

INSPECTION REPORT

CAMPION SCHOOL

Bugbrooke

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122063

Head teacher: Jackie Beere OBE

Lead inspector: David Gosling

Dates of inspection: 18th October – 22nd October 2004

Inspection number: 268764

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11-18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1541
School address:	Kislingbury Road Bugbrooke Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN7 3QG
Telephone number:	01604 833900
Fax number:	01604 833906
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Nigel Strang
Date of previous inspection:	10 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Campion School is much bigger than other secondary schools. It caters for students aged 11-18 and currently has 1541 pupils on roll, 753 boys and 788 girls. Nearly all students are from white backgrounds and only 2 pupils have a first language other than English. The percentage eligible for free school meals is well-below the national average and the attainment of students on entry to the school is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. Currently 155 students have special educational needs and 15 have statements; there is a range of needs but the majority either have moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural needs. There is relatively low mobility of students. Campion School has Specialist Language College status which involves a greater profile for languages in the school and support for other schools in their languages provision. The school has won a number of awards, including: Investors in People; Healthy Schools Award; and Sportsmark. The school is also involved in Excellence in Cities, the national Networked Learning Community Project and Northamptonshire Raising Attainment Partnership, as well as a number of other local initiatives.

With 285 students on roll, the sixth form of this 11 – 18 comprehensive school is larger than other sixth forms. Numbers have expanded in recent years. Nearly all students are from white backgrounds. The number entitled to free school meals is well below the

national average. A high proportion of students from Year 11 continue into the sixth form, with a small number from other schools. Students follow a wide range of courses leading to AS and A-level and the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE). A small number also follow intermediate GNVQ courses.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7118	D. Gosling	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
9708	S. Daintrey	Lay inspector	
32312	P. Johnson	Team inspector	English; sixth form English
7541	H. Hutchings	Team inspector	Mathematics; sixth form mathematics
4922	M. Driver	Team inspector	Science; sixth form biology
29742	P. Fyans	Team inspector	Sixth form chemistry
32590	R. Fenwick	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; business studies; sixth form information and communication technology (AVCE)
2501	R. Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art
11258	I. Rushforth	Team inspector	Design and technology
10817	G. Rayner	Team inspector	Geography: sixth form geography
23307	N. McDonough	Team inspector	History
32208	D. Aitken	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
25377	L. Brown	Team inspector	Music; sixth form history
30800	B. Colley	Team inspector	Physical education; sixth form physical education
31372	B. Hardwicke	Team inspector	Citizenship; religious education
2652	R. Lomas	Team inspector	Special educational needs; sixth form psychology
2496	T. O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Sixth form French; sixth form Spanish; sixth form leisure and recreation
32331	P. Barnes	Team inspector	Sixth form media studies (AVCE)
34157	J. Barker	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw
 Pastens Road
 Limpsfield Chart
 Oxted
 Surrey

RH8 ORE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet *'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections'*, which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	22
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	24
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	63

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Campion School is very effective with some excellent features, and provides very good value for money. Standards are above national averages overall and are particularly high in the sixth form. The students' achievement, taking standards on entry to the school into account, is very good. This is because teaching, and leadership and management are very good; they are characterised by a successful and innovative drive to improve learning for students of all abilities and needs.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students' achievement is very good and particularly strong in the sixth form
- Teachers are very skilful and their subject knowledge is especially strong
- The dynamic focus by the head teacher and other key leaders on improving learning is proving very effective in raising standards and has achieved local and national recognition
- The curriculum is innovative with a very good range of activities outside of lessons, but it is not meeting statutory requirements in all areas
- Teachers know the levels students are attaining but they are not using this information consistently to plan work in lessons
- Although finances are now being managed well, there are financial constraints because spending was not monitored carefully enough in the past

The school has made good progress since the last inspection, with very good progress in the sixth form. The key issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed well, with the exception of the meeting of statutory requirements for religious education and information and communication technology. All strengths have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, students achieve very well. The attainment of students on entry to Year 7 is above average. The results in the end of Year 9 national tests in 2003 were well above the national average and were average against similar schools. Results in English were not as strong as those in mathematics and science. Provisional results for 2004 show improvement. Students gain a solid foundation for the next stage of their education. Current standards are above average in most subjects, well above average in science but below average in art.

Provisional GCSE results for 2004 are lower than those in the table but are subject to appeal. Current standards are above average in most subjects but below in art, where achievement is unsatisfactory. The trend in end of Year 9 results from 1999-2003 was below the national trend but the provisional 2004 results show an improvement. The trend in GCSE results was broadly in line. At A level, standards in most subjects are above or well above the national average. They were the highest in Northamptonshire in 2003 for state schools which are not selective or independent. Results were well above average in

business studies, communication studies, English/English language, geography, history and sports/physical education studies. They were below average in sociology and physics. There has been an improvement in A level results in 2004. Girls perform better than boys at each stage but boys' results are above what boys are achieving nationally.

Students' personal qualities, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are very good. They grow in confidence as they move through the school and are keen to take advantage of out of class activities. Their attitudes, behaviour and attendance are all very good. Students' social, moral and cultural development is very good; their spiritual development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good in the main school and very good in the sixth form.

Teaching is very good. The key strengths of teaching are the high levels of subject expertise of teachers, a major factor in explaining the very high achievement at A level, and the way they help students understand how to learn. Most teachers use a stimulating range of activities and resources and many lessons are full of vitality. Work is sometimes not matched closely enough to students' different levels. Lack of access to computers is leading to insufficient use of ICT in lessons. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good, with not quite so many high-quality lessons seen as in other year groups.

The curriculum, which is enriched very well by extra-curricular activities, provides a broad range of courses, including vocational courses and some exciting courses designed to teach learning skills and enhance students' motivation and self-esteem. Parts of the statutory curriculum, however, are not taught and so students' needs are not catered for fully. The school advises and supports students very well. Although the school has done all it can to minimize danger, parents are rightly concerned about the buses turning in the car-park at the end of the school day. Links with parents and the community are very good and they are excellent with other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall and the leadership of the head teacher and other key staff in the school is very good. The head teacher and associate head teacher provide very dynamic leadership focused on improving learning. Governance is unsatisfactory because governors have not ensured compliance with statutory requirements. Governors are, however, well-organised and have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Overall, departmental leadership is very good and management is good; the leadership of history and ICT are particularly strong. The school improvement plan identifies the right priorities for the school but is not clear about how much actions will cost. Professional development supports individual's and the school's needs very effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents like the ethos of the school, the high standards and expectations, and the commitment of the teachers. They would like more time at parents' evenings to discuss their children's progress and arrangements are currently being modified by the school. Students think they are taught well and feel safe. Some have reservations about behaviour but the behaviour observed during the inspection was generally very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Establish more consistency in the use made of students' assessments in targeting work in lessons on individuals and groups
- Establish the school on a secure financial footing and ensure all key developments in the school improvement plan are costed

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure that statutory requirements for the curriculum and for collective worship are met

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective sixth form which meets the needs and aspirations of its students very well, with an appropriate range of courses. It is cost-effective. Students achieve very well as a result of their application and learning skills and very good teaching. Examination results are above average and have been for several years. The sixth form is very well led and managed. The expansion of the sixth form has placed a strain on accommodation, but it is well-used and is not constraining students' learning.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Standards in most subjects are above, or well above average
- Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and they help students develop as independent learners
- Students receive very good personal and academic support and guidance from a strong team of tutors and managers
- Students have very good attitudes to learning and contribute well to the life of the school
- The curriculum offered to less academic students is currently limited

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good in English where teachers have a very high level of subject knowledge and understanding of examination syllabuses. Good in French and Spanish .
Mathematics	Good in mathematics where pupils are taught well but ICT is under-used.
Science	Good in biology and satisfactory in chemistry where some students find problem-solving difficult.
Information and communication technology	Excellent in information and communication technology where teaching is excellent and students have a very clear idea about how to improve.
Humanities	Very good in geography and history where independent learning is very effectively encouraged, and in psychology where teaching is often inspiring.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	There was no focus subject in this area.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in media studies where assessment and target-setting are particular strengths.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good in leisure and recreation , and very good in physical education where there is a rapid pace of learning in lessons.
Business	There was no focus subject in this area.
Health and social care	There was no focus subject in this area.
General education	There was no focus subject in this area.

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good;

satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Provision is very good. Teachers ensure that students are very well cared for and this assists their very good achievement. Teachers provide very good support, guidance and advice for students and monitor their needs and personal development carefully. Students have good opportunities to express their views and opinions through year councils. Students' personal development is a very strong focus of the sixth form, for example through encouraging them to lead extra-curricular activities for younger students and support them with paired reading sessions.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership in the sixth form is very good. The sixth form has expanded and developed through the enthusiasm and commitment of its leadership which has established a positive ethos in which students feel very well supported and achieve very well. **The sixth form is managed very well.** A strong management team has been created. The sixth form is cost-effective and has a good improvement plan with realistic and achievable targets. The analysis of data is very good and teachers have a very good grasp of what grades pupils are, and are capable of, achieving.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Overall, students enjoy being in the sixth form. They recognise that their teachers have very good subject expertise and that this is used well to provide challenge within teaching. Students enjoy very good relations with their subject teachers and form tutors; they find them to be accessible and helpful. Their teachers help them to study independently and to engage in research, so enabling them to develop as learners and be well-prepared for further or higher education. Students report that they receive good careers advice but that advice on post-16 courses was not always clear: some students were concerned about the acceptability of AVCE courses by certain universities. Concerns about the regularity of homework, being fairly treated, and that they were not well-known as individuals were not supported by subsequent discussions with students and can be put down to the fact that the questionnaire was undertaken just a few weeks into the sixth form career of more than half the students. There are councils through which their views can be heard.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The standards achieved by students are above average overall. Students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good and by the ends of Years 11 and 13 it is very good. In 2003 the standards attained in end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests and the average GCSE points score were well above the national average. A-level results were above the national average in 2003 and provisional results for 2004 show improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained at A-level are very good, particularly at the top levels, with over half the entries gaining grades A or B in 2004
- Achievement at GCSE is very good and is particularly strong in science, design and technology, history, music, physical education, religious education, and vocational subjects
- In the sixth form pupils are particularly strong at analytical writing; they think critically and order their view points very well
- Achievement in art is unsatisfactory

Commentary

1. A-level, GCSE and National Curriculum results for 2004 are still provisional and most of this section, therefore, is based on 2003 results. It should be noted, however, that the 2004 results indicate that end of Year 9 results have improved and that there has been an improvement on the good attainment at A-level. There has been a dip in the 2004 GCSE results but some results are currently subject to appeal.
2. Parents are rightly very happy with their children's progress and the standards they achieve. Students enter the school with attainment above the national average and they make very good progress by the end of Year 11. The key reason for this very good achievement is the high quality of learning and teaching and the drive the school has made to improve students' learning skills.
3. Compared with schools nationally, the Key Stage 3 results were well above average in 2003. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades at A*-C was also well above the national average in 2003. Despite the high standards attained in 2003, the school's challenging targets for Key Stage 3 were not met. At Key Stage 4 the target for 5 or more GCSE grades at A*-G was met but the target for 5 or more grades at A*-C was not.
4. From 1999-2003, the trend in results in Key Stage 3 results was below the national trend, although provisional results show an improvement in 2004. At Key Stage 4 the trend was broadly in line with the national trend. The 1998 data reported in the last inspection showed only 55 percent of students gaining 5 or more grades at A*-C, compared with 67 percent in 2003.
5. Students' achievement, taking into account their attainment on entry to the school, is good by the end of Key Stage 3 and very good by the end of Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 3 results for the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, overall, were in line with those attained by similar schools in 2003; for 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE they were well above. The value-added system used for Year 9 students in 2003 shows a very high proportion exceeding predictions. The end of Year 11 value-added system from Key

Stage 3 to 4 used by the local education authority showed students to have exceeded their predicted grades.

6. The standards seen in students' work and lessons confirm the evidence from data analysis. The students cover a considerable amount of ground in their courses and they are making significant gains in many lessons. The reasons for the disparity in achievement between the key stages are that teaching is stronger in Years 10 and 11 and the learning skills promoted by the school are inevitably more embedded as the students get older.
7. Overall, there are no significant issues around the attainment of boys and girls. Girls did outperform boys from 1999-2003 in end of Year 9 tests and at GCSE but the gap in performance was similar to the national gap. Value-added results for Key Stage 3 in 2003 show little difference in achievement between boys and girls in English, mathematics and science. The provisional GCSE results for 2004 show the gap between boys' and girls' results to have narrowed.
8. The more able students achieve well at the school. In the 2003 Key Stage 3 tests, performance at Level 6 and above was above the average for similar schools. There was a higher percentage of grades A and A* at GCSE than the national average in 2003 - 18.6 in the school compared with 14.4 nationally. More able students performed particularly well in 2003 in combined science, media studies, design and technology (DT), geography, physical education (PE) and religious education (RE).
9. Students with special educational needs achieve well in subject lessons, particularly in history, DT, and in withdrawal groups. They make good progress towards targets set. This is partly evidenced by the high proportion of Year 11 entered for English and mathematics and also the high proportion of students entered in 2003 who gained at least one grade at A*-G.
10. Most students come from white British backgrounds. The small minority who come from other ethnic backgrounds achieve well. The school's tracking systems show 23 of the 25 students from other ethnic backgrounds to be making good progress.
11. In the 2003 Key Stage 3 tests, students achieved better in mathematics and science than English where their results were well below those in similar schools. In 2004, however, English results rose dramatically to the school's highest level ever, with 87 percent of students gaining the average Level 5 or above. Achievement in mathematics and English is now good; achievement in science is very good. Achievement is also very good in history by the end of Key Stage 3. In all other subjects achievement is good by the end of Year 9, except for art and citizenship where it is unsatisfactory.
12. In the 2003 GCSE results the students achieved best in media studies and French. The provisional results for 2004 show the strongest achievement to be in: textiles, drama, geography, German, media studies, music, PE, RE and statistics. Results in RE and textiles were particularly strong, with 94 percent and 92 percent gaining a grade at A*-C respectively. In 2003 the weakest achievement at GCSE was in art, English and mathematics. Achievement is now good in English and mathematics but art remains a weakness and results declined from 69.2 percent to 60 percent.
13. Students' competence in literacy and numeracy skills are good for 11-16 year olds. Standards are weaker in ICT where they are satisfactory for 11-14 year olds. They are good for students aged 14-16.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
---------------	----------------	------------------

English	34.1 (33.5)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	37.9 (36.8)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	36.9 (35.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 230 students in the Year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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	67 (66)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	40.5 (32.7)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 228 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth Form

14. Students' attainment has generally been above average in recent years and their achievement, taking into account their attainment at the start of Year 12, is very good.
15. The school's provisional average points score in 2003 for A-level (based on grades) was, excluding independent and grammar schools, the highest of the Northamptonshire schools. At A-level similar school comparisons are not available but the national value-added system used by the school showed that over 60 percent of students met or exceeded their predicted grades in 2003. At A-level in 2003, girls outperformed boys but boys performed well above the average for boys nationally. The more able students achieve particularly well, with 48 percent of entries at grade A or B in 2003 and 51 percent in 2004. The subjects with the highest proportion of grade As in 2004 were: chemistry, economics, English language and literature, and psychology. At A-level in 2003 the highest achievement was in business studies, communication studies, English, geography, history, science and PE. The weakest achievement was in sociology.
16. A particular strength of sixth form students' attainment is their high level of critical thinking and their ability to write analytical and evaluative essays. Essays are well-researched and show a very good use and grasp of technical terminology and concepts.

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	93.3 (95.1)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	37.0 (47.1)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	291.4 (304.7)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 107 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are very good: they are good for students in Years 7 to 9 and very good for students in Years 10 to 13. Attendance is very good throughout the school and punctuality is good. Students' personal qualities are good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

Main strengths

- Students are highly motivated to achieve as well as they can in the public examinations in Years 11, 12 and 13
- Attendance has been consistently well above the national average since the last inspection and is a significant factor in students' very good achievement
- The vast majority of students behave very well throughout the school day
- Students take an active part in the school and wider community and generally respond well to the many opportunities to consider social, moral and cultural issues

Commentary

17. Students are very positive that this is a good school to attend. Year 7 students enjoy all the new courses and facilities available to them, such as the innovative 'Opening Minds' programme and the wealth of extra-curricular clubs. Year 9 students appreciate the recent improvements in ICT, including greater access to the Internet which enables them to work more independently, and they are keen to fulfil their potential in the end-of-year tests. Year 11 students are inspired by their recent work experience placements to do as well as they can in their coursework and examinations so that they can go on to further education or training. Attitudes to learning were very good in a considerable number of lessons seen in all year groups, but particularly in Years 10 and 11 where students are committed to the

subjects they have chosen to study. Some subject departments are better than others in promoting a thirst for learning. For example, students are nearly always fully engaged in lessons in history, geography and music, but are compliant rather than enthused in mathematics.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (percent)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.1
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.

18. Students' high attendance rates enable them to make the most of what the school has to offer. The attendance of all year groups and all groups of students, including the very small number from the Traveller community, are well above national expectations. Unauthorised absence is consistently low. This is a result of students' own high levels of motivation, the strong support of parents, and the very effective actions taken by the school to monitor and follow up absences. Students' arrival at the start of the day is sometimes delayed by problems with the buses, but most students have arrived by the end of the registration period. The school day is organised well to ensure that students and staff are able to reach their lessons on time.
19. Students' standards of behaviour, like their attitudes and attendance, have been maintained at a high level since the last inspection. A notable feature of behaviour is the very self-disciplined way in which students conduct themselves at the start and end of the day when they get off and on the buses. At breaks and lunchtimes, including during wet weather, a calm, orderly and friendly atmosphere prevails so that students feel safe and staff trust them to use the classrooms for relaxation.
20. Students in all year groups confirm that bullying is not an issue and that the occasional incident is dealt with very effectively. They particularly welcome the installation of a box which they can use to report any concerns anonymously. Students of different ethnic groups mix well together and racist incidents are rare.
21. Behaviour was at least good, and frequently very good, in most lessons seen during the inspection. However, in a minority of lessons in all year groups there was a small amount of low-level chatter and inattention. In Year 9, a small number of students, mainly but not exclusively boys, occasionally indulged in immature behaviour which disrupted the learning in the class. The school has put a lot of effort into devising an approach to behaviour management called 'Choose to Learn'. While this was applied well in some lessons, it was not always used consistently and effectively. The school has an effective range of useful strategies and programmes for helping students manage their own behaviour. The incidence of exclusions is low for a school of this size, and permanent exclusions are rare.

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1179	45	0

White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	15	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	2	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	258	3	0

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

22. Students make good progress, as they move through the school, in developing as confident and responsible young people. They seize the opportunities provided to play a part in school life. Younger students are keen to show off the school at open evening and older students demonstrate good leadership through sports activities and a recycling project. Their personal development is promoted very effectively through the wide range of extra-curricular activities, as it was at the last inspection. Students' skills in collaboration are exploited well in many lessons. In subjects such as English, history and geography, students are successfully encouraged to think about and debate the viewpoints of others who may be very different from themselves. Students learn about and raise considerable sums for charities, including one which helps children in northern Uganda. The school's activities as a specialist language college mean that students are rewardingly exposed to a range of cultures within and beyond Europe.
23. Opportunities for spiritual development have improved to some extent since the last inspection, when this was a key issue for action. A reflective and critical response to belief is a strong feature of RE lessons, but not all students in Years 10 and 11 study RE as legally required. Assemblies make a good contribution to social and moral development but do not include the required act of collective worship. The 'thought for the day' in the morning registration periods provides some scope for reflection but was not taken seriously by the students in the majority of sessions seen, particularly in the older year groups.

Sixth form

24. Students in Years 12 and 13 are happy and positive about their experiences in the sixth form. They are keen to do well, for example to exceed their predicted grades, and greatly appreciate the support provided by their teachers to help them fulfil their ambitions. Their attitudes in most lessons are very positive, and occasionally excellent in Year 13. They enjoy their courses and the drop-out rate is very low. They comply very well with the school's requirement that Year 12 students attend full-time and that Year 13 are only absent for negotiated private study at home. As a result of their very good attitudes and attendance, students in the sixth form achieve very well and complete their courses very successfully.

25. Sixth-formers' personal development is good, with some very good features. Students play a significant role in school life by helping in classes and running lunchtime clubs. A considerable number also undertake community service outside the school, for example in primary schools, and others organise fund-raising events for a national charity with which they have close links. Students get on well with each other despite the crowded conditions in the main sixth form social and study area. They recognise that more needs to be done to build links between the two year groups and, together with staff, are putting in place strategies such as a joint council. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well in subjects such as modern foreign languages and art. It is now being planned for more systematically than in the past through tutor time and the general studies course.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are very good but the curriculum, although innovative and with many strengths, does not meet statutory requirements in a number of areas. Support, advice and guidance for students are very good and provision for care, welfare and safety are satisfactory. Links with parents and the community are very good.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are good in Years 7-9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is good overall. It has strengths but there is not enough consistency in the use of assessments for planning work in lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very high level of subject knowledge is contributing to very good achievement at GCSE
- Teachers increase the depth and pace of students' learning through their expertise in developing learning skills
- Very well-planned lessons make it clear what students are expected to learn, and resources and activities engage students' interests well
- Students' enthusiasm, motivation and hard-work help them learn very well
- Students with special educational needs learn well through good teaching and the consistently good support of learning support assistants
- Teachers know the levels their students have attained but in many lessons are not using this information well enough to target work on individuals and groups

Commentary

26. Students and parents are right to think that that teaching is very good. The improvement of teaching and learning is a key focus for the school and the drive to improve teachers' knowledge of students' learning styles and the theory of learning is a major contributory factor to the very good teaching. There is a higher proportion good or better teaching than in the last inspection, where teaching was found to be good throughout the school.
27. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection and nearly all were very good or good. In Years 7-9, lessons are well-structured but there is less high quality teaching. For this age range in particular there could be better use made of the ends of lessons to review and consolidate the learning that has taken place.
28. The use of "brain gyms" (exercises to make the students more responsive), role play, visual aids and movement within the classroom (particularly effective in drama) are some of the many successful approaches teachers use to provide for a range of learning styles. The most sophisticated use of these styles was seen in the Year 7 Opening Minds lessons taught by advanced skills teachers who have great expertise in learning theory and practice. In one of these lessons a seemingly dry topic on assessing each other's work was brought alive by a range of interesting activities and led to one boy saying that "This lesson is great." Although there is this emphasis on learning styles in lessons, teachers still cover a lot of ground and time is used very productively.
29. Teachers in all subjects are fluent and confident and they use their knowledge and expertise to probe and challenge students. This results in good learning, particularly from the higher-attaining students. The variety of activities in lessons and emphasis on students' active engagement through discussions in groups and pairs and role play, is leading to high levels of interest.

30. Teachers use ICT well in DT and PE but there is insufficient use of ICT in English, modern foreign languages, mathematics, science, history and music. This is not only having an adverse impact on the development of ICT skills, but also on the aids to editing, presentation and data analysis that ICT can provide. The comments made by some students about lack of regular homework being set are not endorsed. The use of homework is at least good in nearly all subjects. It is used well to extend classroom work and in most subjects inspection evidence does not support some students' comments about a lack of regularity in its setting.
31. Teaching is excellent in history in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 7-9. It is also very good in science throughout the school, and in business studies, geography, music and DT in Years 10 and 11. Some of the teaching in history is outstanding and is inspiring a great enthusiasm for the subject. Teaching is good in other subjects, except for art where it is satisfactory. In art, expectations are too low overall and in a few lessons teachers have difficulties managing their classes.
32. Teaching of students with special educational needs is good overall in the subjects across the curriculum and is very good in mathematics, history, music and DT. Teachers ensure students have the same opportunities as everyone else and are fully included in all aspects of lessons. Teachers make good use of the extensive information about individual needs available to them on the school intranet. Targets in students' support plans are not specific enough to be of use in teachers' planning or for students to know when they have achieved them. Teaching in withdrawal groups is good. In one withdrawal group a Year 9 student with moderate learning difficulties had moved from Level 3 to Level 4 in reading and in writing in the space of one half term, because of the carefully structured teaching. Learning support assistants demonstrate a wide understanding of individual students' special educational needs and a creative approach to meeting them.
33. There are no students with English as an additional language (EAL) who are at an early stage of language fluency and consequently no specialist teaching. Some good guidance has been provided for teachers by the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). The emphasis the school has on providing opportunities for a range of learning styles, including multi-sensory approaches, is of value to EAL students who have some difficulties with English.
34. Assessment overall is good. Some students, in surveys, thought that marking could be more regular but those interviewed were much more positive. In books, marking was found to be regular and constructive. Teachers know the levels being attained by their students and set targets for them. Students are aware of the levels they are achieving what they need to improve. Not all teachers, however, are using assessments to target work on individual students and groups to take them to higher levels.
35. Students' learning is very good overall; it is good in Years 7-9 and very good in Years 10-11. Attitudes to learning and motivation are very good, partly as a result of the emphasis placed on adapting teaching to learning styles favoured by students. Students cooperate well in lessons. There is a strong work ethic: students concentrate hard and apply themselves to tasks set. In a small minority of lessons in Years 7-9 there is some disruption by boys and this has a small impact on learning in those lessons. Overall, however, the value placed on learning by students, engendered by teachers, is a key factor in the school's success.

Main School - Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 130 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------

6 (4.6%)	49 (37.7%)	48 (36.9%)	23 (17.7%)	4 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
----------	------------	------------	------------	----------	--------	--------

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

Sixth form

36. Teaching is very good in the sixth form and this is reflected in students' achievements which are also very good.
37. Sixth form teaching has a number of strengths. Subject expertise is particularly strong and is leading to a high level of expectation and challenge in lessons. This is a key factor in explaining the very good results, especially the high proportion of grade As and Bs. The subject expertise in English, ICT and Spanish sixth form lessons is excellent. Teachers make very good provision for independent work and research. A wide variety of activities is provided in lessons and students are actively engaged in their own learning; few lessons are teacher-dominated. In French, mathematics, biology and chemistry there is insufficient use made of ICT for presentation and data analysis.
38. Students are very skilful learners by the time they reach the sixth form. They apply themselves well, are able to work very well independently, and have the higher order thinking skills such as evaluation and analysis which helps explain the high proportion of A and B grades at A-level. In an interview with a group of students who had completed the Year 10-11 Learning to Learn Course, they displayed a very sophisticated knowledge of their own learning styles and how to use them.

Sixth form - Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 58 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (17.2%)	21 (36.2%)	21 (36.2%)	6 (10.3%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although there are some considerable strengths in the curriculum and it is innovative, statutory requirements are not being met in a number of areas. The sixth form curriculum serves the needs of its students well. Overall, extra-curricular opportunities are very good, especially in modern languages and PE. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The failure to meet statutory requirements is leading to a narrower curriculum experience than required in four subjects
- Innovative provision for teaching learning styles and thinking skills are having a positive impact on the quality of learning
- The very good opportunities for enrichment are contributing to the enthusiasm for learning in the school and achievement in a range of subject areas
- Provision within individual subjects enables students to achieve very well by the end of Year 11
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is patchy and the provision to develop numeracy across the curriculum is under-developed
- Accommodation for the sixth form is used well but insufficient space is constraining the range of activities that can be provided in some lessons

Commentary

39. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in a number of areas: ICT in Years 8, 10 and 11; science and RE in Years 10 and 11; PE for boys in Years 7 to 9; and in citizenship where planning is at an early stage. The weaknesses in ICT and RE were identified at the previous inspection. Improvements for ICT and RE are scheduled, however, for implementation in the school improvement plan. Within other subjects, provision is good and enables students to achieve well, with particular strengths in DT and history. The length of the taught week is now in excess of the recommended minimum. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 contains a broad range of choice and is enhanced by business education and vocational options in ICT, leisure and tourism and the Sports Leader Award.
40. Planning is well-advanced to ensure that the school meets key objectives outlined in the present phase of language college development. Some of these have resulted in the strengthening of community links through for example, the extension of French teaching in primary feeder schools and through curriculum development to raise standards in French in Year 9. There are fewer opportunities to develop German and Spanish.
41. The inspection provided strong evidence that innovative elements in the curriculum, such as Learning to Learn, the Opening Minds Scheme and the Value Creation Project for selected students, were having the desired effect on boosting learning skills and attitudes to learning. The first, in particular, supports the school's drive to embed student self and peer assessment throughout the school. The National Strategy is being well used to promote literacy, but the contribution of other subjects to ICT is more uneven, while the promotion of numeracy is limited.
42. 'Raising Standards' meetings are well received by Year 11 students in support of their studies. Years 10 and 11 higher-attaining students are challenged by taking GCSE French and the ICT Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) examinations a year early. Subject planning does not always identify how needs are to be met in mixed-ability classes. The good proportion of grades at the higher levels at GCSE indicates, however, that they are not seriously disadvantaged.
43. The programme for personal and social education (PSE) meets statutory requirements and the needs of students satisfactorily. Schemes of work are currently under review as the new co-ordinator for citizenship is devising a new programme which will seek to combine key elements of PSE and citizenship.
44. There is good curriculum provision for students with special educational needs. Subject teachers are planning work well and the withdrawal groups are effective, with minimal effect on the coverage of syllabuses for the students withdrawn. The Asdan Key Skills programme meets the needs of a number of lower-attaining students in Years 10 and 11. Very good extra-curricular support is provided for students with emotional and behaviour difficulties through the invitation-only lunchtime club, which is well managed by learning support assistants.
45. Several subject areas such as mathematics, history and modern languages provide useful 'drop-in clubs' while there are accredited after-school classes in dance and languages. Sixth-formers run a range of musical activities, including junior band and saxophone group and a number of ICT sessions.. The modern languages department organises an extensive range of foreign trips annually, for example for Year 9 students to Barcelona, and a beginners' class in Italian, while a large number of students participate, and have achieved county and national recognition in, a wide range of sports including athletics, netball, rugby and tennis. Summer schools were held in 2004 for gifted and talented students and to support the literacy and numeracy needs of the new intake of students.

46. Accommodation is effectively organised into departmental areas that reflect the nature and content of the subjects and aid cohesive teaching. The use of recent developments such as the International Centre, the drama and performing arts block and the all weather pitch are having a significant impact on standards and the quality of the learning. The main school library is well-organised, managed and used, with a good collection of books and periodicals for reference and pleasure reading. A useful suite of computers is used for supporting lessons and for individual work in breaks and lunch times. A separate sixth form library is very well-used by students for independent learning and private study. The overall condition of the school's accommodation is generally good but the cramped size of many teaching rooms for the numbers in lessons is a weakness, particularly in mathematics, history, ICT, art and special educational needs where it constrains the range of activities.
47. Teachers are very well qualified and deployed according to their subject expertise. This helps to achieve high standards and quality teaching and learning. There are insufficient teaching assistants for the number of students with special educational needs but their deployment is effective in supporting learning in lessons. Curriculum resources available to departments are generally appropriate and good in modern foreign languages. Access to ICT provision in lessons is unsatisfactory in mathematics, science, geography, RE and music due to the difficulty in booking computer suites and the numbers of workstations available in departments.
48. The curriculum meets the aspirations of the students . Students have access to a wide range of academic and specialist courses. Provision for vocational courses is more limited.

Sixth Form

49. Students enter the sixth form in the expectation that most of them will move on to a university afterwards. The wide range of courses provides a very effective bridge between GCSE studies and higher education. The range is further widened by options within subjects. In history, for example, Year 12 students can follow courses in sixteenth century or modern history. Retention rates within the sixth form are very good and this enables the school in this largely rural community to support small groups in subjects such as 3D design, modern languages and music. The number of vocational courses has increased since the previous inspection. The school has identified a small proportion of students who would benefit from further enlargement of the vocational offer and are working on plans to tackle this. RE is incorporated into the general studies programme, but not in sufficient detail to meet the needs of the Agreed Syllabus.
50. The well-planned programme and participation in extra-curricular activities and community service promotes students' personal and social development well. Students help younger students in ICT, run a large number of enterprising ventures such as fashion, film, rock-music and painting clubs and engage with the wider community through working with the elderly, helping with play schemes and assisting in local primary schools.
51. The sixth form centre is often very crowded, being planned for 180 and catering for 285. The canteen and restaurant is very small for the numbers of students dining there and consequently very overcrowded and difficult to supervise.

Care, guidance and support

Support, advice and guidance for students is good. Students are monitored and supported very well as they move through the school. The school provides very good opportunities to seek students' views about their work and personal development and students are involved

very well in school life and decision-making. Annual checks on safety are not centralized and so formal checks are not easily made.

Main strengths

- Staff know students very well and provide very effective support and guidance
- The support for students at key transition points, particularly from primary school to secondary school, is very good
- Good new systems of monitoring progress have just been introduced to ensure that students and parents receive effective support and guidance, especially when choosing courses, targets and careers
- Students contribute well to, and influence, change through the councils established in the school and other channels

Commentary

52. Support for students' safety and security is satisfactory overall. Internet safety is very well-led and managed. Good medical arrangements for first aid support all students. Yearly child protection training arrangements are now in place for all staff. Most day-to-day health and safety matters are dealt with routinely but no central register of yearly checks on equipment is kept and the school is too reliant on subject areas to ensure that these have been completed effectively. Students are well-supervised outside lessons, when staff ensure their safety. Parents are rightly concerned about safety issues, at the beginning and end of the school day, because of the car and bus parking, as well as the general pedestrian access to the school. The school has done a great deal to minimise the hazards.
53. Very well-structured guidance and support for students contributes to the students very positive attitudes to learning. Staff know the students very well and students appreciate the individual support they receive. Students can turn to a variety of sources of guidance such as tutors, heads of house, key stage coordinators, learning support assistants, support staff, the Connexions adviser and senior staff. Some sixth form students take part in mentoring and further support younger students in the school as part of the community service and care programme.
54. Students who join the school in Year 7 are well inducted into the school through visits, meetings and consultations. An effective options programme in Year 9 guides students in their subject choices and courses in Years 10 and 11, and transition to the sixth form is smooth.
55. Students receive good careers advice as they move through the school and ICT programs enhance provision for all students. Useful careers advice, with well-organised work experience in Year 10, helps students to make appropriate decisions. Overall, tutors are making satisfactory use of tutor group time, but time is not always used productively and the quality of provision varies widely. Provision for gifted and talented students in lessons is satisfactory and enrichment activities outside lessons are very good. Those with special educational needs are very well supported because all teachers are very well informed about their needs. These students are very well integrated into the school.
56. New, well-managed arrangements for assessment and for tracking progress form an effective base to monitor students' personal development and achievements. Parents are included in this system and this supplements the present satisfactory provision of reporting to them. Students, including those with special educational needs, are involved well in setting and reviewing their targets, and are increasingly involved in assessing their own and each other's work in lessons.
57. Students have a variety of opportunities to make themselves heard through year councils where discussions on matters of interest to all students are discussed. Year councils ensure that students have a voice in different aspects of school life. The school takes their views very seriously and acts on them where reasonable and practicable, as with healthy eating options. Students have had a particularly important role in the review of the behaviour policy and procedures; for example they have contributed to the refinements in the reward

system of house points and the production of a leaflet about the anti-bullying code. Their views have been sought and acted upon as part of the school's successful application for the Healthy Schools Silver Award.

Sixth Form

58. The provisions made to guide students as they join, move through and leave the sixth form are very good. Students' views are taken very seriously and considered very carefully by the school. Guidance on further study is very good.
59. There is good advice on careers by the Connexions service and particularly helpful advice for students in need of more support. Gifted and talented students receive extra help to reach high targets and aspirations. Some students in the sixth form do not receive enough advice on alternative career paths to higher education. Links with other institutions, including other schools, universities and colleges, are very good. Students are encouraged to have high expectations and generally feel well supported, especially by subject teachers and the specialist support structures, such as heads of year, within the sixth form centre. Students are involved in setting personal targets and there are good opportunities in most lessons for them to express their views. Opportunities are provided for students to take on responsibilities, including helping with paired reading involving younger students. The support and advice provided in tutor groups is generally satisfactory but the quality varies considerably.
60. Sixth-formers made their views clear on a number of issues at the start of the school year; staff have listened well and are taking appropriate action. For example, Year 12 students have made a number of suggestions about how to overcome the difficulties of a cramped sixth form centre and asked for an input into the choice of speakers for the general studies programme. Year 13 students have a number of ideas for 'bridging the gap' between themselves and Year 12 which they will play a key part in carrying out.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are very good, with some excellent features. The strengths have been maintained and developed further since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very well with parents to build on their support and benefit their children's learning
- The school uses its many community links very productively to enrich its provision for students, and acts as a very effective resource for the community
- The school makes a very significant contribution to the sharing of best and innovative practice among the local clusters of schools

Commentary

61. The school is heavily oversubscribed and parents are very pleased to gain a place for their child. They like the ethos of the school, the high standards and expectations, the commitment of the teachers, and the way in which the school does not rest on its laurels. They support the school very effectively over matters such as their children's attendance, provision of transport for extra-curricular activities and coming to meetings. The school has responded very well to a number of parents' concerns which emerged from its survey in the summer term. For example, there have been a range of meetings to update parents about the curriculum and a review of arrangements for informing parents about the school's bullying policy.

62. The general information provided about the school is good and parents are pleased with the information they get in the annual reports on their child's progress. They do not, however, like the arrangements for parents' evenings when there is not enough time for teachers to discuss their child's progress in any depth. The school is trialling an alternative system of form tutors meeting the parents to talk about students' progress and targets. The school is making good use of external funding to run family learning days so that parents can gain experience of what their children are doing at school. There are very exciting and imminent plans to use the school's website and electronic communication much more extensively to provide parents with all the information they need to be able to support their children.
63. The school has built up over the years many very close links with individuals and organisations based outside the school. These benefit in particular students' personal development, citizenship education and work-related learning (WRL). For example, an external group was used extremely well in the Year 10 'Value Creation Programme' to raise students' awareness of the skills needed to make choices about their life. Outside speakers in assemblies make a good contribution to students' understanding of moral and social issues, and visits and visitors enhance the alternative education programmes for students in Years 10 and 11. The local community provides valuable support for the school. For example, many ex-students living locally join with current parents on the Friends of Campion to run social events and raise significant sums of money for the school. Local sports clubs were part of the successful campaign for an all-weather pitch on the school site. The school runs an extensive range of sports courses for local youngsters which helps those of primary age to get used to coming to a large school campus.
64. As part of its specialist school remit, the school offers language courses for local people, organisations and businesses. The premises are used for adult education classes and district council-run summer activities. Community links are exploited better in some subjects than others. For example, they are a strong feature of modern foreign languages, science and music but are not as extensive as they could be in art and design, RE and geography. Links with local companies are used well to enhance work in DT but they are underdeveloped in ICT and business studies.
65. The school is extremely active in the various networks of schools that exist in the locality. It is recognised both locally as a high-achieving school providing support to others, and nationally as a flagship in disseminating its expertise in learning styles. It runs training courses ranging from a programme to develop the skills of middle-managers to postgraduate modules contributing to qualifications accredited by universities. It is heavily involved in the training of new teachers. advanced skills teachers visit other schools, and staff from other schools visit Campion to observe effective teaching. In addition, languages staff undertake a considerable programme of outreach in primary schools which gives many junior-age students a taste of European and Asian languages. The benefits of the school's excellent links with primary schools include a well-organised transfer for students into Year 7 and opportunities for Year 11 junior sports leaders to gain experience in running skills tournaments for children. A programme funded by the local education authority is being implemented this year to strengthen further the links between Year 6 primary teachers and Year 7 form tutors. There are very good links with local colleges which enable students in Years 10 and 11 who are not suited to the full GCSE curriculum to undertake worthwhile courses and programmes.

Sixth Form

66. The school's very good links contribute to the learning and personal development of sixth formers. Links with the community, other schools and colleges are also very good in the sixth form. Students' personal development is very considerably enhanced by the opportunities to work in local schools as part of their Year 12 community service programme. Some students contribute to local community activities such as the district-wide youth council, and a significant number use their experiences to work towards the Millennium Volunteers award. Outside speakers make an important contribution to the general studies courses. Good links with universities and business mentors have been very successful in raising the aspirations of students to apply for the top rank of universities. Links to encourage progression to vocational routes do not have such a high profile. The head of the sixth form is a very active member of the local network of sixth form heads so that information and expertise are shared. Parents of sixth-formers are kept well informed through newsletters from the heads of year and a regular reporting system.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the head teacher and key staff is very good and management is good. Governance is unsatisfactory because there are breaches in statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher is a leader in the field of learning and, together with the associate head teacher, has driven forward the expertise of staff in this area and improved the quality of teaching
- There have been rapid developments in the use of ICT by teachers, students and parents and the school is beginning to establish excellent work in this area
- Leadership of key staff, including the leadership team, heads of house and heads of department, is energetic and focused on raising standards
- Governors know the school well and have a secure grasp of its key priorities but there is non-compliance of some statutory requirements
- Failure to monitor finances efficiently in the past has led to a large deficit; finances are now well-managed but the school is faced with financial pressures

Commentary

67. The head teacher is part of a national advisory group working on improving students' learning and is a respected leader in the field of learning. She provides dynamic leadership which is focused on learning and is well-supported by the associate head teacher and other key staff. There is a constant drive for improvement in teaching and learning based on latest research into how students learn best.
68. School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and good use is made of data to review performance in the annual self-review programme. Data is collected on the progress of students from ethnic minorities but it is not analysed in depth.
69. Despite a number of strengths, governance is unsatisfactory overall. Provision for ICT, RE, science and citizenship does not meet statutory requirements and non-compliance of RE and ICT were raised in the previous inspection. Arrangements are now in place for the full delivery of RE and ICT but governors have been slow to act. The school fails to provide a daily act of collective worship. When there is an opportunity for it in year assemblies, it is not taking place. Aspects of financial management are only recently being monitored effectively. However, much of the governors' work is making a good contribution to school development. Governors share the vision to pursue improvements in teaching and learning and carry out the performance management of the head teacher. There is a rolling programme for all departments in which each head of department provides a self-evaluation analysis for the governors' curriculum committee. This leads to an action plan which identifies key issues for development.
70. The school improvement plan (SIP) is detailed, contains a useful timeline for its production and very good arrangements for monitoring by the governors. It is, however, lacking in focus. There is no summary for it and there is some overlap between sections. The success criteria and costings for priorities are not sufficiently specific and a baseline position has not been established for key priorities. The ICT development plan is a comprehensive document and is a model of good practice.
71. The head teacher and associate head teacher have complementary roles. This arrangement supports the school's vision for teaching and learning because it allows the head teacher to focus on learning development and personnel whilst the associate leads and manages operational issues such as premises, finance, and sixth form. As advanced skills teachers,

both are good role models for other staff and take a lead role in developing the Learning to Learn policy and for the community languages provision of the specialist school.

72. Leadership is excellent in ICT, history and psychology. It is very good in music, DT, special educational needs, RE, citizenship and vocational business. It is good in English, maths, science, geography, modern languages and PE. Leadership is unsatisfactory in art. Management is excellent in history. The department makes full use of all available information in planning suitable study arrangements for all individuals. The management of subject areas is good overall but it is unsatisfactory in art.
73. The ICT director has made outstanding progress with significant improvements to the information technology infrastructure and has prepared an excellent strategic plan for development. All teachers have lap tops and pupils, parents and teachers can communicate through e-mail. Some very good use of this new system is already taking place in assessing work and providing guidance on the curriculum and assignments.
74. Performance management for all staff is organised well and as a result a detailed and inclusive programme to meet training requirements has been set up. Very good use is made of higher education and other local schools for the training of senior and middle managers. The school has made good progress towards remodelling of the workforce. A number of new appointments have been made to ensure that administration tasks are undertaken by the education support team.
75. Leadership of provision for special educational needs is very good. It is wholly committed to inclusion of all students and is authoritative in terms of understanding of current best practice. It is also innovative, with a clear vision of what needs to be done. There is very good understanding of how to achieve the school's aims through an excellent strategic plan developed since a change in the leadership in September. Management is good. Information about needs, and guidance to colleagues, is provided and co-ordination with the school's pastoral system in regard to behaviour is ensured.
76. There has been some mismanagement of finances and the school has a large projected deficit. Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004 has been found to be inaccurate and a thorough audit is soon to be undertaken. The Governors' Finance Committee regularly receives and considers budget reports. It dealt appropriately with the LEA 2001 audit and reports annually to parents. However, a number of serious financial issues were revealed after the recently-appointed head teacher engaged with a private provider to deal with payroll management. As a result, the school is now working with the local authority to construct a financial recovery plan. The bursar and the finance team work effectively to ensure that day-to-day organisation is good. Since the personnel change in September 2004, the financial systems have been reviewed and budget information is now scrutinised on a monthly basis by senior staff. Independent accountants properly audit the school fund account. The school uses financial and other benchmarking data well and considers options carefully before spending.

Sixth Form

77. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. Committed and enthusiastic leadership has built a strong ethos in which the sixth form has expanded and developed, and standards have risen steadily. The head of sixth form is well-supported by a strong management team of senior tutors, heads of years and a resident manager of the sixth form centre. This team both oversees and is actively engaged in monitoring students' academic and personal development. All members have clearly designated roles ensuring efficient and effective coverage of all aspects of the sixth form. The manager of the sixth

form centre plays a special role in providing readily-accessible advice and guidance to students, as well as developing resource provision.

78. Rigorous analysis of results and value-added data lead to very effective evaluation and monitoring of the performance of students. The development plan for the sixth form is well-structured and is a useful tool for improvement. It has identified appropriate and achievable targets, including a review of the different curriculum pathways which students can follow, transition into and progression through the sixth form and student support to raise personal achievement.
79. The sixth form operates within budget, despite a number of small teaching groups. These are supported from within the sixth form budget with no subsidy from the main school and the standards achieved are very good. The sixth form is thus cost-effective.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

Provision for work-related learning is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All Year 11 students go on a well-planned and supervised work placement of two weeks
- The school has developed some good business links and through the Raising Standards Partnership provides an excellent programme for Year 10 students which helps them understand the skills they have and need
- A good range of vocational subjects is available in Years 10 and 11 including business studies, AVCE ICT, leisure and tourism, the Asdan key skills course and a sports leadership award
- The school arranges and closely monitors a wide range of vocational courses at local colleges to provide for students with particular needs
- Although several subjects deliver work-related elements in their lessons, this area is not monitored and no audit has yet been carried out

Commentary

80. Students achieve well in vocational subjects and particularly well through college links. All Year 11 students learn about how companies and organisations run through a well-organised work placement of two weeks. They had clearly benefited from this recent experience, keeping good log books and able to explain and analyse what they had learned, in areas ranging from theatre and PE to graphics and architecture. Other aspects of careers education are delivered through the Citizenship and Social Education (CASE) programme which is currently being updated, an annual careers convention, and enterprise activities organised within houses to raise money on Charity Day. Year 10 responded really well to the Value Creation programme. This aims to help students understand the nature of choice and the skills you need to develop in order to keep options available to you. They asked perceptive questions and produced very sensible ideas. Vocational pathways provide a useful alternative for many students. Students who find learning within school difficult are very well provided for by the links with colleges and find greater success through these.
81. The leadership team has a good knowledge of WRL and is well aware of the recent statutory requirements. Recent changes in staffing, coupled with new arrangements with Connexions, have delayed the implementation of plans. However, a strong team is in place which will enable further development such as monitoring subject contributions.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good variety of teaching strategies helps students learn well
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge is leading to challenging and interesting lessons
- The curriculum has been carefully restructured for Years 7 to 9, although there is an insufficient use of materials in lessons matched to pupils at different levels of ability
- ICT is insufficiently used to develop skills
- Students' written work is marked and assessed well so that students have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve

Commentary

Examination results

82. Year 9 test results in 2003 were above the national average but well below the average for similar schools. Both girls and boys performed similarly relative to their own national averages. Results have varied from year to year since the last inspection but provisional results for 2004 suggest a significant improvement. The trend in GCSE English and English Literature results has, in general, been upwards over the past five years. In 2003 results were well above the national average; the girls' results were further above their national averages than were the boys. Provisional results for 2004 indicate a fall, although some students are still being upgraded on appeal.

Standards and Achievement

83. Students are being prepared well for national assessments, with a greatly improved scheme of work for students from Years 7 to 9 and a significant amount of focussed support for GCSE students in Years 10 and 11. Most students write accurately, organising their work carefully and thoughtfully. Some students in all years are working well above the national average, producing confident and precise pieces of writing of many different types. Students in Years 10 and 11 write very sensitively about social issues and multicultural literature. In the best lessons, well-designed oral activities enable students of all abilities to achieve well. Directed reading has improved standards and students show an impressive level of understanding. There is not enough good quality work in ICT, although some students in Year 11 have benefited from an e-mail dialogue on how to improve coursework. Overall, students make good progress from Year 7 to Year 11 and achieve well as a result of good teaching.

Teaching and learning

84. Students respond well to their teachers' high expectations of what can be achieved. Very good relationships between teachers and students enable a good working atmosphere to be created in the great majority of lessons. Teachers plan lessons well and use an impressive range of approaches. Of particular note is the thoughtful way in which they take into account the different ways that young people learn, using active learning approaches such as group work, drama and other techniques. This is very effective in giving students the opportunity to achieve their potential. Teachers assess students carefully, marking their written work in a detailed manner and usually setting them clear targets as to how to improve. This enables students to improve their writing skills and make progress. National Curriculum levels are used consistently during Years 7 to 9 and GCSE grades during Years 10 and 11, allowing all students to be clear about the level at which they are working. In teaching groups where there is a wide range of ability there is not enough use of differentiated teaching materials, to support the less able and allow gifted and talented students to excel. Students enjoy English and they work hard.

Leadership and management

85. The department works well as a team and a very supportive working atmosphere has been created. Teachers are committed to the welfare of students and to their academic improvement and students are very appreciative of this. The leadership has a very good understanding of what is important in the subject and is able consequently to give a clear strategic direction. Since the last inspection, schemes of work have been re-written to take account of the National Literacy Strategy and these provide good support for teachers. They are improving standards in Years 7 to 9. Planning and drafting skills have improved, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now more consistent. Closer links are being formed with the special educational needs department, although these could be developed further. There are still few opportunities for students to use ICT in lessons. The present levels of funding make it difficult for the department to maintain a range of good quality text resources.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

86. When students join the school, their literacy skills are good. The contribution to the development of students' language and literacy by other subjects is satisfactory overall. In some subjects it is good, but is inconsistent across the whole school. In history and geography the literacy strategy has been embraced effectively. Speaking and listening, reading, spelling and the use of key vocabulary are all stressed in lessons, as is the importance of extended writing for all students. The special educational needs department gives very good support to those who need help with literacy, encouraging them in speaking and reading aloud, and helping them in a variety of ways to improve. Other subjects, such as music and modern foreign languages, are also pro-active in their approach. In art, however, students are supported far less well, and standards of literacy are low because of low expectations of writing and presentation. Whole-school training has taken place on literacy and this has encouraged some subjects to give it greater prominence. There is still not a clear overview of literacy provision across the subjects.

Modern languages

Provision in modern languages is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE French were well above average in 2003
- Good teaching helps students achieve well
- The department is effectively led and managed
- French receives a much higher profile than German and Spanish and this is leading to below average attainment in German and Spanish in end of Year 9 assessments

Commentary

Examination results

87. The results of teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 in 2003, were average. In 2004 they were well above average. Results in the GCSE full course examinations in 2003 were well above average in all languages. In 2004 there was a slight fall in results but many more students sat the examinations and the gap between the attainment of girls and boys narrowed.

Standards and achievement

88. Standards are above average in French in Year 9. The new accelerated groups which start GCSE courses early boost these. Standards in the second languages in Year 9 are below average due to the restricted time allowance. Students make most progress in speaking and listening in Years 7-9 and in listening and reading in Key Stage 4. They show good recall of prior learning, can match symbols and pictures to text to understand full sentences. In lessons in Years 10 and 11 very good use of the language by teachers supports the development of listening skills. Students' oral skills are less well developed because some opportunities are missed in all years to practise these. This occasionally restricts students' full participation in lessons. Some teachers use ICT well to boost standards but this is not yet common practice. Students with special educational needs make good progress, especially when supported by learning support assistants. Able and talented students achieve well in set classes but planning to meet their needs in mixed ability classes is inconsistent.

Teaching and Learning

89. Teachers make links to prior learning explicit and generally use the language well to establish high expectations. Very good use is made of assessment in lessons to provide students with a clear idea of their current standards and to indicate what they need to do to aspire to higher levels. This is supported by good marking practice. Work in Years 10 and 11 is very closely monitored. Students produce a solid body of coursework which is improved through frequent self-assessment and redrafting. At times this is achieved at the expense of the active acquisition and practice of vocabulary which result in over-reliance on the dictionary in written work. Students' attitudes and social skills are enhanced by a combination of boy-girl seating, pair-work, encouragement and background music in Spanish lessons. Good use is made of the strong pool of foreign language assistants and assessment in lessons to help students become self-aware learners.

Leadership and management

90. Standards are continuously monitored and have risen in Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection. Action is taken to tackle areas of weakness and to improve resources. Staff are carefully deployed but the large number of shared classes poses a few problems of continuity. The unequal status of the languages in terms of curriculum time and focus needs addressing if the department is to be fully successful.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of good teaching
- Teachers have very good subject expertise and use this to plan effectively for students' learning
- Current arrangements for the use of ICT in the subject are unsatisfactory
- Mathematics is enhanced through good display, competitions and the lunch-time help for individuals
- Leadership is focused well on priorities for improvement

Commentary

Examination results

91. The results in the GCSE examination in 2003 were above the national average. Results in 2004 were similar overall. In 2003, girls performed much better than boys, but in 2004 this trend was reversed, with boys achieving slightly better than girls. In 2003, results in the tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. The 2004 results were similar to the previous year. Results in both Years 9 and 11 have shown a slight overall improvement over the last four years. Students in Years 10 and 11 also have an option choice to take statistics and achieve very well. In 2004, four out of five students additionally taking statistics gained grades A*-C.

Standards and achievement

92. The overall results in examinations are reflected in the standards of work seen during the inspection. Students start at the school with overall standards in mathematics that are above the national average, but not as high as in English and science. They make good progress in each year because teaching is structured coherently for students to learn well. Overall, throughout the school, boys and girls achieve well in relation to their predicted grades. The setting arrangements from Year 8 onwards are used effectively to match the work closely to students' needs. Students achieve well in all areas of number, algebra, shape work, data handling and investigative work. For example, students in Year 11 have a very good understanding of statistics and apply this successfully in their preparation for their GCSE coursework by identifying relevant problems in collecting data to test out hypotheses.

Teaching and learning

93. Teaching is consistently good across the department. Teachers share their ideas well to broaden the range of learning styles used in lessons. Their very good subject expertise and knowledge of examination requirements contribute significantly to the results achieved. Teaching uses the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, but, while students are often given an outline of the lesson to follow, teachers rarely share the lesson objectives explicitly to focus students clearly on the learning to take place rather than the tasks to be completed. Work is generally reviewed and consolidated at the end and, in the best lessons, appropriate time is given to this. Imaginative plenary activities broaden students' understanding and provide an introduction to the next lesson.
94. Teachers explain concepts well in lessons and use a range of practical activities to bring relevance to students' tasks. Teaching generally has mathematical rigour, as seen when Year 10 students were learning to solve simultaneous equations graphically. Students are engaged and concentrate well on their work, although in a few lessons a minority, mainly boys, take up teacher time in managing their behaviour and this slows the pace of the lesson for the whole class. Teachers have good relationships with their groups and try to give individual support and encouragement where it is needed. Sometimes this slows the

lesson for the whole class and some time is lost to productive work while students wait for help. Teaching assistants, deployed to individual students who have special educational needs, are effective and often benefit other students in the group. A Year 7 topic on measurement made a very good contribution to students' personal development in addition to developing their numeracy skills, by requiring students to evaluate their success working as a member of a group.

95. Assessment is good, with teachers keeping a close check on students' progress, both in lessons and through regular assessments. Work is marked regularly and students are given useful feedback on inaccuracies or misconceptions. Individual teachers are piloting methods of setting more precise targets for improvement, but these are in the early stages of development and have not been shared across the department to bring about a consistent approach.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership is effective and collaboration across the team is good. Appropriate areas have been identified, within a short time, as a focus for development in the coming year and a start has been made in implementing plans, such as, improving students' approach to coursework and increasing opportunities for teachers to observe one another's practice. During the inspection, changes to the computer network meant that departmental ICT software could not be used as an aid to learning to deepen students' understanding. Overall, there is insufficient access to modern technology. Provision is enhanced by informal help, lunchtime clinics, entry in national competitions, opportunities for students identified as gifted and talented and the recently introduced weekly puzzle. Issues identified in the previous report relating to assessment and programmes of work have been resolved and standards have been maintained.

Mathematics across the curriculum

97. Standards of numeracy are good and enable students to cope with the curriculum well in other subjects. Approaches have not been formalised to maximise opportunities for reinforcement of the numeracy skills gained in mathematics in all subjects, although discussions have taken place between the mathematics and geography departments to ensure a consistent approach. When numeracy is required in other subjects, this is planned for well and provides relevant contextual situations to test out existing skills. For example in geography, students use mapping and grid references and consolidate work on scale learnt in mathematics lessons. Year 10 and 11 geography provides real contextual use of analysing and interpreting statistics data, for example of population densities. In science, students demonstrate good ability in using and re-arranging equations involving speed and time and in drawing and interpreting graphs. Students who have special educational needs in Year 8 plotted and interpreted graphs confidently in a science lesson. Similarly in DT, skills in measurement are linked well to practical applications when marking out and in food technology to use proportion and measure out. The language of mathematics is used well in art to encourage more precise explanations of shape and form.

Science

Provision in science is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning results in students achieving very well
- There is good leadership which is focused upon raising standards
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not meet National Curriculum requirements for a significant minority
- There is an increasing range of teaching to meet styles but, partly owing to resource issues, some approaches are insufficiently developed

Commentary

Examination results

98. Results in Year 9 were well above average in 2003, and were well above those in similar schools. Results fell slightly in 2004, but there was also a drop in the national results. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average, and well above those in similar schools. The percentage of students obtaining A and A* grades was well above the national average. Provisional results for 2004 were approximately the same.

Standards and achievement

99. Students' achievement is very good, as a result of very good teaching. For example, Year 9 students, achieve very well at calculating the moments of forces acting on a beam and their understanding of inheritance and selection and photosynthesis. In Year 11, standards are again well above average in terms, for example, of students' understanding of chemical bonding, their ability to calculate formula masses, and their understanding of the mechanism of breathing in terms of changes of pressure in the thorax. Achievement of students with special educational needs is good, although on occasions it is adversely affected by lack of support from teaching assistants, or insufficient matching of the work to the needs of the students. The achievement of students who are gifted and talented is also good, but is restricted by insufficient use of open-ended tasks.

Teaching and learning

100. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explanations are clear. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and use a variety of activities to engage, and sustain, students' interest and enthusiasm. Relationships are very good and students are confident to ask questions and offer opinions. Questioning is used regularly to check students' understanding but, currently, normally only requires short answers. In the main, teachers have high expectations and tasks are suitably challenging. Teachers place a good emphasis upon scientific literacy and key words. An increasing variety of teaching and learning activities include practical work, demonstrations, investigations, card sorts, sequencing activities, data-handling, research, modelling, games, poster display and some presentations. There is, however, insufficient open, extended investigative work. Because of resource issues, there is insufficient use of ICT by students. There are too few opportunities for extended writing. Social, moral and cultural issues are tackled, but not normally using the full range of teaching techniques such as role-play and debate. Assessment practices have been improved. New tests have been introduced which are given a National Curriculum level. Students' books are marked regularly and, in the best cases, students are given good quality feedback on how to improve. These are new procedures and are not yet

consistently in place. Targets are set for students, but not yet on an annual basis in Years 7 to 9. Assessment criteria are being shared with students.

Leadership and management

101. Leadership is good, with very good features, in particular its impact upon raising standards, which are now well above those in similar schools. The department has adopted innovative approaches to the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. However, as a result, some students only study some of the required sciences in the National Curriculum. This is an unsatisfactory aspect of subject leadership. Management is satisfactory, but there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching. New schemes of work are being developed, and are providing useful guidance for all staff, particularly non-specialists, on the most effective teaching approaches. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy for Science, and the school's focus on learning, are having a significant impact on students' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The department has a foundation course in Year 7 and Year 9 with an option to follow a short course GCSE, full GCSE or GNVQ course in Years 10 and 11.

Provision in ICT is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good teaching but unsatisfactory learning	Good teaching but unsatisfactory learning
Leadership	Excellent (new leadership)	
Management	Excellent	
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are no ICT lessons in Year 8, and the full requirements for the subject are not being taught in Years 7 to 9
- Many students do not take the subject in Years 10 and 11, as required by the National Curriculum
- The new leadership is outstanding, making tremendous recent improvements to the subject, the whole school and community ICT systems

Commentary

Examination results

102. The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are above average. No students' work was available from these assessments to confirm their accuracy. A new monitoring and assessment system is being introduced to improve reliability.
103. Although GCSE full courses, short courses, and vocational courses have been flexibly used to meet the needs of individual students, many students do not take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, the full course results were below average but they improved slightly in 2004.

Standards and achievement

104. Year 7 students arrive in the school with varied previous experiences in the subject. The students rapidly gain new skills and understanding of the potential of modern technology because of the good teaching. The subject is not taught currently in Year 8. In previous years students were only taught ICT in Year 7.
105. In very effective Year 9 lessons, student's achievements are above average when they apply techniques of algebra to improve their researching skills. The disjointed curriculum and some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, cause students not to reach the average standard by the end of Year 9. This has impacted on older students who have to be taught techniques that they should have covered previously. In the work sample seen, middle and lower-attaining students following the GNVQ course achieve average standards. The current GCSE short course work shows that many students' standards are now above average, because of the good teaching and excellent monitoring. Students with special educational needs achieve well because of the tightly structured approaches used by teachers.

Teaching and learning

106. Within the teaching, there are inconsistencies. In some Year 7 lessons, the starter activities took too long and some ground rules were not sufficiently established. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 9 when the excellent planning skilfully combined elements of literacy and numeracy into the subject. To minimise the lack of continuity between Years 7 to 9 the course has been adapted to enable students to show their overall capability. This has been designed to enable students to succeed, but at the expense of providing challenging work for the most able. Teachers give good written feedback and advice to students so that they know how to improve.
107. GCSE and GNVQ students also experience some inconsistency in teaching. Much of the teaching is very good, but in less successful GNVQ lessons the tasks are not sufficiently challenging and students did not consider the commercial specification of their ICT work when evaluating their ideas. Teachers make excellent use of the potential offered by modern technology in lessons and have developed excellent interactive learning resources. This makes learning interesting and creates a professional ethos in the department.

Leadership and management

108. The new leadership has brought about extraordinarily rapid development to the subject, the whole school infrastructure, and community e-learning. Development planning is now outstanding but curriculum weaknesses in the last report have not yet been resolved. The computer rooms lack proper air conditioning, which causes discomfort to students and a risk of equipment failure.

ICT across the curriculum

109. Insufficient use is being made of ICT. In DT students' competence is very good because they have access to specialist equipment and computers that enable them to use computer-aided design and manufacturing techniques. Good work is also apparent in MFL, PE and geography. Mathematics, music and RE lack the use of ICT. Much of the ICT seen in the work sampled from English, science, history and geography is done as homework, because of insufficient access to computers in these departments.
110. Older students display good competence overall in applying the use of ICT to enhance their studies. There is some very good work done in PE and DT because of the availability of specialist software and equipment. There is particular weakness in RE and music because of the lack of ICT resources. Other subjects are beginning to acquire the appropriate resources.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Well below average
Achievement	Good	Non-exam – Very poor GCSE – Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Non-exam – Very poor GCSE – Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is still no provision for statutory religious education in Years 10 and 11
- Teaching is very good especially in fostering critical and reflective thought by students
- In the last three years GCSE results have been well above average
- There is almost no access to ICT within the department

Commentary

Examination results

111. The results in Year 10 and 11 GCSE have been consistently well above national averages and the high percentage of A* A and B grades has been a strong feature. The levels attained by students at the end of Year 9, according to the co-ordinated humanities scheme, were also above average.

Standards and achievement

112. Oral and written work seen confirm that standards are above average. In Years 7 – 9 students of all abilities achieve well in their responses to challenges posed by religion and belief. The “Are you religious?” questionnaire and the group work in a Year 7 class on statements of personal view, stimulated good written responses and lively discussion. Students in a Year 8 lesson responded very well to the constant challenge to think creatively about the concept of a living earth. Most students in Years 10 and 11 have no opportunity to progress because no time is provided for the subject, however, the students on the GCSE course obtain results on average a grade higher than in other subjects.

Teaching and learning

113. Teaching and learning in Year 7 – 9 and the GCSE course are very good. Teachers plan effectively and make the aims of each lesson clear to students. Key words are stressed. In a Year 8 lesson, amongst a variety of learning activities, music was used very effectively as an aid to concentration as students were forming a mental picture of themselves in role as a Muslim footballer during Ramadan, prior to writing a diary of their day. Teachers use time effectively to speak to individual students with differing ability levels to cater for their specific needs. In a lesson on the living earth students were constantly challenged to think logically and creatively. Teachers are skilled in questioning students and in using their answers to maximum effect. In a Year 7 lesson, students worked very well in small discussion groups to explore and justify to each other their responses to questions about belief and values in response to a carefully prepared game format. Work on religion and football stimulated productive work on the phenomenon of religion. The lack of access to ICT hinders the development of greater variety in both teaching and learning.

Leadership and management

114. The department is very well led and managed. An innovative approach to developing new schemes of work in Year 7 – 9 meets the demands of The Agreed Syllabus, builds knowledge about religion and challenges students to respond questioningly and reflectively on their own developing sense of themselves and their personal beliefs. There is a clear vision of the aims of RE and a growing appreciation of its potential contribution to the learning philosophy of the school. The very effective use of the graduate teacher scheme has strengthened the quality of teaching. Support for non-specialists working in the department through meetings and other means is effective.
115. Since the last inspection improvements have been made in accommodation, staffing and stock together with the very successful GCSE course. Plans are advanced to comply with the demands of the Agreed Syllabus in Year 10 and 11.

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in the GCSE course and are successful in the examination
- Learning is strongly promoted by well-planned and effectively taught lessons

- The students' very good attitudes make a substantial contribution to their achievement
- Difficulty in gaining access to ICT resources limits opportunities to use computers

Commentary

Examination results

116. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were above average in 2003. The provisional 2004 results show a much higher proportion gaining Level 5. The 2003, GCSE results were above average. The proportion of boys gaining A*-C grades was much lower than that of girls in 2003, but this was reversed in 2004, with boys gaining a slightly higher proportion than girls. In both of these years, a much higher proportion of students took geography than in most schools, although numbers are lower in the present Year 10 and 11, due to changes in option arrangements.

Standards and achievement

117. Most students enter the school with average standards in geography. By Year 9, the great majority of them achieve well in improving to a level where they are above the expected standard. Students have a good grasp of economic development and are able to identify the most and least developed countries and provide data to support their judgements. The higher-attaining students are able to provide very good evidence for judgements. Achievement is very good in Years 10 and 11 as standards are strongly consolidated at an above average level for a very substantial proportion of students. Well-written work shows that most have a strong understanding of the relationship between physical and human activities, such as mining in the Brazilian rain forest.

Teaching and learning

118. Lessons are very well planned. They start briskly, making a good link with previous learning, and keep up a good pace, so that time is used effectively. Resources are very well-selected to help students to achieve well in their tasks. Teachers give very good guidance on how students can improve to meet the criteria of the National Curriculum and GCSE, both in class and through marking of work. They manage lessons in a way that is relaxed and encourages students to enjoy their work, but sets high expectations about attitudes and behaviour. Students usually respond very well to this, so that lessons are generally characterised by a productive willingness to share responsibility for learning. Teachers sometimes do too much for students, for example by providing answers rather than challenging them to think of their own. Although teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of students of differing attainment and provide effective individual support, too few tasks are planned at different levels to ensure that challenges are always appropriate for all. Many lessons provide good opportunities for students to improve their literacy skills and to work with numbers. Although the department has created good plans for using ICT, tasks usually have to be given for homework, because it is difficult to gain access to computers during lessons.

Leadership and management

119. Current arrangements have only recently been put in place, but are already becoming well-established. There is an awareness of the strengths of the department and areas that need improving and a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to the school's vision of improving achievement through innovative "learning-school" approaches. These are seen for example, in creative use of the school site as a context for learning about geography. Lessons often venture outside for first-hand experience of such topics as weather conditions and the impact of human use on physical resources. The last inspection showed

the department to have many strengths in teaching, learning and achievement. These have been maintained.

History

Provision in history is excellent.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Excellent
Leadership	Excellent	
Management	Excellent	
Improvement since last inspection	Very good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards rapidly improve across each key stage and students' excellent attitudes to learning help their achievement
- The quality of teaching is having an impact on raising standards and the excellent provision of the history time tunnel is a valuable addition to students' experience of the subject
- Leadership is providing the vision and platform for sustained improvement
- Not all classrooms have full access to ICT

Commentary

Examination results

120. Results in teacher assessments at the end of the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average. Provisional results for 2004 indicate that results are at a similar level. The percentage of students achieving A*-C in GCSE in 2003 was well above the national average and the proportion of grades at A*-B twice the national average. Provisional GCSE results for 2004 show a decline.

Standards and achievement

121. On entry students have a broadly average knowledge and historical skills. However, they quickly improve because teaching focuses on key skills and uses baseline data to focus on individual needs. In Year 7 and Year 8, students quickly develop questioning skills and understand about evaluation and analysis of historical sources. In Year 9 they have begun to use empathy in their explanations of life during World War 1. They understand different learning styles and use these effectively in Year 10 to produce projects about medical developments. By Year 11, the range of approaches to teaching and learning styles leads to even higher standards. Students are able to carry out theoretical analyses and are adept at interpreting historical events and using notes effectively to plan essays. Girls generally perform better than boys because they respond better to the writing elements of coursework and examinations. However, the percentage of boys achieving the highest grades is greater. Students with special educational needs and with talents in history achieve equally well.

Teaching and learning

122. Lessons are well-structured and learning develops through a range of activities which focus on students' individual learning styles. Assessments through essays, poems, model making and role-play give students every opportunity to demonstrate their historical knowledge and understanding. Using assessment to set targets for students and plan classroom activities is a strong feature of teaching. Teachers' comments in books and regular use of

assessment criteria in lessons help students to know how to improve. Teachers have very high expectations and students respond by their excellent attitudes to work.

123. Students appreciate conditions in the trenches through audio recordings, and the use of video enhances knowledge of life in Tudor England. Teachers have to rotate between classrooms because not all have computer projectors. In Year 11 understanding of twentieth century political ideology and social change is learned through role play and discussion. Students' well-structured essays and examination answers are a result of teachers preparing structured frameworks to help with writing tasks. Teachers use historical artefacts such as gas masks and World War 1 shell-cases, together with an abundant supply of models, costume, weaponry and military uniforms from the time tunnel to give students a hands-on learning experience. The remembrance assembly and the time tunnel experience made very good contributions to social, moral and cultural education. Year 11 study of political ideologies contributes to citizenship education.

Leadership and Management

124. A clear vision is shared by all teachers and support staff. Leadership is inspirational and this gives confidence to teachers and students to be imaginative. The curriculum is designed to enhance students' historical experience of people and the contribution individuals have made to shape our history from the Romans to the post-second world war world. The emphasis of the department is to bring history alive and to generate a love for the subject. The time tunnel is an excellent educational resource. Standards have improved since the last inspection and the quality of teaching and assessment have improved.

Design and Technology

The design and technology department comprises the disciplines of resistant materials, graphic products, food technology, textiles, electronics and systems and control.

Provision in design and technology is very good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve high standards by the end of Year 11 as a result of very good teaching and learning
- The leadership and management promote a positive climate for achievement and improvement
- The effective use of assessment in monitoring students' progress in lessons is promoting high achievement, especially in textiles and food technology
- ICT is used very well to promote teaching and learning and, as a result, students are regular and confident users
- The planning of lessons in Years 7 to 9 is insufficiently focused on improving attainment at the higher National Curriculum Levels 7 and beyond
- Examination results in graphic products are too low compared with the other design and technology subjects

Commentary

Examination Results

125. On entry to the school in Year 7 students have average ability in DT. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average but below average for the higher levels.
126. In 2003, the GCSE examination results at A*-C were above average and they were broadly similar in 2004. Results at the highest grades were significantly higher than the national picture. Within the DT subjects there is a spread of standards. The highest examination results were achieved in textiles and food technology and the lowest in graphic products where there is a greater reliance on non-specialist teachers. Girls achieve highly compared with national averages.

Standards and Achievement

127. By the end of Year 9 most students achieve well and make good gains in their practical design and making skills in resistant materials, textiles and in food technology. They become knowledgeable and increasingly confident designers of electronic systems and can accurately control computer software to operate sequences of sounds and lights. They acquire a good knowledge of the properties of materials, tools and equipment and are able to follow a clear design-process to completion, supported by good quality teaching resources which help them to show their knowledge and understanding.
128. The current Year 11 work indicates that students are achieving well above average in textiles and food technology. Their design folders are very well presented to show the development of their design ideas and critical thinking processes. Students use ICT very well to support the development of their designing and making and this is clearly helping the development of high standards and the popularity of the subject. In graphic products students have competent design, presentation and modelling skills but their work lacks creativity. All students in Years 10 and 11 achieve equally well as a result of effective and knowledgeable teaching which is increasingly well-matched to the needs of the examinations. Students' achievement is generally better in the practical than in the theoretical aspects of the subject.

Teaching and Learning

129. In Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching and learning are good, although in some lessons the silly behaviour of a few students reduced the pace of learning, which remained satisfactory nevertheless. The majority of teachers have very good subject knowledge and promote high expectations of work and conduct. Effective learning is promoted by a wide variety of teaching strategies. ICT is used very well as a teaching tool in a number of DT lessons, including the use of power point presentations and computer-aided design programmes. As a result most students are confident users of ICT, despite the more limited access to computers in graphics, textiles and food technology. Lesson activities are planned to promote the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills appropriately.
130. Teachers manage behaviour very well. They promote positive relationships and a climate of hard work and good attitudes. Where support for students with special educational needs is available it is consistently well-deployed and helps them achieve in line with their peers. Lesson planning is clear, well-organised and objectives routinely shared with students but is not always clearly focused on the strategies for achieving the higher levels in Year 9. The department is aware of this and is trialling a new system of assessment tracking in Years 7 to 9 to monitor students' progress against the attainment target levels. The assessment processes in Years 10 to 11 are very effective and provide students with clear and regular feedback on what they need to do to improve their performance.

Leadership and management

131. The staff work as an effective team and share common goals for improvement. A good improvement plan clearly identifies strengths, weaknesses and strategies to meet the needs. Assessment and performance data is analysed conscientiously, evaluated and monitored and used by teachers so that there is a clear view of what all students should achieve. The curriculum is very broad and offers access to all the design and technology subjects. The management and deployment of resources, including the technicians is very effective in promoting high achievement. Extra-curricular access to the workshops outside of lessons is very good and uptake high. The department has a high profile both in the school and beyond through the participation in national projects, working with local education authority advisers and supporting other partner schools. The accommodation is good overall but the cramped nature of the graphics room is having some impact on standards achieved. The size, shape and layout of the textiles room creates significant difficulties in teacher supervision whilst some power equipment is being used.
132. Standards of work, the quality of teaching and learning, provision for food technology and access to technical support have all improved since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

In addition to detailed inspection of art and design and music, drama was sampled during the inspection. Three lessons were observed and an interview was held with the head of department. In 2003 standards in drama GCSE dropped significantly from the very high standards achieved in previous years. This was mainly because of changes to the GCSE syllabus which had not been sufficiently taken into account in the curriculum. In 2004 GCSE results improved dramatically and were well above the national average. The achievement seen in lessons was very good, with particular strengths in the use of voice and gesture and the realism of performances. Teaching and learning were very good in the lessons observed; the wide range of strategies deployed and the high level of subject expertise were leading to enthusiasm for the subject and very good learning. The department is being led dynamically by the new head of department and significant improvements have been made to the schemes of work and assessment system.

Art and Design

Provision in Art and Design is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Despite recent improvements, a lack of challenge for many students has led to underachievement
- The behaviour and attitudes of boys interrupts the learning of others
- Some teaching is very effectively challenging students and tackling underperformance
- The accuracy and use of assessment are unsatisfactory

- A recent, rigorous analysis of strengths and weaknesses is underpinned by a determination to improve

Commentary

Examination results

133. Teacher assessments in 2003 gave standards at the end of Year 9 as above expected levels for students' ages, but inaccurate assessments led to these results being inflated. Results by girls were better than boys, as is the case nationally. Standards were average in the 2003 GCSE examinations but fell in 2004. Students achieved less well in art than in their other subjects and none gained the highest grades.

Standards and achievement

134. Achievement over the longer term is unsatisfactory. Low expectation and the poor attitudes and behaviour of a significant number of boys has gone unchecked for too long. The quality and presentation of work in Year 9 sketchbooks is weak and the quality of written notes and annotations does not reflect the standards of literacy in the school as a whole. Whilst in some of the lessons observed achievement was unsatisfactory, in others it was very good. Some teaching is successfully tackling students' underachievement. Expectations of effort and work rate are communicated clearly and as these are becoming accepted, so standards are beginning to improve. In a Year 10 ceramics lesson students achieved very well, some from low starting points. All were engaged and motivated, in part by the very good teaching but also by what they had achieved in just a few weeks. They spoke knowledgeably, about Kate Mallone's work and their own work. They explained their use of cut stencils to mask out different areas of the clay base, showed how to apply slip decoration and explained the detailed annotations on their design sheets. A significant proportion of potentially higher-attaining students did not demonstrate the standards of which they were clearly capable.

Teaching and Learning

135. There have been some recent changes to teaching staff and this is having a positive impact on achievement. Some teaching is very effective and some has unsatisfactory elements. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which in several lessons was used to good effect, for example to demonstrate different painting techniques, apply surfaces decoration to a relief sculpture and to lead a discussion on the viewpoints taken by Georgia O'Keefe in her paintings of flowers. In sharp contrast, where teaching was dull and too little was expected of students they wasted time and insufficient learning took place. Teacher assessments are at times inflated and do not give students sufficient information on what they have achieved or how to improve. Not enough use is made of National Curriculum levels and examination marking criteria to monitor students' progress and plan tasks that are matched to individual learning needs and potential.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership has been neither decisive nor influential enough to tackle the drop in standards. The recently written recovery plan demonstrates a more rigorous approach to improvement with teaching and learning rightly holding a more prominent position. There is a strong determination on the part of staff to improve standards, and the expertise and teamwork to make it happen. Displays are good and support learning well, rooms are well-managed. Although the use of ICT is under-developed, the recent acquisition of computers together with an improved curriculum plan, provides a good platform for improvement.

Music

Provision in music is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well planned, challenging and varied activities maintain interest and make music enjoyable
- Classes are well-managed so that all students can maximise their learning
- Extra-curricular opportunities are very good and they enhance students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education
- The current lack of ICT limits achievement

Commentary

Examination results

137. Teacher assessments in 2003 at the end of Year 9 were above those reported nationally. Provisional results for 2004 show that these have been improved upon, with more students achieving Level 6.
138. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average with nine out of ten students achieving the highest grades. Provisional results for 2004 show this standard being maintained.

Standards and achievement

139. Students enter Year 7 with average attainment but rapidly make progress as they acquire a musical vocabulary and the ability to compose music both graphically and using notation. They go on to broaden their knowledge and understanding using tuned percussion instruments or keyboards, writing compositions based upon a pentatonic scale showing a good sense of timing and rhythm. Higher-attaining musicians compose for, then play, their own instruments. By Year 9, students show good achievement as they demonstrate a very good knowledge of the principles of blues music with its flattened 3rds and 7ths. They then proceed to work in pairs to perfect their playing of 'Jackass Blues' on keyboards using three chords and a walking bass. Very large classes working in relatively small rooms does mean that much time has to be spent on setting up and putting away equipment safely and so further achievement is limited. Students with special educational needs are very well supported and achieve as well as others in their class.
140. Students in Years 10 and 11 use their instrumental knowledge to bring music to life as they study ternary form by playing 'Georgy Girl'. They use clarinets, guitars, piano, drums and violins emphasising the structure by changing the instrumentation. Year 11 students show a very good knowledge and understanding of Indian music and use keyboards to play their own compositions in a similar style.

Teaching and learning

141. Teachers display a very strong knowledge of their subject and use this skilfully to select tasks and present them in active ways which students find enjoyable. They plan lessons very well and share objectives and criteria for success so students clearly know what they need to do. The development of literacy and numeracy skills is well-supported but the lack of projectors for the interactive whiteboards limits the effective use of technology. Listening and appraising skills are well- integrated with composition and performance as students record and evaluate their compositions critically. They have less opportunity to make a note of the recorded music which they hear. Teachers make considerable efforts to transpose and orchestrate music so that students can use their instruments to enrich lessons. Students and teachers clearly appreciate and respect each other. Classes are very well-managed so students are very well-behaved.

Leadership and management

142. Leadership creates a vision of music as something which can be enjoyed by, and is accessible to everyone. Teachers work closely together, planning and assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment is very good and students use peer and self evaluation very well. The very good management brings together a large number of peripatetic teachers to engage students in a range of musical activities which greatly enhance the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the students. Concerts and performances contribute greatly to the school's ethos. Students and teachers give their time generously to support charities and the community through their musical efforts. The department has established very good links with primary schools.
143. Since the previous inspection a new music and arts suite has been built, though the lack of sound-proofing is a distinct handicap and the music practice rooms are too small for ensemble work. The lack of ICT at the time of the last inspection persists, but there are plans for students soon to have access to laptop computers. The uneven distribution of curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 identified previously, has been rectified. The recent restructuring of the options choices at the end of Year 9 has drastically reduced the opportunity for students to study music to GCSE level.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since last inspection	Very good	

Main strengths

- Standards were well above average in the 2003 GCSE results
- Good teaching is helping all students to learn and achieve well
- Leadership is innovative and takes effective action to meet the needs of students
- Students' very good attitudes assist good learning and achievement
- Extra-curricular activities, supported by good links with the community, give very good opportunities for students to extend their learning and experience

Commentary

Examination results

144. GCSE results in 2003 were above average. Results in 2002 were below this. More boys than girls are entered for the subject examinations and boys do better than girls overall. In 2004 results remained above average, with an increased number of students gaining A grades, according to school data.

Standards and achievement

145. Students have average skills in games activities when they enter the school but they have below average skills in gymnastics because of varying prior experience. Students' standards are above average in Year 9 in games activities but are average in gymnastics so students are achieving well overall in Year 9. By the end of Year 11, standards for those following the examination course are well above average, with very good ICT facilities driving improvement and achievement. In the core curriculum, students' standards are above average with students responding very well to the wide choice of activities offered. These students achieve well, as do those students on the Junior Sports Leadership Award course where standards are average at this early stage of the Year 11 course. All students acquire skills quickly because they listen well. Teachers and coaches have high expectations so they challenge students to achieve well. Standards achieved by talented team players are very high as students are encouraged into clubs with some progressing to regional and national levels.

Teaching and learning

146. Teachers demonstrate skills well and questioning is effective in drawing out all students' learning and understanding. Teachers break down tasks so that all students are pushed to achieve well. For example, in a Year 10 hockey lesson students were well motivated as the teacher challenged students into executing accurate shots for goal receiving from both sides by developing the push shot and combining stops with reverse stick control so that students built up all the elements for successful handling of the stick and maintaining close contact with the ball. Students learn well because of well-planned lessons and the high expectations of teachers. In the best lessons teachers encourage students to view one another's work and to help each other.
147. Talented students have opportunities to lead groups or assist with demonstrations. Good use of information technology and digital cameras allows students to observe and analyse one another's performances so as to improve practical assessment. Assessment in the GCSE course is used well to help students to check their progress and measure performance against targets, but marking does not always highlight areas for improvement or clearly relate to grades. Teachers usually review lessons but this is not always well linked to improvement. The thorough evaluation procedures seen in some lessons are not consistent across the subject.

Leadership and management

148. Leadership has focussed attention strongly on improving standards and satisfactory changes have been made to the curriculum identifying courses and activities to meet students' needs. Dance and karate have been introduced as well as the Junior Sports Leadership Award Scheme. These have been tailored to students' requirements. The boys' curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because it does not include all elements of the National Curriculum. Sports facilities are good, with a specific theory teaching room to meet the increasing needs of the additional courses. Good guidance for teachers is provided in detailed schemes of work but there is inconsistent implementation of literacy, numeracy and citizenship in lessons. Standards and facilities have improved and the school has achieved the Sportsmark award since the previous report.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school offers vocational courses in ICT, sports leaders awards, business studies, youth awards, and leisure & tourism. The focus subject for inspection was the applied business studies course with Part 1 GNVQ Intermediate Business studies forming a double GCSE award.

Business studies

Provision in applied GCSE business studies is very good.

	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There were very high GCSE results in the first year of the course
- Students enjoy the variety in lessons and achieve very well because of the studious atmosphere
- The quality of teaching is never less than good, but does not emphasis the impact of global and international markets sufficiently
- The subject has recently benefited from gaining a permanent base and suite of rooms

Commentary

Examination results

149. The results in 2003 in the first year of this examination were well above average. The school data shows that many students taking this subject did better than in their other subjects. Results for 2004 are currently subject to appeal.

Standards and achievement

150. Year 10 students organised themselves quickly in a role-play exercise that developed their understanding of hierarchical structure in organisations, and job roles. Students confidently took on the job role given on prompt cards and show very good understanding of the issues of responsibility, roles, qualifications, and pay in the company. All students achieved well in this lesson because the teacher ensured that all were included and carefully chose the prompt cards to give a suitable challenge to each student. Year 11 students can clearly explain the advantages and disadvantages of their case study business relocating to a new

region. In a lesson on cash flow, students constructed a spreadsheet to test out assumptions and then used the new knowledge to tackle GCSE questions rapidly. The new laptop facilities enable all students to use ICT very confidently. They include useful research findings from the Internet in their work, construct spreadsheets and word process their reports. Many students apply the use of arithmetic very well when calculating cash flows. Students with special educational needs make very good contributions to the lesson discussions and achieve well.

Teaching and learning

151. There were variations in the quality of teaching but it was never less than good and sometimes excellent. Overall, teachers manage the learning very well. This inspires students to participate well and listen to the ideas of others. Teachers use a good variety of activities that build on previous learning. Students are engaged with their learning because of the very good attitudes established by teachers. Lessons are challenging and interesting. The strong contribution that this subject makes to citizenship and WRL is not yet clearly identified in the planning. Some students are lacking an international and global appreciation of markets for products and services. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, setting high expectations in lessons that result in students wanting to learn.

Leadership and management

152. The department has very recently been relocated into a suite of adjoining rooms that enables good team working and the subject identity to be established. The assessment and monitoring of students' achievements are very good and students receive very good advice. Display, basic teaching resources and equipment are not, as yet, fully established.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching	Very good	No evidence
Learning	Unsatisfactory	

Leadership (newly appointed coordinator)	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	n/a

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is insufficiently developed and lacks a coherent scheme of work
- Assessment of students' progress is inadequate
- Departments have a limited understanding of the requirements of the citizenship curriculum
- The citizenship co-ordinator has made a great impact in a short time in post

Commentary

Examination results

153. No examinations are taken in this subject.

Standards and Achievement

154. Achievement is unsatisfactory because of the underdeveloped and incoherent provision. There is little written work produced and students have no record of their work over time, nor any systematically organised evidence of their progression in developing the skills of communication and enquiry or participation. In the Year 7 Opening Minds lessons and in the Citizenship and Social Education (CASE) lessons students are achieving well in their understanding of some aspects of citizenship such as the need for rules but their achievement is patchy because of the lack of a coherent programme.

Teaching and Learning

155. Where there is explicit teaching of citizenship, teaching and learning are very good. Overall, however, learning is unsatisfactory because of the limited experiences students are having. In the two Year 7 Opening Minds classes where citizenship is taught formally teachers use a range of activities to engage students' interests and written work is perceptive and well-presented. Other very good teaching was observed during the inspection in a lesson on the key concepts involved in being a good citizen. Students in Year 9 showed they could organise themselves well, discuss issues articulately and give good feedback to the class. In another very good lesson students engaged with issues of racism, writing a reflective diary entry for a Muslim footballer during Ramadan. Imaginative use of music to develop a sympathetic ethos for a reflective task was particularly effective. Students' personal and social skills are developed well in their residential trips.

Leadership and management

156. Until this year the leadership and management of citizenship has not been effective. The implementation of National Curriculum citizenship has not been monitored and there is not a coordinated approach across departments to ensure they make a contribution. The recently appointed co-ordinator, however, is approaching the development of the subject with vision, purpose, energy, and commitment. Analysis of the situation has led to well-organised support for teaching colleagues, and the formulation of a strategy to bringing the coherence needed for progress with the subject throughout the school. This very good leadership is already making a significant impact. A new policy has been formulated and presented to the governors and some discrete citizenship teaching by the co-ordinator introduced on a rolling programme. The coordinator is effectively addressing assessment issues and the effective integration of the CASE into a complete citizenship scheme.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

From the inspection, 13 subjects and courses 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.

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	6	100.0	98.6	50	50.2	86.7	87.5
Biology	18	100.0	96.4	27.8	39.2	77.8	78.6
Business (VCE)	30	100.0	65	30.0	14.6	85.0	60.1
Business Studies	15	100.0	98.7	46.7	36.8	88.0	80.1
Chemistry	7	100.0	97.6	42.9	49.0	80.0	84.9
Communication Studies	27	100.0	99.4	40.7	37.8	90.4	82.1
Economics	10	100.0	98.9	60.0	52.0	90.0	88.3
English/English Language	20	100.0	99.4	65.0	36.3	95.0	80.9
English Literature	6	100.0	99.5	50.0	46.5	90.0	86.5
French	2	100.0	98.8	100.0	51.5	120.0	87.6
Design and Technology	8	100.0	97.8	25.0	35.0	75.0	77.9
Geography	18	100.0	98.7	55.6	44.5	92.2	84.0
German	3	100.0	98.4	100.0	47.9	113.3	84.8
History	6	100.0	99.0	66.7	44.6	100.0	84.6
Information Technology (VCE)	31	95.1	77.9	59.0	23.4	90.8	64.9
Mathematics	19	94.7	96.7	42.1	55.6	80.0	88.8
Media (VCE)	11	100.0	71.9	63.6	28.5	98.2	n/a
Music	4	100.0	98.8	25.	38.9	80.0	81.1
Other Sciences	5	100.0	97.3	80.0	41.5	104.0	80.3
Other Social Studies	50	100.0	97.4	48.0	42.7	86.0	81.8
Physics	12	100.0	96.7	25.0	44.6	68.3	81.7
Sociology	10	100.0	98.2	30.0	44.3	74.0	83.6
Spanish	1	100.0	98.3	100.0	50.2	100.0	86.9
Sports/PE Studies	10	100.0	98.0	50.0	30.9	90.0	75.2
Total	257	99.6	97.7	47.1	42.1	86.5	81.9

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	7	100.0	80.1	28.6	23.7	25	28.9
Biology	17	64.7	65.2	11.8	11.1	18.3	22.3
Business Studies	5	80.0	76.4	0.0	16.3	37.8	26.5

Chemistry	3	66.7	72.7	33.3	13.9	12.9	24.8
Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Communication Studies	8	100.0	86.4	50.0	23.8	33.6	32.0
Economics	2	50.0	73.6	0.0	20.1	42.5	26.6
English/English Language	11	100.0	82.9	36.4	17.5	46.7	29.4
English Literature	5	60.0	85.9	0.0	19.1	35.0	31.2
French	3	100.0	78.2	33.3	18.9	40.0	30.0
Design and Technology	4	100.0	74.9	0.0	15.1	28.0	24.3
general studies	22	86.4	73.9	40.9	17.8	n/a	26.6
Geography	14	78.6	74.3	0.0	19.8	45.0	28.3
German	1	100.0	81.5	0.0	19.3	n/a	30.7
History	14	71.4	80.7	0.0	19.5	44.0	30.5
Information Technology	1	100.0	67.0	0.0	10.9	n/a	22.3
Mathematics	7	57.1	61.0	0.0	17.1	20.0	20.7
Music	2	100.0	86.5	50.0	21.4	30.0	32.3
Other Sciences	3	100.0	71.4	0.0	15.8	60.0	25.8
Other Social Studies	27	81.5	69.7	7.4	16.7	29.6	25.2
Physics	4	100.0	68.6	25.0	14.4	30.0	23.0
Sociology	6	66.7	71.8	17.7	18.4	46.7	25.9
Spanish	3	100.0	78.5	66.7	17.7	20.0	28.3
Sports/PE Studies	3	100.0	73.2	0.0	11.4	28.0	25.0
Total	172	82.0	73.9	17.4	17.4	30.2	26.3

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English, French and Spanish, but German and communication studies were also sampled. In the lesson observed, the majority of students made very good progress, building on their good standards at GCSE. They worked well on challenging material in the language laboratory, discussing their findings in German. Their written work is interesting and of good quality. Results in communication studies in 2003 were well above average. In the lesson observed, well-structured teaching enabled students to develop their skills in writing analytical paragraphs in a sound theoretical framework. Students were engaged and enthusiastic about the course.

English

Overall, the quality of provision in English is very good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Improvement since last inspection	Very good
-----------------------------------	-----------

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and teaching is often excellent
- A variety of approaches is used to direct all work explicitly at the examination requirements
- Students apply themselves exceptionally well in lessons
- Students receive very good support which they recognize and value greatly
- Literature results are not at the high level of those in language and literature
- A minority of students is passive in oral work

Commentary

Examination results

157. In 2003, results in English language/literature were well above the national average. On the whole, students performed better than in their other subjects. Boys and girls performed equally well. Provisional grades for 2004 indicate that these high standards have been maintained. Results in language and literature have been very good for a number of years. In 2003, results in English literature were above average and similar to the students' performance in other subjects. Fewer students are choosing to study literature than the language/literature course, and fewer boys than girls. Provisional grades for 2004 suggest that English literature results are higher.

Standards and achievement

158. The majority of students taking English subjects have achieved well at GCSE level and they continue to make very good progress in the sixth form. Their extended critical writing is nearly always structured well with a clear line of argument. In Year 12 most students write in a fluent, measured style with good, sustained use of evidence. By Year 13, they have developed in greater depth the skills of speculation and analysis, with a more confident use of critical vocabulary. In the great majority of cases reading skills are developed extremely well. Some lower-attaining students make a somewhat limited response, and are unsure about more difficult concepts, but they work hard and certainly make very good progress. Folders contain a significant amount of support material, often annotated by students in an impressive fashion, showing they have engaged with it and extracted useful elements to help them progress with their understanding. Although it is early in the course, many Year 12 students make significant contributions to oral work, expressing their viewpoints clearly and confidently. Year 13 students perform very well in the classroom, achieving high standards in discussion. Attitudes to work and learning are excellent throughout.

Teaching and learning

159. Students achieve very well at A-level because of the very good standard of teaching they receive and their own determination to succeed. Teachers have a high degree of subject knowledge and an expert understanding of the requirements of the examinations, particularly in the language and literature course. They also get to know their students very well and prepare and deliver lessons which challenge the more able but are accessible to all. In a lesson on the first story in Joyce's *Dubliners*, extremely high levels of support were given before the text was tackled, including modelling a detailed response to the opening paragraph. From the very start of the courses, teachers give all students confidence in their ability to tackle the subject, encouraging them to develop and express a personal response to literature through their own reading. A most positive atmosphere is created, enabling less confident students to present their ideas in front of others, such as in a practical criticism lesson on Ted Hughes. Students' understanding is also aided by the frequent use of active learning approaches. A Year 12 lesson exploring the nature of linguistic features in

conversation made very good use of drama to explore the issues. Teachers supply very well-chosen support materials at all stages of the course to ensure that students can achieve. In written work, specific learning outcomes are planned for skilfully, with a strong emphasis on important assessment objectives.

Leadership and management

160. Growing numbers of students are choosing to study the subject and retention rates are good. All teachers have a shared commitment to the students, who all express their great appreciation for the clarity of information provided for them, both before and during the course. They are unanimous in their appreciation of the time and advice offered to them. The department monitors students' achievements and provides appropriate advice about how to improve and succeed. Having two teachers working for the examination board has helped to raise standards. Students appreciate the thorough grounding they receive lower down the school, which they feel prepares them very well for the complexities of A-level English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

161. Overall, the standard of English language and literacy skills across the sixth form are very good. When students join the sixth form, their literacy skills are above average. They therefore make good progress in this area relative to their previous attainment. Teachers know their students very well and are able to give good advice to individuals on how to improve their writing.

French

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results from small groups have been broadly above average
- Teaching is consistently good and students learn well
- Students' learning skills and their knowledge of grammar are rigorously developed
- Recruitment to courses has been low, though it has improved this year

Commentary

Examination results

162. Entries at GCE A-level over the past three years have been too small for valid statistical comparison. However, all candidates in 2003, of whom the majority were girls, achieved pass grades, mostly at higher levels. Girls performed better than boys.

Standards and achievement

163. Year 13 students gave well-researched short presentations on famous French historical and cultural figures, then worked independently planning coursework assignments. Examples of past coursework seen were of high quality. Year 12 students, who entered with good GCSE

grades, are achieving above GCSE level. Interesting and varied work on aspects of family life included spoken presentations, listening work in the language laboratory and reading challenging texts.

Teaching and learning

164. Lessons, which are taught in French, are planned for variety, including opportunities for students to work independently and in collaboration. There is an appropriate emphasis on grammatical accuracy and students receive very good guidance on examination techniques. As a result of the good teaching, students learn well and make good progress. Their work is diligently assessed. They have fewer opportunities to learn through ICT than in other languages. Nevertheless, they have positive attitudes to the course and apply themselves well.

Leadership and management

165. Courses are well planned, though there is heavier reliance on published course-books than in other languages. Students are encouraged to go on work experience in France and have visited Paris jointly with the art department. Recruitment in the current Year 12 has been better than in recent years, but overall numbers studying French have been disappointingly low in a specialist language college. Many more girls than boys study French. Strategies to improve uptake in general, and among boys in particular, have not been effective. The last report noted low entries for A-level French, though all students achieved pass grades. The picture has changed little, but the quality and consistency of teaching have improved.

Spanish

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	n/a

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very stimulating and teachers model the use of language very well
- Students are making very good progress and achieving above-average standards
- Students enjoy the course, notably its cultural elements
- Examination results from small groups have been broadly average, though few students have achieved the highest grades
- Recruitment for the course has been low, particularly among boys

Commentary

Examination results

166. Entries at GCE A-level have been too small for valid statistical comparison. Over the past three years, few students have achieved the highest grades and the overall average has been grade C. The small number of boys taking Spanish has performed similarly to girls.

Standards and achievement

167. The school's value-added system shows students to have achieved above expectations. Indications from the current Year 13 are that the single candidate should perform above average. Students in Year 12 are already performing significantly above the level of GCSE, in which they achieved good results. They use their language skills effectively in combination, developing their knowledge and understanding of topics such as conflict between parents and children. They write well on a range of topics.

Teaching and learning

168. Teachers provided lively and stimulating input, with excellent modelling of Spanish. They promote very good learning and progress through the variety of tasks and very good feedback to students, which include reinforcement of new learning. In Year 12 in particular, a good focus on grammar helped underpin students' progress in expressing themselves. Written work is diligently marked, giving students clear guidelines as to how to improve. Teachers use laptop computers and interactive whiteboards effectively and up-to-date textbooks provide a solid base for learning. Year 12 students expressed satisfaction with the course, especially its focus on Spanish culture and on Spanish as a world language. All intend to proceed to the full A-level examination.

Leadership and management

169. There is no head of Spanish but the course is well-organised and planned. Monitoring and professional development have contributed strongly to recent improvements in the quality of teaching. This looks likely to improve results. Students have opportunities for work experience and study visits. The key issue for the subject is recruitment, particularly of boys. This has improved in the current Year 12, but needs to be sustained in a specialist language college. The department has the capacity to maintain its improvement. Spanish in the sixth form was not seen at the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

In mathematics, students study a combination of pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics. Key skills are taught for students of subjects other than mathematics and a lesson was sampled on this course. In the lesson seen in Year 13, the teacher used ICT well to support statistical analysis. Students made satisfactory progress in developing their skills and enhancing their analysis and evaluation of complex data.

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are able to tackle some complex work and can apply theory to practice well
- Standards reached in AS-level encourage students to continue the course to A-level
- Teaching is good and the positive relationships between teachers and students enable students to work well in an atmosphere of shared learning

- Currently, students do not have enough access to ICT

Commentary

Examination results

170. Results in 2003 were in line with the national average. Attainment in the 2004 examination was higher than the previous year.

Standards and achievement

171. Students attain standards above those normally seen in the sixth form, with relatively few students working at below average standards. For example, in a Year 12 mechanics lesson, all students were confidently applying their knowledge of acceleration equations to complex vector problems at this early stage of their course.

Teaching and learning

172. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they use this well, for example in using mathematical language precisely to establish and reinforce concepts. In a Year 13 lesson, the teacher's skilful use of reflective questioning enabled students to develop their own solutions to equations using recurrence relations with minimal input from their teacher. In a statistics lesson, the teacher effectively changed the pace of input so that, as students gained deeper understanding, they were expected to take the initiative in finding a solution to a problem.
173. Teachers take responsibility for preparing their own materials and do not rely on textbooks. This is leading to tasks better matched to the students' needs and interests. During the inspection they were not able to support learning with the use ICT but students used their own graphic calculators well to illustrate the graphs of a range of equations. Teachers have very good relationships with their students so that learning is a shared activity within the whole group. The numbers in the groups enable teachers to use a seminar-style approach to teaching so that new ideas are worked out together. Teachers' use of questioning is very good and ensures that all students are included, contributing to their own learning and that of the whole group. Students respond well and have very positive attitudes to their work. They question confidently if there is something which they do not understand. Time is used well in lessons for activities which require discussion and teacher explanation, leaving time beyond lessons for students to consolidate and practice what they have been learning about in class. Students are happy and comfortable with their courses and believe that they are being enabled to achieve well.

Leadership and management

174. Teachers work collaboratively to share information and develop their teaching approaches. Assessment procedures are effective so that students know how well they are doing and this contributes to the progress they make. Students studying mathematics have access to a wide mathematical curriculum and many go on to study mathematically related courses at university. There is a good level of retention between AS and A2-level courses. No specific sixth form issues were identified for improvement in the last inspection. Since that time the curriculum is more restricted as further mathematics is no longer offered. Results have been maintained.

Mathematics across the curriculum

175. Students in the sixth form have good mathematical skills which they use effectively in a variety of situations in other subjects. Students are confident in the way that they apply their understanding of mathematics. This has a positive impact on the school's success in

Key Skills tests. Where students have more limited mathematical skills at GCSE, planning in other subjects provides structure and practice so that they are able to deal with the mathematical demands. For example, in chemistry, students are given opportunities to practise ratio and proportion applications before they are expected to deal with the subject content confidently. In physics, students who have special educational needs cope well with calculating various forms of average. Geography students have a good command of the statistical background necessary for the subject.

SCIENCE

In science, the focus was on biology and chemistry, but human biology, geology and physics were also sampled. In human biology in Year 12, excellent teaching promoted excellent learning and very high achievement. Students used an ICT presentation on the chemical structures of DNA to enhance their understanding of a complex topic. They worked with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The Year 13 geology lesson seen did not take place in the laboratory, so opportunities for investigative work were more limited than normal. However, the lesson was very good, because it provided a very effective opportunity for students to work together to reinforce and extend their previous learning about identifying different rock types. In the physics lesson seen, students were doing an end-of-module test, which they approached in an appropriately committed manner.

Biology

Provision in biology is good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in students learning and achieving well
- Good leadership is placing an emphasis upon raising standards
- Teaching and learning styles are being broadened but the range is too narrow
- Assessment practices have been improved significantly

Commentary

Examination results

176. Results in 2003 were above the national average and broadly in line with expectations based upon students' prior attainment. Results in 2004 fell, affected by staffing issues which have now been resolved.

Standards and achievement

177. Students in Year 13 have a very good grasp of some complex theories and processes, for example in terms of students understanding of glycolysis, the Krebs cycle and the biochemistry of carbohydrates and proteins. As a result of good teaching, students make good progress and achieve well.

Teaching and learning

178. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and explanations are clear, with regular questioning to check students' understanding. Lessons are well-structured and involve a variety of activities. In the best lessons teachers have adopted strategies from the National Strategy for Science and lessons have a clear three-part structure. There is an increasing range of teaching approaches including demonstrations, modelling, practical work, use of past questions, extended coursework and some research, student presentations and model making. ICT was used well in one lesson where aspects of the structure of the cell membrane were modelled very clearly. Generally, however, there is insufficient use of ICT by students as a result of a lack of resources. There is not enough emphasis upon independent work and problem solving approaches. In some lessons basic GCSE work is covered when students could be set this as preparatory work for the lesson. Students respond well to the learning opportunities provided. They enjoy the subject and feel they are making good progress. Regular short quizzes and tests have been introduced, the tests being marked on the examination scale and these are providing very good consolidation of knowledge. Work is marked regularly with a grade and comments on how to improve. The students find this feedback helpful.

Leadership and management

179. Leadership is having a positive impact upon standards and achievement. Test marks are now kept on a database and students' progress and attainment is monitored well to identify potential problems. Curriculum time for biology has been increased and more emphasis is to be placed on preparation for synoptic questions in the final examination. Students have been provided with module summaries in terms of objectives. Teaching, learning and achievement have improved since the last inspection. Management is satisfactory. Schemes of work have been produced but are not yet sufficiently detailed to share the most effective practices between teachers. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and development planning, are too informal.

Chemistry

Provision for chemistry is satisfactory.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Satisfactory
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory

Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory
-----------------------------------	--------------

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students make satisfactory progress and gain an A-level pass
- Teachers are well qualified and match learning well to A-level examination requirements
- Students have a positive attitude to their work and appreciate the support provided by their teachers
- In larger Year 12 classes, work is not always matched to the full range of student needs
- Learning objectives in some practical sessions are not always specific

Commentary

Examination results

180. A-level results were average in 2003. Results rose in 2004, with students doing better than had been predicted on the basis of their attainment at the start of Year 12.

Standards and achievement

181. The course attracts students with a range of abilities so that standards on entry to the course are broadly average. Students achieve satisfactorily over the two year course, but make better progress in the smaller Year 13 group than in Year 12. Students learn and recall facts well, but some Year 12 students find problem solving more challenging.

Teaching and learning

182. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to ensure that students understand examination requirements. This was evident in a Year 13 lesson when the topic on polymer chemistry was reviewed and the examination marking scheme was clearly explained. Students feel well-supported by staff and find them readily available. In a Year 13 lesson the teacher gave advice as the group were organised to work collaboratively in pairs and as a group. The use of one student as a data manager was novel and interesting. Larger groups need more careful organisation and managing. This was evident in a Year 12 practical session where students performed a titration. Students were not organised to use the large laboratory well, and a method of recording the skill needs of each student had not been adequately devised.

Leadership and management

183. Recent changes in management have not yet had time to embed. However there is a clear vision for the department to improve with an appropriate focus on the needs of Year 12. The day to day management of the department is satisfactory, although the limited availability of ICT resources affects curriculum planning. The small size of the A-level laboratory equipped with a fixed fume cupboard restricts its use for large groups. Since the last inspection standards have risen and numbers in Year 12 increased.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) course.

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

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Excellent
Teaching and Learning	Excellent
Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent

Improvement since last inspection	Very good
-----------------------------------	-----------

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are well above average and consistently improving
- Students achieve highly in this subject because of the excellent teaching using the modern technology to its full potential
- Students gain high levels of technical competence in the use of software, due to the excellent demonstrations and the very good guidance given in lessons
- Some coursework is excessive and students are not evaluating the development of their ideas sufficiently to their specifications
- Students do not as yet benefit from strong vocational links with commercial users of ICT as part of the taught course

Commentary

Examination results

184. Results in 2003 were well above average. Many students did far better than their predicted grades in this subject. Boys did significantly better in ICT than in their other subjects. Results showed further improvement in 2004. Over the last three years the subject has consistently maintained results that are well above average. The course has excellent completion rates.

Standards and achievement

185. Students start the course with average standards. Although not all students study the subject in Year 11, they progress in the Year 12 lessons to well above average and often very high standards because of the excellent teaching and very good attitudes towards learning. Achievement in lessons is very high because of the excellent technically-correct demonstrations of software and procedures. Students get to know the required standards because the teachers make references in lessons to what is expected for the highest grades.
186. In Year 13 students are able to build web site pages using commercial software and set up mechanisms to enable potential clients to send e-mail responses via internet forms. The sample of course-work seen shows that standards are well above average. Students are given opportunities to work together to design an advanced relational database for a video shop. The use of e-learning materials allows students to gain access to their work and software at home. As a result, many students find the e-learning materials very useful and exceed their expectations.

Teaching and learning

187. There is a good induction process to the course for students joining from other schools. Initially some Year 12 students do not find the work any more challenging than GCSE, but quantity, quality, and standards are much higher. The excellent subject knowledge of teachers combined with slick demonstrations using the full potential of the technology ensures that students get excellent tuition. In Year 12, good opportunities for group work and discussion draw on wider experiences of culture to support problem solving when working on projects. Numeracy and literacy are applied well in the units on databases and spreadsheet modelling.
188. In Year 13 the teaching is brisk, and objectives are clearly shared with students using power point to give added clarity. Excellent starter activities using on-line tests of technical terms have been developed. The very good planning ensures that students are forced to draw upon previous experiences and this reinforces learning. The very good record keeping and monitoring of students ensures that shared teaching is well-planned and students have

an excellent understanding of what needs to be done for each unit of work. Some coursework has excessive documentation that does not add to the overall grading. The students' coursework also shows that on-going evaluative thinking is not linked sufficiently to the technical specification.

Leadership and management

189. The leadership has fully embraced the benefits that modern technology can bring to learning. This has resulted in excellent opportunities for students though the use of e-learning materials. The role models present in the department are very professional and bring experience of industry and commerce to the course. As yet the department is not using visits and professionals from ICT organisations in the community as part of the taught programme, to ensure that all students have a strong vocational background to their studies. Since the last inspection standards and teaching have improved considerably.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

190. The overall competence of students using ICT is good. The sixth-form has a new ICT resource study area, but because of the increase in size of the sixth-form the school lacks sufficient computers overall and inadequate numbers for the large sixth form. The use of ICT is very good in PE where students confidently use equipment to analyse movement and produce multimedia presentations. Students studying DT make very good use of computer-aided manufacturing. There is good competent use of ICT in some modern foreign languages where students access relevant internet learning resources. Music, mathematics and RE suffer from a lack of appropriate ICT resources, and so students do not develop or apply the use of ICT in these subjects as expected.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on geography, history and psychology, but sociology and philosophy and ethics were also sampled. In a Year 12 sociology lesson, students, who were new to the subject, achieved well because of good teaching. They enjoyed learning about various perspectives on society such as feminism. The lack of a subject leader is inhibiting the development of the subject. In the Year 13 philosophy and ethics lesson seen, the teaching approach was tutorial as a small group discussed life after death. Effective teaching ensured good focus on examination requirements, whilst promoting students' personal development. High levels of motivation among students, combined with appropriate teaching strategies, ensured high levels of achievement and above-average standards.

Geography

Provision in geography is very good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Students succeed very well because of very capable teaching
- The very positive attitudes of students contribute strongly to their own achievement

Commentary

Examination Results

191. A-level results were well above average in 2003. Students' results were similar to those they achieved in their other subjects. The 2004 results show a lower proportion of students gaining A or B grades. However, the AS results of current Year 13 students strongly indicate that they are on target to secure final A-level results that match those of 2003.

Standards and achievement

192. Standards on entry to the course are average. The students who have recently entered Year 13 are achieving very well and are already working at levels that are above average. Many are indicating that they are capable of reaching well above average standards by the end of the course. The great majority show extensive knowledge of geographical processes and issues and understanding of how these relate to each other. This is shown for example, in work in which the human and physical causes and consequences of global warming are considered and measures for alleviating the effects are analysed.

Teaching and learning

193. Teaching places a strong emphasis on encouraging students to become independent learners and to work collaboratively to share tasks and feed back what they find out. This usually works very successfully, with students responding very well to the challenges that they are set, although, on a small number of occasions, they are less confident in discussing their ideas in small groups. The subject knowledge of teachers has considerable impact in helping students to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding and to ensure that this is used effectively to succeed in the examination. For example, teachers provide strong guidance on the precise use of specialist terminology and on how to identify the most geographically relevant questions when studying a topic. Students benefit from access to a very good range of resources and so their skills in using evidence are strongly enhanced. In a discussion, students were very appreciative of the opportunities that they have to undertake research, form opinions and discuss their findings, although they would like more independence in choosing and investigating their focuses for fieldwork.

Leadership and management

194. Following a very recent change, leadership and management are characterised by a balanced awareness of existing strengths and areas that will benefit from improvement. This is shown for example in a very objective and comprehensive review of the 2004 examination results. The very good achievement and teaching and learning that were identified by the last inspection have been maintained.

History

Provision in history is very good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because students benefit from the dynamic leadership and expert knowledge of their teachers in very well structured courses
- Students show a very mature approach to history and are able to work very well both independently and collaboratively
- The very challenging approach to the subject does not always take into account the less developed organisational skills of some students

Commentary

Examination results

195. Examination results in 2003 at A-level were very high. Provisional results in 2004 show that these high levels have been maintained.

Standards and achievement

196. Current standards in Years 12 and 13 are very high and achievement is very good. Students make very good progress in Year 12 using a complex range of historical information to analyse and evaluate historical situations and source materials. Their ability to argue the relative contribution made by Lloyd George to the decline of the Liberal Coalition showed a maturity and confidence in their ability to select appropriately from a wide range of source materials. Students' willingness to read widely and think critically develops considerably as they progress from Year 12 to Year 13, as is evident from their extended written answers.

Teaching and learning

197. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and an excellent rapport with students which they use to bring the subject alive. The very well-structured courses involve and challenge students, through the very probing questions and mature discussions made possible by the high levels of advanced preparation of both students and teachers. The students' confidence is developed and boosted by the demands made upon them. A very successful PowerPoint presentation on Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination collaboratively prepared and delivered to the class by three students, was followed by the teacher skilfully drawing out the central issues and ensuring everyone's complete understanding. Students testify to the pleasure they get from history as they are helped to interpret, analyse and evaluate in a supportive environment. Their work is very well-marked and they are always aware of their ability and what they need to do to improve. Their quality of writing clearly improves as the course progresses. The use of varied learning styles clearly helps students to make effective notes and understand the complexity of the subject but a few of the students do not get enough guidance in organising the wealth of information at their disposal.

Leadership and management

198. The department benefits from a high profile as a result of the very good leadership which provides a vision of history as being intensely relevant to everyone's life, and one to which the students subscribe. Students take this view out to the community where some have written magazine articles and even won national awards for their views. There is also a determination in the department to further improve standards by a constant reviewing of the students and their courses and analysing the most appropriate teaching methods and resources. Teachers work together extremely well, consulting and sharing best practice. The very good use of interactive whiteboards encourages students' active participation in the lessons.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is very good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are well above the national average
- Students of all abilities make very good progress in relation to their capabilities
- Teaching is very good overall and students are very committed learners
- The leadership the department is determined to maintain high standards whilst giving all students an opportunity to study the subject

Commentary

Examination results

199. A-level results in 2003 were well above the national average with 55 percent of the students entered gained A or B grades, compared with 38 percent nationally. The provisional results for 2004 show improvement. The relatively small number of boys, compared to girls, taking psychology makes it unsafe to draw conclusions about their respective performance. Some students follow the one-year GCSE psychology course on entry to the sixth form. Their results were also well above the national average.

Standards and achievement

200. Students rapidly develop key skills of evidence and data analysis, critical evaluation, problem solving in practical investigations, and rational explanation using psychological terminology. A group of Year 13 students planning their own investigation decided to follow a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. They explained their choice by saying that otherwise it would be too difficult to control all the variables. This demonstrated their very good understanding of the psychological issues involved. Only a short time after beginning the course, students accurately used terms such as ocular convergence and monocular depth-cues in infants, in presenting their case in the nature versus nurture debate. Students consistently exceed their predicted grades, making the department one of the most successful in the school in terms of adding value.

Teaching and learning

201. Teaching is almost always good or very good and sometimes it is excellent. The best teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge, dynamic presentation which captures students' interest, very good classroom strategies which give students experience of learning in different ways, excellent use of questioning and very helpful marking of student work ensures they all know what to do to improve. In one lesson the teacher was very perceptive in understanding what was preventing a student gaining understanding. Subtle re-phrasing of the question, so that it related to the student's own experiences, shaped the student's thinking so that he soon grasped the key psychological concept involved. Students are consistent in the positive view they have of the psychology provision. They respond enthusiastically to the teaching, often making significant

contributions to lessons by bringing in knowledge they have gained from their own reading of research. They respect each other's views and work consistently hard during lessons.

Leadership and management

202. The leadership has high aspirations for student achievement in psychology. It is very committed to the principle that psychology is of value to all students. It inspires and motivates, providing a good model for staff and students. Planning to develop provision further is excellent, being based on careful analysis of data. There is excellent monitoring of students' progress so that underachievement is addressed. Monitoring of provision takes place but the programme of classroom observation is not sufficiently extensive to ensure consistency. The results in this increasingly popular subject have improved and a high performing department has developed further.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology Product Design was sampled in Year 13. The teacher provided good guidance on examination technique and criteria, which enabled students to improve their design portfolios. Standards were average and achievement was satisfactory, despite a lack of creativity in students' work. Girls' work was somewhat better than that of boys.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on media studies, but art, music and performing arts were sampled. In an art lesson in Year 13, students looked at critical analysis and responses to art. Teaching and learning were satisfactory, although there were too few opportunities to engage and involve the whole group in response to short individual presentations. Standards were satisfactory and achievement was satisfactory. In another lesson, with a mixed group of Years 11, 12 and 13, very effective, lively teaching in a progress review lesson led to very good learning and achievement. Students used a range of learning styles, relating their own work to that of artists. In the music lesson in Year 13, students followed the score of a Webern quartet. Good teaching inspired students to work confidently on their own composition. In a performing arts lesson in Year 12, very good teaching led to performances which were well above average. The work was very well-structured and built on students' very good prior learning. Students demonstrated their very good understanding of theory, practice and dramatic technique.

Media studies

Provision in media studies is very good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have a good grasp of the subject's concepts terminology
- All students successfully completed the course in 2003 and 2004
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to extend and challenge students.
- Assessment data is used very well to monitor progress
- The monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped

Commentary

Examination results

203. The AVCE media examination results in 2003 were well above average. All students who took the examination achieved a pass grade and the number achieving the highest grades was above expectations. Given the starting point of the students this showed very good achievement. Provisional results for 2004 suggest a decline. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

204. In discussion and writing, students demonstrate a good understanding of media concepts and terminology. In a very good lesson on technical, aesthetic and digital skills in photography, students talked confidently and lucidly about individual photographs - exploring the roles of light, angle and perspective. Specialist input from a photographer enabled students to become increasingly analytical and reflective and to make connections between their own work and that of working professionals. Written coursework is of high quality with the chosen topics being carefully matched to assessment criteria. It is well presented demonstrating good ICT skills and standards of literacy.

Teaching and learning

205. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and expertise and enjoy good relationships with students. The balance of activity within lessons is good with students working both independently and collaboratively. Opportunities are provided for reflection, but are not always effective because some teaching is too didactic with students being given the answers before having the opportunity to discuss the issues themselves. Systems for monitoring and reviewing individual students' progress are very good. Target grades and assessment data are effectively integrated into the teaching with students being very clear about how to improve. Teachers cater effectively for the range of ability within each class. The course is a popular choice in the sixth form and all students who start the course complete it. Personal development is good, with students considering the wider societal roles of media industries and media marketing. Notes are kept thoughtfully and with care, although girls display better levels of personal organisation than boys.

Leadership and management

206. The committed head of department has a clear view of how the subject should develop and a good overview of each module. The improvement plan is inadequate, however, as it lacks precise success criteria and is not costed. Systems for monitoring individual teacher's performance are also underdeveloped. The department is well organised and efficient with each module of work having good support materials. Schemes of work are detailed and appropriate, although not particularly well organised. Lesson plans have clear aims and objectives. Staffing is good and accommodation satisfactory although there is a need for greater soundproofing between areas. The department makes very good use of its limited ICT facilities. Since the last inspection results have remained high, the subject has increased in popularity and the high quality of teaching and learning has been sustained.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on leisure and recreation and physical education.

Leisure and recreation

Provision in leisure and recreation is good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	n/a

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good or very good
- Students respond well to active, investigation-based approaches to learning
- The subject is very well led and managed
- There is clear vision for future development
- The subject does not have its own accommodation
- Severe constraints on its budget are impeding the subject's development

Commentary

Examination results

207. The first group of students will be examined in 2005. The results of modules already taken are within the grade range B to D. The evidence of the inspection and students' current work point to above average standards.

Standards and achievement

208. In the lesson seen, students produced good work investigating leisure organisations and their response to customers' needs at national and local levels. Students in Year 12 began the course with generally modest GCSE results. They have made a sound start and are achieving average standards. They undertake research-based work effectively and make average progress.

Teaching and learning

209. Teaching is dynamic and engaging. Lessons are well-planned with clear objectives and an emphasis on involving students in active, research-based learning. Teachers use questioning well to develop students' understanding and provide subtle structuring to help them consolidate their learning. Relationships are notably good and, as a result, students learn well in a pleasant and motivating atmosphere. Students know the levels they are attaining and they are given clear guidelines as to how to improve. Students enjoy the course and like the variety, the extensive use of ICT and the level of independent study they can pursue. They are enthusiastic and committed in lessons.

Leadership and management

210. Documentation has been updated and the new leadership has clear vision and ambition for the future development of the subject. Development planning focuses on appropriate and achievable goals. Schemes of work, which are shared with students, give concise overviews of the programme of study. There is currently no permanent teaching base for the subject. This is an impediment to its development as resources cannot be stored centrally and there is little opportunity for displays which could enrich learning. The department has insufficient funding and has had to rely on donations of new resources. These factors limit how well students achieve. Nevertheless, this is a subject which shows strong potential and capacity to grow.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- The subject is very well-led and students are very well supported and guided
- The course is very well-structured and teaching is very good so students learn very quickly
- Students' attitudes are very good and these assists their learning and achievement
- Excellent ICT support enables students to extend their experience and learning

Commentary

Examination results

211. In 2003 results were well above average and an improvement on the 2002 results which were above average. In 2004 results improved. More boys than girls are entered on the course.

Standards and achievement

212. Standards in Year 13 are well above average and students here and in Year 12 achieve very well when results at GCSE are taken into account. Early in Year 12, students can define technical terms linked with fitness and compile suitable programmes for fitness of different groups of people. They are aware of important factors to take into consideration such as age and medical conditions. By Year 13, students are confident in the history of the Olympics and the political and fitness strategies

of different nations. They are aware of the psychology which may affect individual performance, and well-informed discussions on the impact this may have on well-known sportsmen demonstrate their confidence in their learning. Students early in Year 13 are able to see how class, opportunity and festivals influenced the early opportunities for sport and how working class teams were often linked to free time, industry and churches; they are beginning to relate this very well to modern day sport. Students are competent at organising essays and understand how to plan and research. They can construct and analyse graphs well, and collect data and relate theory and practical work. Homework is set regularly and areas for improvement are usually identified. The standard achieved by talented team players is very high. They compete at local, regional and national level in a variety of sports and are encouraged to join clubs.

Teaching and learning

213. Rapid pace and a variety of activities ensure that much is achieved in lessons. An atmosphere of cooperative, productive joint enterprise in learning is created. Teachers have very good personal expertise in ICT and very competent knowledge of the subject, enabling them to challenge students rigorously. In a Year 13 lesson, students built up a thorough understanding of how to answer examination questions on a topic. They researched the popularity of certain areas of examination questioning and homed in on essential features towards a model answer which was then very effectively compared to the examination board's model answers. In another Year 13 lesson, students delivered PowerPoint presentations in a demonstration of shared learning. This resulted in excellent interchange of ideas and confident discussion with each group contributing to the whole group's learning. Demanding questioning and discussion is a feature of most lessons. Students are very positive about the course. They enjoy learning to understand the impact of different topic areas on the whole subject, and are aware of recent topical issues.

Leadership and management

214. A very good team of teachers, focussed on analysis, drives improvement in examination technique. Teachers attend courses regularly to help to keep the department and students up to date. There are good resources in the library and additional materials in the department and excellent ICT support complement these very well. Very good systems of monitoring students' progress have developed enabling teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This guides teaching and enables teachers to advise students very well.
215. Since the previous inspection A-level has been introduced and results have been consistently above average. The use of ICT on the course is significantly improving students' achievement and assisting analysis of skills and techniques.

BUSINESS

Business studies and economics were sampled. In business studies, Year 13, students investigated the cause and effect of cash flow problems. The teachers' very good subject knowledge steered their discussion effectively and they made good progress, despite some lack of pace in learning. In a Year 13 economics lesson, students learned to identify and explain different forms of price discrimination. The lesson was very good, because enthusiastic, knowledgeable teaching and the students' very positive response secured very good achievement in increasing the depth of understanding of the topic.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

The general studies course was sampled. In one lesson, a visiting speaker addressed the whole of Year 12 as part of the community and culture topic. Students were given a challenging talk on world poverty with particular reference to northern Uganda, where the school has been involved as part of its community outreach programme. Students listened attentively, but had no opportunity to engage with the speaker. In a Year 13 lesson on Friends of the Earth, involving a speaker from a local group, students' learning and the standards achieved were satisfactory. The contribution of both teacher and visitor were

good as they worked hard to engage the students with challenging ideas on environmental issues and the role of pressure groups.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	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	2
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		3
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	2	3
How well the curriculum meets students needs	3	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	1
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	5
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	3

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

