered on the course contribute significantly to developing the very effective social and moral education of students and to their appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship.

177. Students respond very well to the subject. They have a high regard for their teachers and find the individual tutorials particularly effective in helping them to learn very well and make very good progress. They value the feedback on their coursework and feel well prepared for examinations. The intellectual rigour is sufficient to stretch and challenge the most able while supporting the lower-attainers. Students enjoy seeing the relevance of the subject to stories in the news and they were well informed on the locally based ferry operator's recent business decisions affecting the port.
178. Teaching is very good and the background and experience of the team complement one another well. Opportunities are missed, however, for capitalising on their expertise and students' enthusiasm by including more trips, visits and guest speakers, and making greater use of ICT. Students use ICT for research and to type up their coursework but a lack of access to ICT in many lessons prevents its further integration into classroom teaching. The marking and assessment of students' work is very good. Feedback has been developed which students find very useful. Assessment objectives are made clear to the students which helps them develop very good examination skills leading to very good results.
179. Leadership and management are good but the subject does not have its own budget, which makes acquiring up-to-date resources more difficult than it need be. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Provision in health and social care is very good.

Main strengths

- Standards are well above average and students achieve very well
- The teaching and learning are very good
- Students benefit from good guidance on how to improve their work

Commentary

180. In 2003, results in this AVCE course were well above the national level. Results were maintained in 2004. This represents very good achievement. Students' attitudes are very good and they enjoy the subject. They feel very well supported and appreciate the variety of teaching methods. The portfolios produced are of high quality and reflect the effort the students put into their work. The teaching and learning are very good with some excellent aspects. In lessons, students enter into class discussions with confidence and work very well in a co-operative manner. They are set challenging tasks that they tackle with enthusiasm, producing work of a high standard. The lessons are motivating, relevant and engage all the students. Teachers use a wide range of teaching approaches with guest speakers, visits and the extensive use of computers for research and presentation.
181. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. The team of experienced teachers has a wide range of expertise with a very good knowledge of the examination requirements. The assessment of the work is very detailed and clearly indicates how students can improve. All students are aware of their attainment and their target grades. The teachers closely monitor progress of the students and offer support when needed.
182. The leadership and management are very good. Lessons are very well organised within each module even though the teachers are based in different departments and rarely have the opportunity to meet formally to discuss the course. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, with standards now much higher than were reported previously.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

183. There was no focus subject in this area. The **critical thinking** course was sampled. Students achieved very well in the lesson observed. A lesson putting students into the role of magistrates to consider sentencing made a valuable contribution to citizenship education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

