

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CANON SLADE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105267

Headteacher: The Revd Dr P W Shepherd

Lead inspector: Mrs M Thompson

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 268765

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1721
School address:	Bradshaw Brow Bolton Lancashire
Postcode:	BL2 3BP
Telephone number:	01204 333343
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B G Finney
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> February 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Canon Slade Church of England School is a large, mixed, voluntary aided 11-18 comprehensive school, attended by 1721 pupils and students. It attained Specialist Performing Arts College status in 2003. The school has been heavily over-subscribed in recent years. The major criterion for admission is regular Christian worship for parents and children for a considerable period prior to entry. Pupils currently attending the school represent the whole ability range. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well above average. The large traditional sixth form is attended by students from Canon Slade School, and by a number of students who have previously attended other schools. Admission is on the basis of success in examinations.

In all years except Years 8 and 13, there are more girls than boys. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low and the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is also low. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with a statement.

The school has received a variety of awards including Artsmark Gold, Investors in People, Sportsmark, Careers Education Quality, and Excellence in Mentoring Award. Pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and some sixth form students take part in community service, a primary school teaching scheme and Young Enterprise.

The school has a large number of major partners including five local schools who undertake research and development through the Leading Edge programme, and a partnership involving four primary schools and one secondary school in performing arts. On a regional level, the school works with the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth based at the University of Warwick, with the University of the First Age and with the 135 churches in the greater Bolton area. It is also a training school for initial teacher training in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University and Matthew Moss School (Rochdale).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2626	Mrs M Thompson	Lead inspector	
13448	Mrs D Lloyd	Lay inspector	
30941	Mr K Brammer	Team inspector	English, Drama
2919	Dr P Armitage	Team inspector	Mathematics
20729	Mr J Berry	Team inspector	Science
30901	Mrs S Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design, Citizenship
7084	Mr J Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology
12118	Mr A Paver	Team inspector	Geography
8873	Ms C Evers	Team inspector	History
33636	Mr R Snaith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
19026	Mr B Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
11676	Mr G Thomas	Team inspector	Music
31879	Mr J Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education
10275	Mr J Cosgrove	Team inspector	History
10013	Mr T Wheatley	Team inspector	Science
22906	Mr B Hodgson	Team inspector	Physical education
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Canon Slade School** is a very good school, and **provides a very effective education for its pupils**. Academic standards are well above average throughout the school and pupils achieve very well as a result of very good teaching. The headteacher's leadership is very good, and the school is led with clear vision and Christian purpose, which are evident in all aspects of its work. The introduction of Performing Arts College status has provided a wide range of opportunities for the school community. The school provides very good value for money

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well as a result of very good teaching, except in information communication technology (ICT) in Year 11 and Year 12 where achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good and sustain very good learning.
- The headteacher's vision, based on strong and explicit Christian values, and high aspirations, promotes a rigorous sense of purpose for the school.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and supports pupils' excellent personal development.
- Financial management is excellent and governance is very good.
- The school's very good links with parents, other schools, colleges and the community enhance the quality of pupils' learning experiences.
- Accommodation for mathematics and for the sixth form is unsatisfactory.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen at all stages, faster than the national trend in Years 7 to 9. Strengths in teaching and in the quality of support and guidance have been maintained. Many pupils experience success in sports and the arts. The school takes a leading role locally and regionally in developmental work. Specific issues raised during the last inspection, such as the use of cross-curricular ICT and time for art and music in Years 7 to 9, have been successfully addressed, although the quality of marking remains uneven.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 and 2004 were well above average. Results are much better than those gained by pupils with similar levels of attainment on entry to the school. Standards of work are well above national expectations and pupils' achievement is good. In 2003 and 2004, the GCSE examinations results were well above average. Although there are not national data for 2004, pupils performed very well in relation to pupils from similar schools in 2003. Results have improved in line with those found nationally in Years 10 and 11. By Year 11, standards are well above the national expectation and achievement is very good. However, in ICT, standards are below the level expected in Year 11 and achievement is unsatisfactory, because the course followed is unsuitable for the pupils. This has been changed in Year 10. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. By Year 13, standards are well above average and students achieve very well. Students concentrate, perform very well, and show a very high level of

commitment. Students do not achieve as well as they should in ICT A-level because the great majority of them have not previously followed a GCSE course and they are not prepared sufficiently well.

**Pupils' personal development is very good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.** They have a well-developed sense of responsibility as a result of the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is consistently very good. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good. Pupils' enjoyment of, and active participation in, all aspects of school life and their mature attitudes promote very good achievement.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good. Teaching is very good throughout the school.** Teachers' command of their subjects is a strength, and planning is very good. Most pupils are interested, work hard and are keen to do well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 to 11. It is not always accurate and is used inconsistently to guide planning. Targets set for pupils are not always suitable and pupils do not always know how well they are doing.

The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities that caters well for the needs of the majority of pupils and is appropriate for a Performing Arts College and a denominational school. The school does not, however, offer a suitable range of vocational courses for the small number of pupils for whom they would be appropriate. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Opportunities for participation in sport and the arts are excellent and opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside the school day, are very good. Accommodation for mathematics and for the sixth form is unsatisfactory.

The quality of advice, support and guidance is good and contributes significantly to pupils' academic gains and personal development. There are very good systems for involving pupils in the work and development of the school. The school is well regarded in the local community and has been over-subscribed for a number of years. Links with parents and the local community are very good, and enrich pupils' learning. Links with other schools and educational institutions are very good. Much of the work is innovative and brings mutual benefits.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher is very good: his clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations are excellent. He is supported well by other key staff and a very committed, knowledgeable and effective governing body. Management is good and financial management to achieve priorities is excellent.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the standards of education provided, particularly the examination results, school discipline and security. They feel the school develops moral values well. Pupils believe the school develops their potential. Parents think the school deals with truancy well and they value the school's facilities. Parents and pupils have some misgivings about how successfully bullying is dealt with, although it is generally dealt with effectively.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school needs to do are:

- Ensure that assessment and marking are accurate and consistent, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and that academic targets are refined so that they are appropriate for pupils and used well;



- Ensure all subjects make consistently good use of data;
- Continue to improve the planning of provision for ICT in Years 10 and 11 so that the courses match pupils' needs more effectively;
- Improve the accommodation for mathematics and for the sixth form.

## SIXTH FORM AT CANON SLADE

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective sixth form that gives very good value for money.** About 60 per cent of students stay on into the sixth form and small numbers come from several other schools. The quality of teaching and students' learning is very good and students achieve very well. They work at levels that are well above course expectations and achieve examination results that are also well above the national average. The curriculum is very good, with a very wide range of academic courses but very few vocational courses. The school provides careful guidance about courses available in other colleges for pupils who leave at the end of Year 11. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall and restricts the courses the school can offer.

#### The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve very well overall as a result of their very good attitudes to work and very good teaching.
- Students' achievement on the ICT course is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership of the sixth form is very good, with clear direction for improvement.
- The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent leading to students developing into mature, confident young adults within a strongly Christian ethos.
- The quality of career and higher education guidance and support for students is good, though target setting is not consistently challenging.
- The range of AS and A-level courses is very wide, though there are too few vocational courses.
- The accommodation in the sixth form centre is unsatisfactory.

### 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	<b>Very good in English literature.</b> Standards are well above the national average. Students achieve very well because of very good teaching and their own maturity, commitment and enthusiasm. <b>Very good in German.</b> Students achieve very well and examination results are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good and students have excellent attitudes to work and show a high level of motivation.
Mathematics	<b>Very good in mathematics.</b> Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are very good and teachers' subject knowledge is very good. Students' use of ICT is satisfactory and unsatisfactory accommodation erodes the overall quality of work
Science	<b>Good in biology.</b> Standards are above average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this promotes good learning.
Information and communication technology	<b>Unsatisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT).</b> Standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory due to insufficient preparation of students with no prior experience of GCSE ICT. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Humanities	<p><b>Very good in history.</b> Standards are well above average and students achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good. Students are highly motivated and this contributes significantly to their success. ICT is not used enough and accommodation is unsatisfactory when the sixth form centre is used.</p> <p><b>Very good in geography.</b> Standards are very high and students achieve very well due to very good teaching and learning. Leadership and management are very good though the extensive assessment information available is not used effectively to set targets for further improvement.</p>
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<p><b>Excellent in product design.</b> Students' achievement is excellent and they reach very high standards of work. Teaching and learning are very good and occasionally excellent. The subject is very well led and managed.</p>
Visual and performing arts and media	<p><b>Good in art and design.</b> Teaching is very good and the quality of support for students is very good. Students have very good attitudes which play an important part in their good achievement. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and assessment information is not used enough to aid planning.</p> <p><b>Very good in performing arts.</b> The course attracts a wide ability range of students, many aiming for a career in performing arts. Overall standards are broadly average but students achieve well. Teaching is very good.</p> <p><b>Good in theatre studies.</b> Standards are above average by the end of Year 13 and students' achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good and marking is excellent. The relationships between students and teachers are very good and extra-curricular opportunities are very good.</p>
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	<p><b>Very good in physical education.</b> Teaching and learning are very good. Standards are high and students achieve very well. Students have excellent attitudes, and there are very good relationships between teachers and students. Standards in out-of-school activities are high.</p>
Business	<p>Only one course on economics and business studies is offered. This was sampled.</p>
Health and social care	<p>The school does not offer courses in this area</p>

*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

**Advice, guidance and support for students are good overall.** Induction procedures into the sixth form are very good. Students receive very good support from tutors and teachers who know them well. Relationships are very good. Careful monitoring and guidance help students understand what progress they are making in their studies, although target setting based on assessment information is not always sufficiently challenging. Students are given good information and advice on future options.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

**The sixth form is very well led and managed.** The director of sixth form leads and manages a large team of tutors very effectively and they all work very closely together to provide extremely good advice and support for students. The quality of resources for the sixth form is good and the sixth form centre, though too small, is very well organised so that students have working and leisure space at all times. The range of courses available to students is predominantly academic and meets their needs, although the school recognises that there are too few vocational courses.

## **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students are very pleased with their sixth form and they consider that the school meets their needs. Students appreciate being treated as adults and value the good teaching they experience and the commitment of teachers. They enjoy the good range of courses and the many extra-curricular activities that are available. The Christian ethos of the school is important to most students. Exceptionally good sports facilities, good access to computers and their own canteen are seen as benefits, although they find the common room and some teaching rooms small.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 and 2004 were well above average, and have risen faster than the average trend over recent years. Standards were very good in relation to pupils with similar prior attainment. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 and 2004 were well above average, for both boys and girls, and achievement was very good. Compared with pupils in schools with similar prior attainment, standards were well above average.

Standards are well above the national expectation by Years 9 and 11, with many pupils reaching high levels. Achievement is good for both boys and girls in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Most groups of pupils make very good progress, other than pupils with special educational needs, who make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 11.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the GCSE and A-level examinations are well above average.
- Pupils in Years 10 to 11 and students in the sixth form achieve very well as a result of their positive attitudes and very good teaching and learning.
- Achievement in ICT in Year 11 and Year 12 is unsatisfactory, as the courses do not match pupils' needs.
- Achievement in product design in the sixth form is very high.

#### Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the school is well above that expected nationally overall, especially in mathematics and science. However, it is variable across subjects and is lower than this in a number of areas.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37.5 (38.4)	N/A (33.4)
mathematics	40.8 (40.3)	35.5 (35.4)
science	37.8 (37.9)	33.1 (33.6)

*There were 281 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the results were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science, continuing a trend of improvement over recent years at a faster rate than the national picture. When compared with the results in schools with pupils of similar prior attainment, standards were well above average. Results in 2004 were again well above the unconfirmed national averages in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement in mathematics was well above that of pupils with similar prior attainment and in science it was above. Results in English were similar to the previous year.
3. Standards are well above the national expectation by Year 9, with many pupils reaching the highest levels. Pupils achieve well. In English, mathematics and science, standards are well above expectation, and pupils achieve very well overall, working hard to maintain the high levels they achieved on entry to the school.

4. In design and technology standards are well above average and occasionally very high, and achievement is very good and sometimes excellent because of teachers' very high expectations and very good use of assessment to help pupils to improve. In ICT, music, drama, physical education and modern foreign languages, pupils have had limited experience, on entry to the school. Pupils work hard to reach levels above national expectation in ICT, physical education, citizenship and modern foreign languages by Year 9. They achieve well as a result of good teaching and positive attitudes to learning. In drama and music, pupils reach the nationally expected levels by Year 9; good achievement is supported by pupils' enthusiasm for the subjects and recently improved facilities and resources, which are beginning to have an impact. In history, geography and art and design, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations and achievement is good.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	82.0(81.0)	53.4 (52.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98.48 (99.0)	88.6 (91.0)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99.62 (100)	95.8 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	348.2 (46.3)	282.3 (34.7)

*There were 275 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. The method of calculating average point score was changed between 2003 and 2004.*

5. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the results were well above average for boys and girls. Over recent years, the performance of pupils has improved at a similar rate to the national trend. Compared with results of pupils of similar prior attainment, the results were well above average and for pupils attaining five or more and one or more grades A\*-G were very high. Achievement is very good overall for both boys and girls. The results in 2004 indicate a slight fall, but remain well above average.
6. Standards by Year 11 are well above the national expectation in most subjects. Pupils achieve very well as a result of well-focused examination teaching and pupils' conscientious work and positive attitudes. In English, mathematics and science, standards are well above expectation and achievement is very good, as a result of teachers' very good subject expertise, leading to very good learning. The same is true of drama, design and technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages and art and design, where standards are also well above expectation and achievement is generally very good. For the small number of pupils who study ICT in Year 11 standards are below expected levels and achievement is unsatisfactory, because pupils follow a course that places too little emphasis on practical skills. In Year 10 where a more appropriate course is followed, standards are in line with expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in music and physical education are above expected levels and achievement is good, despite limited teaching time for physical education in Years 10 and 11. Whilst standards are above expectation in citizenship, achievement is only satisfactory because of limited teaching time.
7. There is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls, except in English where the attainment of boys is high. In most subjects, average and higher attaining pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented, achieve equally well. Occasionally, work is insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils in physical education.
8. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Attainment in the English tests in Year 9 for pupils with special educational needs is low despite average gains of two years in their reading ages. This is because pupils take time to settle into mainstream classes in Year 9, having been withdrawn for support in Years 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs do not progress as well as their peers in a few subjects, for example

single award science in Years 10 and 11 and in ICT. There is wide variation in results in GCSE examinations. However, all pupils with special educational needs were entered for at least one GCSE and passed the GCSEs for which they were entered.

9. Standards of literacy are above those expected nationally when pupils enter the school. Most pupils are confident speakers and they read and write competently and accurately. By the end of Year 11, standards of literacy are well above average. This reflects good provision. Strengths in literacy contribute significantly to pupils' very good achievement across the attainment range in all subjects, with the exception of pupils with special educational needs.
10. Standards of numeracy across the school are satisfactory as pupils are rarely called on to use and apply their numeracy skills to a high level. . Many departments make limited demands on pupils so they cope easily. Too many pupils use calculators rather than employ mental arithmetic and this masks a weakness with computation apparent even in mathematics itself.
11. Pupils' competence in ICT is good in Years 7 to 11. They have good keyboard skills, work with confidence and are benefiting from the effective use of the National Strategy for ICT. The standard of ICT is good in several areas, notably art, drama, English, geography, modern languages, music and science. It is very good in design and technology and unsatisfactory in mathematics because of a lack of access to facilities.

## Sixth form

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	97.0 (97.9)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	40.0 (46.5)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	336.3 (355.8)	234.2 (232.9)

*There were 145 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

12. The A-level results were well above the national average in 2003 and were higher in 2004. Students achieved well in relation to their GCSE qualifications. They achieved very well in physical education, where students had not previously had the opportunity to study a GCSE course. Results were well above average in mathematics, sports studies, communication studies, drama, music, English literature, physics, sociology and geography.
13. Standards are well above course expectations and students make very good progress in their different subject choices. In English literature, applied mathematics, history, geography, German and physical education, standards are well above course expectations and achievement is very good because students are mature, self-motivated learners and the teaching is very good. In biology, art and design, and theatre studies, standards are above average and achievement is good. In AVCE performing arts, which caters for students of a very wide range of abilities, standards are in line with expectations of the course and achievement is good. Standards in ICT are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, because students have not been sufficiently well prepared for the challenges of the course they are studying. Standards in design are very high and achievement is excellent, because of very demanding teaching.
14. Students of all abilities achieve well. Students with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities and the gifted and talented achieve very well. Higher attaining boys do relatively better than girls in geography. The achievement of students in the sixth form whose mother tongue is not English is very good. Students are competent, mature, independent learners who are eager to learn and enthusiastic about their subjects.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is consistently very good. Personal development overall is excellent: the school makes excellent arrangements for the spiritual, moral and social development of its pupils and very good provision for their cultural development. Attendance is very good, and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' spiritual and moral development, within the Christian ethos of the school, is excellent.
- Pupils show excellent commitment to enhancing their learning by taking part in a wide range of activities outside lessons.
- Pupils have a real sense of social responsibility and develop very good relationships because care, consideration and respect for others are central to the school's culture.

### **Commentary**

15. The school aims to provide an environment in which pupils flourish as individuals, fulfil their potential and are prepared well for life in a rapidly changing world. The Christian ethos that permeates every aspect of school life enables this aim to be achieved. Pupils develop spiritually, not only through regular acts of worship but also through discussions in tutorial groups and in lessons across the curriculum, where they explore feelings, values and beliefs. At the Pupil Voice conference, when representatives of every tutor group considered elements of a Christian school, speakers displayed impressively mature attitudes. The fact that they were confident to express their most personal and sensitive beliefs in public is testimony to the immense trust engendered by the school's Christian character. The moral development of pupils is also integral to the school's philosophy. Pupils acquire a sense of morality and personal responsibility as a result of teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour, with particular emphasis on self-discipline and awareness of the needs of others. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are almost always very good, and often exemplary. Exclusions are rare.
16. Pupils show excellent levels of commitment to extending their learning by taking advantage of the wide range of opportunities the school provides for them to exercise responsibility, develop skills and talents, and pursue personal interests. Specialist status as a Performing Arts College has opened up more opportunities for pupils to take part in music and drama productions and events, both as performers and technicians. Interest and involvement in extra-curricular sporting activities are unusually high, with many pupils achieving sporting successes of a very high standard. At lunchtimes, pupils are to be found all around the school taking part in activities as diverse as school council meetings, the chess club or writing poetry, while the library is always full of pupils doing research, completing coursework or simply enjoying books.
17. As part of its Christian ethos the school nurtures in its pupils values of respect, thoughtfulness and consideration for the needs of others. Consequently, relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils co-operate well in lessons, both with their teachers and with one another. They play a central role in ensuring that the school community is a place in which everyone feels included, for example, through a 'buddy' scheme to support new pupils and through the work of volunteer mentors throughout pupils' first year in school. Delegates at the Pupil Voice conference were anxious to ensure that the school should be a friendly, welcoming, safe environment for all pupils, with particular emphasis on the elimination of bullying. When bullying occurs, it is generally dealt with effectively. The fact that the majority of pupils enjoy school, are happy and confident is due in no small part to the school's excellent promotion of positive values.
18. The attitudes, values and personal qualities of pupils with special educational needs are good. They develop good self-awareness and attitudes to work through activities such as lunchtime

social and homework clubs and the use of personal development files. However, pupils have limited involvement in setting targets for themselves. Pupils who find social relationships very difficult are carefully and sensitively guided by staff who know them well.

### Sixth form

19. Students in the sixth form provide very good role models for pupils in the main school. They are ambitious, anxious to do well and consequently approach their work with serious commitment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and Christian values underpin students' attitudes and conduct. Students contribute significantly to the life of the school by undertaking a wide range of responsibilities. At the same time, their willingness to show initiative and give up their time for the benefit of others gives them valuable opportunities to develop their social and organisational skills, as well as fulfilling their desire to be socially responsible young people. Performing Arts College status has given sixth formers many opportunities to take a leading role in activities, for instance, in performing to audiences of parents, in assisting with projects in primary schools and, this year, in organising the annual pantomimes that will be performed there. In common with pupils in the main school, students work hard at raising funds for many charitable causes.
20. Students are very happy to be at the school. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities open to them for both learning and personal development. They have good relationships with their teachers, who are very supportive and helpful. In their turn, students are quick to accept responsibility and act as role models for the younger pupils.

### Attendance

21. Pupils' attendance is well above that found in most secondary schools and there is hardly any unauthorised absence. Although the school has effective monitoring procedures, pupils' very good attendance is more attributable to their positive attitudes and moral values. Punctuality is good overall, but the constraints of the site, together with difficulties caused by cramped, narrow corridors, often result in lessons starting late.

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.0
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.*



**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1655	34	0
White – Irish	3		
White – any other White background	9		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background	7		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2		
Any other ethnic group	3		
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	28		
Total	1721		

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL****Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school and has improved since the last inspection. It is at least good in over nine out of every ten lessons in Years 7 to 9, in over eight out of ten in Years 10 and 11 and in almost all lessons in the sixth form. In around four out of 10 lessons, teaching and learning were very good and occasionally outstanding. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 as it is not always accurate, and it is used inconsistently across the school to guide planning.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and lead to high achievement throughout the school.
- In design and technology in the sixth form teaching and learning are excellent.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 as the targets set for pupils are not always accurate and pupils do not know how well they are achieving.

**Commentary**

22. Teaching and learning are very good. The quality of teaching and learning varies from excellent to (very occasionally) unsatisfactory. Teaching is good or better in about nine out of every ten lessons. This compares with seven out of ten at the time of the last inspection. It was very good and occasionally outstanding in a large minority of lessons. This is a considerable improvement from the last inspection, when it was very good or better in under a quarter of lessons. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching is highest in the sixth form, and lowest in Years 7

to 9. In most lessons and subjects, pupils make very good progress in learning, because lessons are very well prepared and taught in a motivating way. As a result, pupils are interested in, and attentive to, what their teachers have to say and achieve very well.

23. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school, including the sixth form, in English, and history, and excellent in the sixth form in product design. All lessons present a high level of challenge. They are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good with older pupils and students in modern foreign languages, geography and mathematics. This is often because teachers are more familiar with the requirements of GCSE than the National Curriculum. In ICT teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9, but satisfactory in Years 10 to 12 where inappropriate courses have been provided for pupils and students. Lesson planning meets the syllabus requirements, but is often not well matched to students' needs. In art and design and science, teaching and learning are very good throughout the main school and good in the sixth form. The teaching of physical education is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form, where it is tightly focused on examination requirements. Drama and music were looked at in detail only in Years 7 to 11; teaching and learning in drama are very good and good in music.
24. Teachers' command of their subjects is a strength. They convey their expertise effectively so that pupils learn very well. Pupils taking GCSE courses are very well prepared for their examinations because their teachers are, in most cases, very experienced in examination work. Most teachers choose suitable, interesting topics, which enthuse their pupils. In practical lessons, teachers use their expertise to very good effect, as, for instance, in a design and technology lesson on electronics, in which the teacher's very skilful demonstration provided the pupils with a very good base from which to develop their own work.
25. Most lessons are planned very well. In the very best examples, teachers take into account carefully the different learning needs of their pupils, and in classes where there is a range of capability and needs, they provide suitably matched work for the highest and lowest attainers. This does not, however, happen sufficiently in all lessons. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and how they will develop their learning in the lesson. Very occasionally, planning is unsatisfactory and the pupils' learning suffers as a result.
26. The high levels of intellectual or creative challenge provided by teachers, together with a good pace to learning, are key factors in the very best lessons. Teachers use, and expect pupils to use accurately, correct terminology. In a history class, for example, pupils in Year 10 were set very demanding work on the problems facing the League of Nations in Europe in the 1920s; they rose to the challenge, produced ideas and understanding of the issues at a very high standard and achieved outstandingly. In most lessons, teachers insist that pupils consider and explain their views and reasoning. They are not content with brief, superficial answers. They ask probing, supplementary questions to develop and draw out pupils' understanding thoroughly.
27. In a very small number of lessons, this challenge is missing, tasks are completed quickly and little learning takes place. Very occasionally, the work is too difficult; for example in a Year 10 history lesson where the sources were too difficult for the pupils to understand, pupils became frustrated because they could not do the work set, and this in turn led to unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour.
28. In the majority of lessons, appropriate use is made of different teaching and learning techniques. The best lessons include a wide range of such methods, which are used effectively. Lessons frequently begin with a teacher-led explanation or exposition to the whole class, move through challenging individual or group work and discussions and finish with a review of what has been learned. Pupils are closely involved at all stages of lessons. As a result, the vast majority of pupils behave very well, because they find their work interesting and motivating.

29. The vast majority of teachers manage pupils very well. Pupils clearly understand that teachers expect them to begin lessons in a calm and purposeful manner and to continue in that mode. In some lessons, notably in mathematics, the late arrival of teachers to dispersed classrooms means that valuable teaching and learning time is lost and does not establish a business-like approach to the work of the lesson. Relationships in lessons are very good. There is clear mutual respect between pupils and teachers. Pupils are usually extremely well behaved and rarely need to be reprimanded. Teachers praise good work and attitudes, and many use humour successfully to make learning enjoyable. In the very best lessons, teachers use activities which the pupils find fun, so that their hard work becomes enjoyable. In these lessons, the enthusiasm of the teachers becomes so evident that pupils cannot help but become interested themselves.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 202 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
11 (5%)	78 (39%)	92 (46%)	19 (9%)	2 (1%)	0	0

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

30. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan carefully, work closely with teaching assistants and have high expectations of pupils. This results in pupils who are well motivated and confident to express their ideas. There is very good practice in using individual education plans in design and technology and history. Where teaching is weaker, pupils' needs are not understood or planned for. This results in lower expectations and a slower pace of learning. Literacy teaching in the curriculum support department is well planned and directed at pupils' needs, but it is not well enough linked to the programmes of work in English.
31. The teaching of literacy is good overall. The school is using the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy effectively to improve pupils' skills. Achievement is best in subjects where teachers regularly identify and address all students' literacy needs in their lesson planning.
32. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory across the school, although many subjects make limited demands on pupils. In mathematics itself, pupils rely too heavily on calculators when a small mental effort would suffice. Numeracy is used well in science where teachers use it well both to develop and to interpret graphs. In art and design, numeracy is well planned and applied when teachers consider perspective and scale. Numeracy is used very well during work on gear ratios in design and technology and when considering issues as diverse as costume design and stage lighting angles in drama.
33. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. Teachers make good use of software presentation packages and are beginning to use interactive whiteboard technology with good effect for discussion and demonstration. ICT developments at the whole-school level are having a good impact on developing teaching methods and independent learning. ICT is used well to support learning.
34. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall and in Years 7 to 9. It is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is too variable in quality. It is excellent in drama, and very good in design and technology and modern foreign languages. There are good features in mathematics, geography and music. It is unsatisfactory overall in science, physical education and history. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. The quality of the marking is, however, very variable, both across the school and within subjects. In English, mathematics, science, geography and history the marking does not always show pupils clearly enough what is wrong with their work, or how to improve good work still further. Assessment within lessons, when teachers quickly check what pupils have learned, is largely good.

35. Academic targets for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are set on the basis of their primary school results and pupils' capability, using standardised tests. These targets are not, however, consistently refined or used well, across the school. As a result, many targets are inappropriate, and often too low. Teachers have access to a large amount of information about pupils' attainment, but do not use it well enough. There is inconsistency in the way the National Curriculum is used to set targets in Years 7 to 9. In science, physical education, art and design and history, pupils are unclear about the levels at which they are currently working. Not all teachers assess pupils' work regularly enough against the targets. The assessment of pupils' work in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Teachers make effective use of examination board criteria and grading to assess pupils' standards. The school is currently establishing a system through which staff can use information more effectively to assess accurately and realistically pupils' learning and achievement.
36. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Individual education plans include good descriptions of pupils' needs and well-chosen targets and strategies to guide detailed target setting in departments. A good range of information about pupils' attainment is available, including national test results, additional standardised tests and teaching assistants' observations. However, this information is not brought together effectively, or analysed well enough, to make detailed assessments of individual pupils' progress. As a result, information that could inform day-to-day planning for pupils with special educational needs is not used consistently.

### **Sixth form**

37. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It was very good or better in over half of lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The teaching in design and technology was excellent. Outstanding lessons were also seen in German, physical education and performing arts. Teaching is good in biology, Latin, classics and performing arts, and satisfactory in ICT. It is very good in all other subjects.
38. Most aspects of teaching are very good. A particular strength is the depth of subject knowledge that teachers have. Lessons are planned very well. Teachers set high standards and have appropriately high expectations of their students. This is a very strong feature in almost all lessons, but it is especially so in design and technology and physical education. The way in which teachers engage with and relate to their students is a strength of teaching. The students themselves bring a very positive attitude to lessons. They work hard, and show a determination to reach high standards. Their approach to work, combined with the very good teaching overall, leads to very good achievement.
39. Assessment is good overall. It is excellent in physical education and the performing arts, very good in design and technology and German, and satisfactory in ICT. In all other subjects, it is good. Marking is a strength in all subjects except mathematics. Teachers' helpful and detailed comments show students clearly how to improve their work still further. Most subjects use the data provided for them well in order to set targets for students. They adjust the data to take account of students' prior attainment in specific subjects. In English, biology, art and design and history, however, this information is not used effectively enough because the data is not adjusted sufficiently. This means that for some students the targets are not high enough.

### **The curriculum**

The school's curriculum reflects well the school's performing arts and denominational status. It meets the needs and aspirations of the vast majority of its pupils well. The school does not, however, offer a suitable range of courses for the relatively small number of pupils for whom vocational courses would be appropriate. Few courses reflect adequately the world of work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. The sixth form provides a good curriculum for its students.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide choice of academic courses meets well the needs of most pupils in Years 7 to 11 and there is a very wide range of AS and A-level courses for students in the sixth form.
- Students benefit from a very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities outside the school day; participation in sport and the arts is excellent and the provision of study support outside the school day is good.
- The school has introduced new courses in dance, music and performing arts to reflect its specialist status.
- The range of work-related courses in Years 10 to 13 is very narrow.
- Accommodation for the sixth form and for mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- A number of the schools' facilities are excellent and enhance pupils' and students' experiences.

## Commentary

40. In Years 7 to 11, the breadth and balance of the curriculum are good, reflecting well the school's status as a Performing Arts College. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study drama as well as art and design and music. The school offers three modern foreign languages for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and pupils may choose to study two of these. In addition, they have the opportunity to study Latin. A very wide range of options is offered within design and technology and physical education. The wide variety of staff expertise in music and art and design means that pupils have a broad range of experiences. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 provides good opportunities for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.
41. In Years 10 to 11, pupils are able to select from a very wide range of GCSE courses. All pupils take a GCSE course in religious education and most take the full course. Dance has recently been introduced as a GCSE subject. Pupils have only one hour a week of physical education and no GCSE course is provided. The only vocational course is in ICT. Although there is a significant minority of pupils for whom vocational courses would be appropriate, there has been relatively little take-up when such courses have been offered. Whilst the academic curriculum of GCSE courses meets the needs of the majority of pupils very well, a growing minority of pupils require more varied, practical and work-based experiences to achieve their best. Provision for literacy is good and for numeracy is satisfactory.
42. Provision for pupils with special educational needs from Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory overall and good in a number of subjects. Pupils are taught in small lower sets or mixed ability groups and are supported well. Support outside lessons and after school is very good. Pupils with literacy needs have good specialist provision in Years 7 to 9. However, there is not enough time allocated to English in Year 8 for those pupils who have difficulties with literacy and communication skills. The curriculum for pupils with learning and social needs in Years 10 and 11 is developing well through the innovative work of staff in the Zone. The role of staff who work here is to arrange and provide an alternative curriculum for pupils who benefit from a different approach to learning. The development of Certificate of Achievement courses by teaching assistants is also leading to greater pupil motivation. The timetable restricts opportunities for work-based learning, limiting vocational choices for these pupils.
43. The use and application of ICT across the curriculum are good. They are especially good in geography, music and modern foreign languages. Pupils' use of interactive whiteboard technology is good in English and in history in Year 7. The use of ICT in design and technology is very good and this subject continues to make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning and application of ICT skills, knowledge and understanding.
44. Preparation for the next stage of education is good, and provision for careers education and guidance is very good, with pupils following a structured programme from Year 7 onwards. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and the course is well planned to

cover most relevant areas. However it is more limited in Years 10 and 11 as a result of reduced teaching time.

45. A very wide choice of extra-curricular opportunities enhances the curriculum. Most of the school's subjects offer support outside the school day and general interest clubs. Pupils have opportunities to participate in visits abroad and within the United Kingdom. The school provides a very wide variety of performing arts activities outside school time and these are very popular with pupils. The range of, and pupils' participation in, sporting activities are excellent.
46. The curriculum is reviewed carefully by the governors, senior managers and staff. The weaknesses in mathematics, ICT, art and music, identified during the last inspection, have been dealt with appropriately. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have one hour a week of music and art and design, sufficient time has been allocated to the teaching of mathematics and a separate ICT department has been established.
47. Accommodation is satisfactory in the main school. It has many strong features that promote learning, but also some that have a negative effect. The magnificent chapel, the superb new dance studio, drama facilities and the extensive physical education indoor and outdoor arrangements do much to generate high standards and enthusiasm. The buildings are clean and well looked after with many good displays, thus providing a stimulating working environment.
48. Many of the buildings are now too small for the purposes that they have to fulfil. Teaching spaces are too cramped; for example in food technology, the room is too small for practical work and its shape makes supervision difficult. In ICT some rooms are small and are badly ventilated. The library is also too small for the number of pupils wanting to use it. The mathematics department has unsatisfactory accommodation that limits access to and use of ICT. It is taught in 17 different rooms spread across the site, wasting teaching time as teachers move from one classroom to the next between lessons. Accommodation for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but there is a shortage of interview rooms.
49. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is very good, after a recent period of some disruption, particularly in music. The match of support staff to the demands of the curriculum is also very good. Recruitment and retention are not significant issues in this school. Staffing and resources for pupils with special educational needs are good.
50. Resources for learning are mostly good throughout the school; they are excellent in music, very good in ICT, and satisfactory in geography. Resources are used well. Resources for ICT have greatly improved since the last inspection. An on-line booking system enables better access across the curriculum and teachers are able to plan more efficiently their use of ICT within their subject, except in mathematics where access remains a problem.

### **Sixth form**

51. The curriculum is very good. Students are able to choose from a very wide range of academic courses. This highly academic curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of most students, but by no means all. One vocational course is offered in performing arts. This is a new course, which has been introduced to contribute to the school's specialist status.
52. Within subjects, students have a range of opportunities; for example in English, they choose to study language or literature or a combination of both. Appropriately, the school offers courses at both vocational and A-level in performing arts, and an A-level in theatre studies.
53. Almost every student takes a course in general studies in Years 12 and 13. There are recreational opportunities for sport, but there are no short courses or Community Sports Leaders Award courses. There is insufficient support in ICT for students who do not study ICT

in the sixth form but who need ICT skills in their AS and A-level subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

54. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the sixth form is good. Students with special educational needs other than learning difficulties are supported well and make good progress. The curriculum offered in the sixth form is not suitable for students with learning difficulties.
55. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in the sixth form, especially the sixth form centre, where classrooms, computer facilities and leisure spaces are overcrowded, thus making learning difficult and unpleasant.
56. Resources in the sixth form are good, and are used well to support learning. They are very good in ICT and satisfactory in geography. In all the subjects covered by performing arts, resources are excellent as a result of the additional funding received through the successful bid for performing arts status. The money has been spent well and supports the achievement of the targets set down in the bid. Resources in the library are used well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school has good arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of all pupils and students. Support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring of their academic and personal development, are good. There are very good systems for involving pupils in the work and development of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are given extensive opportunities to express their views and to influence developments in school.
- The good levels of care, support and guidance ensure that pupils' individual needs are identified and met well.
- Careful attention is paid to health and safety.
- The use of data in monitoring pupils' progress and setting targets is inconsistent.
- Links between subject staff and special educational needs staff regarding pupil progress are underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

57. There are exceptionally good mechanisms for taking into account pupils' opinions of the work of the school. In addition to annual surveys, there are innovative projects such as Learning Walks and the Pupil Voice conference. These are elements of the Leading Edge programme aimed at raising the achievement and involvement of pupils through working in partnership with other schools. These activities have given pupils unprecedented opportunities to compare their school with others in the local area and to explore, in depth, issues that are important to them, with a chance to bring their views to the attention of those who are empowered to make changes. Alongside these special events, the school council meets regularly, with representatives from every form acting as a conduit between pupils and the headteacher. Senior staff and governors have shown that they value pupils' ideas and suggestions, by bringing into effect some positive changes; for example, pupils now take a more active part in assemblies and services, an anti-bullying scheme which has been established for some years has been enhanced in response to pupils' ideas, and plans are being prepared for a memorial garden in the school grounds.
58. The pastoral structure hinges on form tutors and heads of year, who know pupils well and provide the first port of call for any personal problems or concerns. In addition, both personal and academic support is offered to pupils in a number of ways. Under the auspices of the

Leading Edge programme, a team-building, confidence-boosting summer school was run very successfully for a group of pupils in Year 7. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, who might benefit from extra help, are provided with mentors, selected from school staff or volunteers from industry and commerce. Appropriate help and encouragement are given according to need, for example with organisational skills or attitudes to work or homework, with the objective of helping pupils reach their full potential. All who have taken part have found the scheme worthwhile.

59. Alternative curriculum arrangements, which include work placements, are made for a small number of pupils, who benefit greatly from this kind of support. Revision classes and individual support with academic study are freely provided by subject teachers. Pastoral staff have access to assessment data that charts pupils' progress. However, this data is used inconsistently and there is no formal mechanism for reviewing pupils' progress and helping them set targets for improvement. For some pupils with special educational needs, information about progress against their individual education plan is not collated effectively and links between the special educational needs department and subject areas are under-developed.
60. Arrangements for the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors are good, with some particular strengths. Individual departments are responsible for ensuring that safe procedures are followed in relation to activities and equipment. These procedures are especially good in science and in physical education, where pupils are now learning, as part of their course, to complete risk assessments for themselves. A qualified first aider is based permanently in the medical room to deal with routine medical care until 4.30pm every day. She is supported by a number of other staff strategically placed around the school and who provide cover when she is not there. Staff are vigilant in identifying and reporting hazards, which are prioritised and remedied promptly.

### **Sixth form**

61. Academic and pastoral support for students is very good. Advice and guidance from teachers are supplemented by speakers from industry, commerce and public service, so that students can make informed choices about future pathways. Students themselves are very active within the school community, working in partnership with staff to create a calm, happy and purposeful environment. The school council is organised and led very effectively by the head boy and head girl, prefects help supervise pupils in main school and, following the Pupil Voice conference, sixth formers have been instrumental in organising anti-bullying measures.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents, with other schools and with the community are all very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school works very well in partnership with parents.
- Close liaison with other schools through innovative projects is mutually beneficial.
- Extensive links with the local community enrich pupils' learning and contribute positively to their personal development.

### **Commentary**

62. The school is careful to emphasise that parents have an important part to play in the education of their children and therefore invites them to work closely with staff to ensure that their children derive maximum benefit from their time at Canon Slade. Most parents support pupils' learning effectively and show this by their very high attendance at consultation evenings, by communicating and co-operating with teachers in academic and pastoral matters, and by their interest and involvement in everything the school does. The highly effective school association,



whose functions are very well supported by parents and staff, organises both fund-raising and social events that contribute to the community spirit that is so evident in the school. In its turn, the school provides good information for parents, responds promptly to their queries and concerns, and undertakes regular surveys of their views. The quality of annual reports has been satisfactory, but as a result of parental dissatisfaction in one of the school's regular surveys, they are being changed in line with the views expressed. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs for annual reviews of progress are satisfactory.

63. Involvement in special programmes brings the school into close contact with others in the locality and in the region to share good practice and new ideas, and to undertake experimental projects for the benefit of staff and pupils. Activities have included a summer school for pupils identified as gifted and talented, an exploration of extra-curricular provision under the banner of the University of the First Age and involvement in a town-wide Pupil Voice conference. Training School status provides funding to ensure the best possible training for new entrants to the teaching profession. Arrangements at Canon Slade are highly developed. Pupils benefit because teachers at the school are at the forefront of good practice, constantly developing their expertise. Performing Arts College status has involved the school in work with local primary schools, for example giving their pupils opportunities to work alongside sixth formers in a dance project and preparing a multi-media presentation for a forthcoming Bolton celebration.
64. Links with organisations and individuals in the local and wider communities give pupils opportunities that supplement their lessons and help them develop an awareness of the world around them. Through the Education Business Partnership, pupils benefit from outside speakers in lessons, especially in relation to careers and personal, social and health education, from work experience placements, and from mock interviews, in preparation for future choices. Links with Bolton Wanderers FC enable pupils to take part in special workshops to extend their thinking, as well as to be inspired by watching junior training sessions that take place on the school's playing fields. The school has a major programme of lettings, especially of the sporting facilities, which benefits the community through the provision of accommodation, but also benefit pupils, since any financial profit helps to fund additional resources for them. Extensive links with churches around the area give pupils opportunities to perform with a choir, orchestra or one of the school's many musical ensembles. These performances also make a positive contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils who take part. Musical activities allow parents and members of the local community to join with pupils, for example, in the very well regarded Gospel Choir. Pupils make their contribution to the community outside school by raising substantial funds for local, national and international charities, thus showing their awareness of, and genuine concern for, the needs of others.
65. The curriculum support department and the Zone work very hard to maintain good positive and supportive links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Links with other agencies and education providers are well managed. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements in terms of the information provided but contain too little detail on the progress pupils are making and how the school works in partnership with the parents of its most vulnerable pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the school is very good and the headteacher provides excellent direction for improvement. Governance is very good. The school is well managed, with a clear focus on ensuring pupils and students achieve well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has an excellent view of how the school should continue to improve.
- Governors are very well informed of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and play a considerable role in planning further improvements.
- Procedures for evaluating the work of the school are well defined, although, at departmental level, implementation is sometimes inconsistent.
- The quality of professional development and support for staff is very good.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- Financial management is excellent.

### **Commentary**

66. The headteacher's vision for the school is firmly rooted in Christian values and gives excellent direction for continuing to improve the high levels of examination success experienced by pupils and students and to prepare them for life and service in a rapidly changing world. Much of this vision, and enthusiasm, is shared by colleagues and is reflected in their work in school. Governors play a significant role in this. They have effective ways of gathering information about how the school functions and work very closely with the senior leadership team and departments. Consequently, their contributions to school improvement planning are perceptive, evaluative and valuable in helping the school plan further improvements.
67. The school's procedures for improvement planning are very good. All staff contribute to the process. Teachers conduct their own research into how learning and teaching can be improved and this contributes to school improvement. All staff have opportunities to air their views, and these are all taken into account before decisions are made.
68. Responsibilities are allocated well and members of the senior leadership team make an effective contribution to leading and managing various parts of the school's work. They all have responsibilities for monitoring, evaluating and supporting the work of subject departments, ensuring that the needs of pupils and students are fully met. They do this well overall. However, this was not thorough enough in the case of ICT in the sixth form, as the school did not identify that lack of ICT at GCSE, or similar, level, would slow down students' achievement on higher level courses. The use of examination information to monitor the work of the school is satisfactory overall, although improving. Information is made available to departments so that they can set targets and analyse pupils' and students' performance. There is a mixed response to this, with some departments doing this very well. However, there is no overall school view that takes into account the context of very highly committed pupils and students with high aspirations and the impact that this has on performance; targets are sometimes too low. Overall, the leadership of departments is very good and management is good. They reflect the school's Christian values and vision for improvement.
69. Leadership of special educational needs and the Zone are good. Both managers have a clear vision for their areas and have created very effective and highly motivated teams. Strategic planning in special educational needs is good. Priorities are well chosen and evaluation focuses on how well pupils are provided for. The policy meets statutory requirements and is reviewed annually. Current links with senior leaders are strong and effective, but have only been in place for a short time and have yet to demonstrate their full impact. As a result, the roles of both managers in contributing to strategic decisions in areas such as curriculum and

funding are under-developed. The governor who has oversight of special educational needs meets with staff in the department frequently and is well informed.

70. Management of special educational needs is satisfactory. While documentation is kept well and the curriculum support department is very well organised, the links with the rest of the school are weak, resulting in patchy provision. Action to link the special needs policy and access plans to the policies and practices of subject areas has not been undertaken. The monitoring processes that are proposed or have been put in place recently are good, but systems for sharing information are not firmly in place. The school makes good use of special educational needs funding, and augments this with funding from a range of other sources.
71. The use of performance management is well established over a long period. In this process, all teachers are given a target relating to a teaching and learning project and this is driven by whole-school development plans. Targets are precise and well structured, and their impact is measurable. New staff receive a well-structured and closely monitored programme of meetings and talks, with newly qualified teachers having additional inputs relevant to their stage of development. The school's long-standing status as an Investor in People helps to ensure that high quality training is available for all staff and a dedicated training room has been set up within the school. Opportunities for professional development are very good with much of the training provided within the school itself. The school's Training School status is of exceptional quality. It has enabled strong links to be forged with three local providers and the school itself has 40 trained subject mentors spread through different departments, a further indication of the value the school places on professional development.
72. Governance is very good. Governors are very experienced and make a strong contribution to their school that they know very well. They both challenge and support the headteacher. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The governors have led the school determinedly through three changes of status in recent years in their commitment to fulfilling their very clear vision to educate children raised in a specifically Anglican tradition. This remains their single criterion for admission. The governing body is well led, collectively very experienced and contributes a potent mix of professional skills of a high order. The governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because their committee structure is strong, effective and efficient. The good blend of governance and management noted during the last inspection continues. Governors are very well informed and management proposals are scrutinised in committee.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	646,8680	Balance from previous year	396,982
Total expenditure	676,6257	Balance carried forward to the next	99,406
Expenditure per pupil	3,452		

73. Approaches to financial management are excellent. Development planning is well understood by governors and forward planning is very good. The budget is well constructed to meet identified priorities. Financial management, through the finance committee, is prudent and based on a regular supply of accurate information. The very large sums carried forward from 2002-3 were earmarked for expansion and improvement. The most recent auditors' report regards financial planning and procedures to be good and the matters raised by them have been properly resolved. The Business Manager provides a very good service to the school. His skilful and timely management of a financial crisis when the heating plant broke down ensured that the school was able to replace its boilers immediately. The school has built a performing arts studio in line with its new specialist college status and the trustees recently met the majority of the construction costs of the new chapel which proclaims the school's mission at

the front of the building. Funds provided for specialist college status and those for pupils with special educational needs are well spent.

74. Spending is carefully scrutinised because the budget is very tight; there are very good arrangements to ensure value for money. The monitoring of teaching and learning for performance management is in place. The Business Manager ensures transparency and equity in the distribution of funding to departments through the application of formula funding. Whilst resources are employed effectively and departmental capitation is spent wisely, middle managers do not monitor these features. The rich data now available in school to monitor progress and set targets is not yet used well enough. Therefore, overall, the arrangements the school makes to apply the principles of best value are good.
75. This is a very effective school and sixth form and good improvement has been made since the last inspection. It achieves this on average funding per pupil and, therefore, gives very good value for money.

### **Sixth form**

76. The sixth form is very well led and managed, and the Sixth Form Director provides a very clear long-term vision for how the sixth form could improve further. He has been strongly instrumental in providing the very wide range of AS and A-level courses and sees further widening of courses to include vocational courses as important, as soon as accommodation permits. The assistant directors and sixth form tutors work very well together as a team, providing a high level of support, advice and encouragement for students. They are highly respected by students, particularly in the level of support provided when students are applying for university places.
77. The sixth form budget is very skilfully managed so that income and expenditure balance exactly. Financial management is in line with the rest of the school and is very good. The sixth form provides very good value for money.

### **Work-related learning (WRL)**

78. The effectiveness of the school's provision for work-related learning (WRL) is satisfactory and it meets statutory requirements. This judgement is based on discussion with the co-ordinator for WRL, and with pupils, a study of pupils' work placements and their evaluations, and evidence about WRL across the subjects of the curriculum.
79. The school provides vocational training courses for a small group of pupils, linked to a local training provider, to study a range of skills-based options. The course is satisfactory and meets the needs of pupils. In discussion, pupils said they enjoy the course and respond very well to the opportunities and challenges. Pupils' achievement is good; they make good progress and standards are in line with those expected.
80. Pupils have very good careers guidance, including individual interviews through the Connexions service. Pupils said they are very happy with the support they receive. They are guided well both about progression to courses beyond Year 11 and about future careers. Careers education is of a good quality. The personal, social and health education programme has specific careers content, starting in Year 7. Better provision is made for older pupils. Guidance is much more intensive from Year 9 onwards, so that all pupils follow a structured programme and, in addition, each pupil is provided with very helpful individual advice and support matched to his or her needs. The teacher responsible provides a very good level of co-ordination and management. Very good use is made of local employers to support the programme through presentations and discussions.
81. Work experience is very well planned and the school arranges relevant and stimulating placements for all pupils. The preparation and debriefing of pupils on work experience are very

good. Visits to the school by employers take place and pupils have the opportunity to visit local retail outlets, businesses, manufacturing industries and public services. The range of employment sectors represented is very good.

82. Planning for WRL is effective in art and design, design and technology, special educational needs, personal, social and health education and citizenship. Careers education is very good and there are very good links with local employers and the Education Business Partnership, which helps to provide work experience placements. The school offers a limited vocational curriculum, but is very aware of the need to develop pupils' work-related skills.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average in the Year 9 national tests and in the GCSE examinations in English, English literature and media studies, and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and the very good teaching ensure that pupils achieve very well.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough when marking in Years 7 to 9.

##### **Commentary**

83. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are consistently well above average and the difference between the performance of boys and girls is less than it is nationally. In 2003, boys' attainment was very high. The results were similar in 2004. Standards in the GCSE examinations are also well above average in both English and English literature. In 2003 and 2004, almost every pupil gained passes in both subjects and four out of five were awarded grades A\*-C. Results for media studies were well above average in 2003 and very high in 2004.
84. Standards of work are well above average in all year groups, particularly in speaking and listening. In all years, most pupils talk confidently about a wide range of topical issues as well as the texts they are studying. They explain and justify their opinions clearly but are also prepared to modify them as a result of group or class discussions. Reading skills are also well developed. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise their deductive and inferential skills in lessons. Although no Year 11 lessons were observed, these pupils' books show an impressive awareness of the power of language to move and persuade. In media studies, pupils show a very good understanding of media concepts and respond maturely to a challenging range of texts. In Year 9, pupils study texts from our literary heritage which are normally studied for GCSE examinations at other schools. Their narrative writing is well above average; it is lively and often original and shows the flair and creativity of pupils who are able to use figurative language very effectively to enrich their descriptions. Lower attaining pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9, have problems with the structuring of writing to inform and explain and do not readily distinguish between standard and colloquial English.
85. Standards are above average when students enter the school and well above average by the end of Year 9. This very good achievement is maintained through Years 10 and 11. A few pupils with literacy needs do not achieve quite as well as others in the national tests because they take time to be fully integrated into Year 9 English lessons and to prepare for the tests, having had separate classes in Years 7 and 8. Overall achievement is aided by pupils' very positive attitudes and the motivation and encouragement provided by their teachers. Additionally, there is a very good curriculum which provides regular library and drama lessons in Years 7 to 9 and a good range of ICT activities. All pupils study both language and literature at GCSE and can opt for media studies. Considerable enrichment is provided by such activities as regular theatre trips, visiting writers, book fairs, poetry and writing competitions and the lower school English club.
86. Teaching and learning are very good because of the teachers' strong subject knowledge, their high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work, and the wide range of teaching methods

used. Teaching is lively and stimulating and encourages pupils to make their own decisions, to be inquisitive and independent. However, not all teachers make effective use of national test levels or assessment information when planning their lessons and marking work in Years 7 to 9. This means that pupils are not always shown exactly what they must do to gain a higher level. Whilst there is some very good marking, it is not consistent across the department. The newly introduced Key Stage 3 strategy is already helping all teachers to share the very good practice which already exists and to involve pupils fully in the assessment process.

87. The leadership of this large and enthusiastic team of English specialists is very good. There is commitment and vision, innovation and dedication and a shared love of the subject, from the newest to the longest serving teacher. Management is good. Responsibilities are appropriately delegated; teaching is regularly monitored, new staff well inducted and departmental needs and priorities clearly identified. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have improved even further in GCSE examination in English literature and media studies, teaching and learning are now consistently very good, and pupils have regular access to a range of ICT activities to support their learning

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

88. Pupils enter the school with levels of literacy which are above those found nationally. Most speak, read and write well for their age. They listen well, have a wide vocabulary and are conscientious about the presentation of their work. Because of good provision in most subjects, pupils' achievement is good and their overall standard improves to well above average, with speaking and listening skills very high, by the end of Year 11. Pupils' literacy skills support their development across the curriculum well.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 11 and pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Boys achieve less well than girls.

### **Commentary**

89. In 2004, the GCSE examination results in French, German and Spanish were well above average and were an improvement on the results in 2003 at grades A\*-C. The results have risen since the last inspection. Boys do less well than girls in examinations.
90. No lessons were observed in Year 11. Standards are above the national expectation at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. This is consistent across the three languages taught. There are no differences in attainment across the four aspects of the subject. Pupils use the target language fluently and well for speaking and writing and have a good understanding of listening and reading texts. Knowledge and understanding of grammar develop very well. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 where there is a strong focus on preparation for GCSE examinations. Boys achieve less well than girls, although boys' attainment is still above the national average for boys. Some pupils with special educational needs are taught by non-specialist languages teachers and their achievement is satisfactory rather than good.

91. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, there is a small minority of unsatisfactory teaching. Some teachers are also teaching their third language, which is clearly not as strong as their main languages. There is also some non-specialist teaching in Years 7 to 9. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, lessons lack challenge and too much English is spoken. Where teaching is good or better, lessons are carefully planned to ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise both their written and spoken language. In these lessons, English is rarely used. Teachers have very good subject knowledge not only of the language and grammar needed, but also of how best to prepare pupils for success in examinations. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially in Years 10 and 11. Working relationships in lessons are very good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are very good so that the atmosphere in most lessons is relaxed, happy and very businesslike. Teachers and pupils use computers well to enrich and enhance the curriculum. Modern foreign languages make a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. The contribution to numeracy and citizenship is satisfactory. There are very good assessment procedures in place to track pupils' attainment and progress. The use of the data to set targets for groups and for individual pupils is very good.
92. The curriculum is very good. Pupils have opportunities to study two of the three languages taught. The curriculum is enriched by visits and workshops from theatre companies, who perform in the foreign language. There is a range of exchanges with schools in France, Spain and Germany. Resources are good but the textbooks used in Years 7 to 9 are out of date. A committed and hard-working team of teachers and assistants is led very well by the head of languages. The management of the subject is very good and it has made very good progress since the last inspection. Pupils now have good opportunities to use ICT and the monitoring of teaching is now good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average at Years 9 and 11 and older pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching is good and most teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Demands placed on pupils for numeracy skills across the curriculum often lack challenge.
- Pupils' access to and use of ICT in lessons are unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation for mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- The scheme of marking is not used consistently by teachers and this is unhelpful to pupils.

### **Commentary**

93. In the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2004, the results were well above average, maintaining the already high results of past years. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. Despite this cohort's well above average standard on entry to the school, these results represent good progress, as standards are maintained with pupils of a wide range of capability. In the GCSE examination in 2004, the results were well above the national average and represent a marked improvement on the previous, already high, figures for 2003. When comparing this cohort's very high performance in 2002 at the end of Year 9 with that of schools nationally, the latter category consists mainly of selective schools. As a result, although Canon Slade figures suggest its pupils are achieving less well when compared to these schools, it is, in fact, achieving very well because it has the full, comprehensive, range of pupils.
94. Standards are well above the levels expected nationally by Year 9 and achievement is good. In one lesson with an 'express' group who will attempt GCSE early in their Year 11, pupils were shown three different ways to expand algebraic brackets and all did so with ease; only rarely



were errors over multiplication of signs an issue. A lower set of pupils in Year 9 considered the best way to undertake a meaningful survey of pupils' eating habits and spoke clearly of the need for proper random sampling and took care over the precise form of questions to be asked. With grouping by ability in mathematics, most pupils with special educational needs are in the lower sets in each year. Small groups and the presence of capable teaching assistants enable these pupils to make satisfactory progress.

95. Standards by Year 11 are well above average. As Year 11 pupils were on work experience during the inspection, judgements of their work are based primarily on a scrutiny of past work. Pupils use calculators too frequently for low-level work. In Year 10, pupils in an upper set relied on calculators for simple operations. The lesson considered an algebraic proof of Pythagoras's theorem and pupils coped well. A corresponding lower set, working toward the foundation tier of examination, considered solutions to first order equations. Some of this class used finger counting to subtract 7 from 31. This class demonstrated the only poor behaviour seen, the girls particularly being uncooperative and truculent. In all other lessons, the behaviour of both boys and girls was very good and often exemplary.
96. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. They are strengths of the department. Core members of the department have very good subject knowledge and deploy this effectively when explaining work. The best teaching is characterised by good planning and use of appropriately challenging material, which catches the interest of pupils. Teachers do not question whether pupils understand what has been covered. The use of ICT in the department is unsatisfactory, as teachers do not have sufficient access to computers. In the week of the inspection, only six classes out of a possible 138 were able to use computers. Homework is set regularly and, as with all class work, marked regularly. The recently adopted scheme of marking is not used consistently by staff and this is unhelpful to pupils.
97. Leadership of this dispersed department is very good. Staff work with a common purpose and to exacting standards. Management is good. The work of the department is monitored by a system of paired observations, the results of which are used in departmental discussions. Assessment is not yet in place and pupils do not have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. In particular, the marks awarded by teachers are not obviously linked to learning objectives or to GCSE grade descriptors. Numeracy across the school is satisfactory and demands placed on pupils are modest. The department has yet to come to grips with its contribution to whole-school issues such as social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and citizenship. Accommodation for mathematics, which is taught in 17 different rooms spread across the site, is unsatisfactory. This has the knock-on effect of delaying the start of many lessons so that, in the week of the inspection, an average of 10 per cent of lesson time was lost.
98. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good; achievement has risen but the use of ICT has not improved. Numeracy across the school has worsened and is satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved as a higher proportion of lessons are very well taught. Marking and assessment remain issues to be addressed.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

99. A full audit of need was conducted two years ago and a new numeracy co-ordinator has been appointed recently. Because guidance on numeracy has not been sustained, its application in subject areas is variable in quality and depth. Heavy users of numeracy such as science, ICT, design and technology and geography plan for its use appropriately, other departments less so. The notable exception is drama where planning and use of numeracy are very good.
100. Numeracy across the school is satisfactory. A numeracy in-service training day was run some years ago which resulted in a number of departments incorporating numeracy into their schemes of work. This is not widespread, however. In the majority of subjects, pupils and

students cope with the modest demands placed on them. Skill levels support satisfactory progress in other lessons.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good teaching is producing very good learning; this results in very high standards and very good progress for most pupils.
- The depth and breadth of the curriculum enable pupils to aim for and to attain high levels and grades, but there is a lack of visits to enhance their understanding.
- The use of assessment to identify underachieving pupils and to initiate appropriate measures is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

101. The results of the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well above the national average and when compared with the results in similar schools. The results indicated good achievement from the levels pupils obtained in Year 6 and very good achievement for the higher attaining pupils, who attained nearly twice as many of the higher Level 6 than the national average. Standards of the present Year 9 are well above national expectations, maintaining the high standards and achievement of previous years. Boys and girls perform equally well. The past few years show a rising trend faster than that seen nationally. Pupils show a good understanding of most topics and develop ideas from basic principles, such as appreciating how water potential can be used to predict osmotic movement. However, sometimes they do not know what underpins the method they are using, for example what a joule is.
102. Results in GCSE examinations are well above average and pupils achieve very well. The school offers double award or single award GCSE examination courses. In 2004, the double award examination results were well above the national average and when compared with similar schools. Nearly a quarter of the pupils gained the highest grades of A\* or A. The achievement of the pupils on the course was very good and much better than would have been expected from their Year 9 results. Standards show an upward trend with boys and girls doing equally well. The results in the single award examination were above the national average; the achievement of the higher attaining pupils, from their Year 9 levels, was good and it was satisfactory for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In the last few years there has been no significant trend, nor any difference between the results of boys and girls. The work of pupils in Year 11, who were out of school on work experience, shows that the very high standards are being maintained.
103. The quality of teaching is very good: almost all teaching was of this quality. Teachers plan lessons effectively, with clear well-communicated objectives. Most lessons start by checking and reinforcing previous learning, which is then developed using skilful questions to draw out and expand pupils' ideas. The teachers' very good subject knowledge is used well to generate interest and variety of approach to both theoretical and practical work. In the best lessons, most pupils are actively involved most of the time; their contributions develop the topic and design the practical activities, with the teacher providing direction and amplification. In the few lessons that are satisfactory pupils are told rather than invited to discover, and perform practical work by recipe, and the teacher's questions only check their learning. The response to the very good teaching is very good learning. The pupils are interested and become actively involved. They listen well, work hard and are keen to answer questions. Relationships are good and pupils clearly enjoy being challenged to think. Marking is good and useful homework is usually set to extend the pupils' learning.

104. Very good attention is paid to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, especially in the production and use of graphs. The use of ICT for teaching and by pupils is developing well and is a focus for future developments.
105. The department is well led and managed. The depth and breadth of the curriculum enable pupils to aim for and to attain high levels and grades, but there is a lack of visits to bring the subject to life and to show science in action. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is good and pupils' work is assessed well. However, the use of assessment is unsatisfactory: most pupils are ill informed about the level of their current work and their targets, and the use of achievement data is not well developed. A very effective team of technicians, who maintain and set out the equipment very efficiently, serves the department very well. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards and pupils' achievements from their last examination show a big improvement. Teaching is now very good with good marking and a much wider use of ICT.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at the end of Year 9 are above the national expectation and achievement is good.
- Standards by Year 11 are below course expectations and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is very good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and results in good learning.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and there is a good match of teacher expertise to the curriculum.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 as insufficient use is made of National Curriculum levels to help pupils improve their work.

### **Commentary**

106. No GCSE examination courses were in place until recently and the current Year 11 will be the first cohort to take a GCSE examination. Standards by Year 11 are below the level expected nationally, and achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because the course followed does not match pupils' needs as it places insufficient emphasis on the development of practical skills. However, for the current, very small, group of pupils in Year 10, a more relevant examination course has been introduced and standards are in line with expectations and rising rapidly. For this group of pupils, achievement is satisfactory. However, overall achievement in Years 10 to 11 is unsatisfactory.
107. Teachers' assessments in 2003 and 2004 at the end of Year 9 show that pupils reach above average levels, representing good achievement from average standards in ICT on entry. There is a sustained three-year trend of improving standards, with girls constantly outperforming boys at expected levels and above. In lessons, standards are above national expectations, with most pupils achieving well and some achieving very well.
108. The implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for Years 7, 8, and 9 has brought strong coherence to the teaching of ICT and has provided a very good basis for learning. In each year group, the achievement of the majority of pupils is good, but it is especially good in Year 9. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and it is good for those identified as gifted and talented. However, many pupils bring high levels of experience of ICT to the subject and, occasionally, the challenges presented to them do not fully extend their ability.
109. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are very good throughout Years 7 to 9, as the effective implementation of the National Strategy for ICT, and a good team of staff sharing

good practice, have created a basis of good practice. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, because lessons are not well matched to the range of pupils' abilities. Much of the teaching is very good, with none unsatisfactory. The best teaching is well planned with clear aims and objectives, with teachers making very good and appropriate use of software presentation packages. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, so little time is lost in managing behaviour; lessons have very good pace and direction. Pupils' attitudes are very good and teachers have high expectations. Pupils make very positive contributions to lessons and often give answers highlighting their own personal research and interest in the subject. The teachers' strong commitment is demonstrated through the extra-curricular opportunities they provide that are always fully attended by pupils across the year groups. All non-specialist teachers involved in the teaching of the subject have successfully completed their New Opportunities Fund training initiative for ICT. The teachers involved in the national strategy have undertaken further professional training to ensure the effective teaching of the units.

110. The assessment of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory overall. It is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because the assessment procedures used in marking and grading class work are inconsistent and the determination of National Curriculum levels is not secure. It is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, where teachers are more familiar with examination requirements.
111. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department has been in post for only a short time and much has been achieved, but there is still a good deal to do. The department benefits from the appointment of another specialist teacher. However, the curriculum within all year groups is insufficiently matched to the needs of all pupils and the number of pupils following an examination course in ICT in Years 10 and 11 is very low. The head of department has made positive contributions to the governors' committee for ICT about current and future provision in ICT and these are being considered for future implementation.
112. Although there has been a major investment in accommodation, resources, infrastructure and training, a number of factors still have a negative impact on teaching. In several rooms, there is not enough space away from the computers for pupils to plan and reflect individually, or to work easily in groups. In some rooms, a lack of effective air-conditioning leads to the generation of enormous heat from the equipment, and an uncomfortable atmosphere. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. However, progress has been satisfactory since the appointment of the head of department.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

113. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is **satisfactory** and pupils' competence in using ICT across the curriculum is **good**. In all subjects, ICT is used as an aid to learning. All the pupils have e-mail addresses and access to Internet research. All subjects within their schemes of work have designated five per cent of curriculum time to ICT, with very good evidence of use by pupils in design and technology and good opportunities within art and design, drama, English, geography, modern foreign languages, music and science. The opportunity for pupils to use ICT in mathematics is unsatisfactory.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Latin**

114. Although not a focus for the inspection, one lesson of Latin was seen during the inspection and pupils' work was sampled. Standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Pupils show excellent attitudes to work.

## Classical civilisation

115. Although not a focus for the inspection, two lessons of classics were seen during the inspection and pupils' work was sampled. It was not possible to come to an overall judgement on the basis of lessons seen. Standards range from average to above average and pupils achievement from good to unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning were good in one lesson and unsatisfactory in another, where insufficient demands were placed on pupils and some were allowed to waste considerable time. A large number of pupils opt to study the subject in Year 10. Pupils showed good attitudes to work in one lesson and varied attitudes in another, with some being unsatisfactory.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and achievement is very good.
- Very good teaching motivates pupils to learn very well.
- Teachers expect high standards of work and behaviour from their pupils.
- Pupils show high levels of interest and involvement.
- The targets set for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are often too low.

## Commentary

116. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is well above that expected nationally in teacher assessments and in work seen during the inspection. Most pupils begin Year 7 with attainment that is above the national expectation. Most pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9. This is because they are taught very well and they are prepared to work hard. Pupils with special educational needs usually achieve well because they receive good, appropriate support from their class teachers and from support assistants. The vast majority of pupils in Years 7 to 9 have very good knowledge and understanding of the past. They see and explain well the reasons for past events. They understand and explain that there may be differing views of past events. Most use a wide range of historical sources very well to make their own valid deductions about the past. The highest attainers offer their own views in mature and well-structured extended accounts.

117. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were significantly above the national average at grades A\*-C. The proportion attaining the highest grades of A\* or A was twice the national average. It was not possible to see any lessons in Year 11 because pupils were on work experience. The work seen, both from pupils in Year 10 and in a large sample of work by pupils in Year 11, is well above the national expectation. The majority of pupils achieve very well. This is the result of very good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to work.

118. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 have very good knowledge of the topics they study and understand well why events happened. Pupils in Year 10, for example, show very good understanding of the complexities of the relationships between the main world powers in the 1920s. The majority express themselves very articulately, both in writing and orally. Their written work contains lucid and cogent arguments, based on their very competent use of historical sources. Lower attainers have good knowledge and understanding and explain accurately the motives for actions taken in the past.

119. Teaching is very good overall and occasionally excellent. Most pupils learn very well. The high quality teaching is based on the teachers' very good subject expertise, which is used effectively to provide motivating and stimulating lessons. Pupils are invariably actively involved in their learning. In most lessons, enthusiastic teaching and very good relationships create an

atmosphere in which hard work is enjoyable and where learning is fun. Teachers expect pupils will reach high standards and most pupils rise willingly to the challenge. Very occasionally, these expectations are too high and pupils become frustrated. The support that class teachers provide for pupils with special educational needs usually ensures that they learn and achieve well.

120. The department is led and managed well. As a result, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained at a very high level and teaching is very good. The department makes good use of ICT for teaching. There are, however, no ICT facilities in the department for pupils to use to support their own independent learning, and access to centrally provided facilities is not always available at times to suit the department. The National Curriculum targets set for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are often not accurate. This is partly because they are not based on pupils' prior attainment in history in Year 8 and 9. As a result, pupils are unsure of exactly how well they are achieving. This is a weakness the department needs to deal with quickly.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are very high and pupils achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall and better in Years 10 and 11 than between Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management are good and have led to good improvement since the last inspection.
- The use of assessment to raise standards further is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

121. Teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicate that standards were well above average. These standards have been maintained over recent years. Current standards are well above national expectations and this represents good achievement from above average standards on entry in geography. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly when they are very well supported by very good classroom assistants. Average and slightly above average attaining pupils make very good progress. Higher attainers make good progress and are challenged well to think in class discussion, in group work and in descriptive writing; however, they do not attempt enough high level written analysis. The single weekly lesson in Year 9 limits writing in class.

122. Although the GCSE examination results declined in 2004 from a previously very high point, the results were well above average and pupils made very good progress against their prior attainment on entry to GCSE. It was not possible to observe lessons in Year 11. Standards in lessons in Year 10 and in exercise books in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and achievement is very good. Pupils make very good progress. Teachers have identified boys' performance in their coursework as a target for improvement and are successfully providing them with stronger guidance.

123. Teaching is very good overall; it is very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9. Some excellent teaching occurs in Years 7 to 9, brought about by the implementation of the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 strategy. A strong teaching team has complementary skills, shared enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge, shown in the very good preparation of appropriate materials and the good management of classrooms and pupils. Teachers and pupils share values and have high expectations of themselves and others. The pace is fast, with strong oral work. Pupils listen and speak confidently. They

participate very well and work easily in pairs and mixed ability and gender groups. The skilled use of powerful visual stimuli provokes very good learning; consequently, pupils reached very high standards in their written homework describing the Kobe earthquake. The use of mathematics and ICT is developed well. Homework projects in development allow extended research. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is thorough and encouraging but does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Most pupils know their target grades but have no sharp focus on raising them. The use of data for continuous assessment is under-developed and the performance of boys and girls is not compared in Years 7 to 9.

124. Leadership and management are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Provision has improved from being largely unsatisfactory to good, GCSE results have improved from below to well above average, and teaching and learning have improved. A non-specialist is prudently deployed and the department has good quality long-term supply staff. There is sufficient time for fieldwork in Years 10 and 11 but there is insufficient practical work in Years 7 to 9 to support coursework skills. A very good ethos is created by a subject suite, very good display and a shared office, which allows staff to communicate easily in a large school.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of pupils' work is well above average and occasionally very high and achievement is very good.
- Very demanding teaching leads to very high standards.
- The quality of assessment and the monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment are very good.

#### **Commentary**

125. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment in National Curriculum teacher assessments is well above the national average. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, results were well above the national average when considering all aspects of the subject. Almost three quarters of pupils achieved a grade C or better, an improvement since the previous year. The most recent GCSE results show that standards are lower in resistant materials and electronics but remain above average.

126. Lessons in Year 11 were not observed during the inspection but a thorough work review was carried out covering practical project work, design folders and project folders.

127. Standards are well above average overall in relation to the national expectation by the end of Year 9. Pupils make very good progress. They produce articles of very good quality and are developing excellent skills to express their ideas and communicate their designs. The very high standards and achievement are due to the very high expectations of teaching staff and the pupils' response, as seen, for example, in the Year 7 lesson when pupils were constructing electronic circuits to a very high standard. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 is well above the standard expected nationally. They make very good progress and achieve very well. Higher attaining pupils are capable of producing work of exceptionally high quality, as seen, for example, in their detailed and very well presented project folders, and the very good quality work in the practical projects. Standards are lower in resistant materials and electronics than in food technology, textiles, graphics, and systems, but are still above average. Pupils following the options for resistant materials and electronics often have lower results in national assessments at the end of Year 9 but by the end of Year 11 achieve well.

128. Pupils make very good use of computers, as for example, in the use of computer-aided design and manufacture seen in a Year 10 lesson when pupils were designing packaging for consumer products. Pupils are challenged to focus clearly on the requirements of the GCSE examination. As a result, pupils understand what they need to do and are helped to reach the higher grades. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The high standards are a result of very good planning of lessons, the excellent quality of the marking and the high quality of the assessment.
129. Teaching and learning are very good, and in three lessons, the teaching was excellent. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations to engage pupils. Effective classroom management is based on very good relationships. The very good range of activities ensures that all pupils are actively involved in their learning. Lessons are sharply focused and the objectives are shared sufficiently with the pupils. Key learning points are systematically reinforced and new knowledge is introduced as and when it is needed, so that pupils use it immediately to develop their understanding. There is a very good level of support for pupils with special educational needs, helping these pupils to progress very well. The use of the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has helped to improve planning and teaching.
130. Assessment is very good. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers provide encouraging, motivating comments that show pupils how to improve. The outcomes of these assessment are used consistently and effectively to inform future planning and teaching. Systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and attainment are very well developed. Information from assessment is used to set challenging targets. The use of assessment, and the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment, contribute positively to raising standards.
131. The head of department provides very good leadership. Management of the department is very good. The head of department has rightly focused on lesson planning to improve teaching, designing a curriculum that interests and meets the needs of all pupils. The level of technician support for resistant materials is very good and makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the department. Technical support for food technology is very limited. The size and layout of accommodation for food technology are not always suitable for larger classes and on occasions slow progress. The department has access to computers but the provision for computer-aided manufacture is limited and restricts access to modern production methods, particularly for older pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and learning and in standards.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Drama**

Provision in drama is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The GCSE examination results have been well above average.
- Very good teaching and pupils' enthusiasm and strong commitment to their work ensure that pupils achieve very well in their GCSE examinations.
- Teachers' use of GCSE assessment information to show pupils how to improve is excellent.
- Pupils in Year 10 are being challenged by the opportunity to study two GCSE examination subjects.



## Commentary

132. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above the national average but some girls did not do as well as expected. Standards in 2004 showed some improvement. They were further above average and many pupils did better in drama than they did in their other subjects.
133. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above expectation. Standards of written work are well above average. Higher attaining pupils write fluently and have very good analytical skills. The most capable have mature research and ICT skills and make good use of the library and the Internet to investigate writers, plays and themes and historical, social and cultural contexts. Their diaries and notebooks indicate a good awareness of the assessment objectives of the courses and, consequently, their writing is fluent and analytical, with interpretations well justified and illustrated. Their planning is also very good, as are their devised scripts and their discussion and problem-solving skills. The few, comparatively less capable pupils do not always show a full understanding of the concepts and conventions of drama which they have studied, and their commentaries are sometimes descriptive, rather than evaluative. Overall standards of performance are well above average and show pupils' impressive ability to create, plan, develop, shape and evaluate their drama and to respond to a wide range of stimuli.
134. Overall standards in Years 7 to 9 are around expectation. All pupils recognise that drama is a discipline and not a recreation, and most respond enthusiastically and creatively and use a range of basic drama techniques. Ensemble work is good by the end of Year 9, though some pupils are not always aware of the impact of voice, facial expressions and body language on an audience.
135. Most pupils enter the school with little experience of drama. They achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is helped considerably by pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm for the subject, by their willingness to work together and share ideas, and by the recently improved facilities and resources. Pupils in Year 10 are being challenged by studying for GCSE examination courses in drama and in the national pilot in applied performing arts. The subject makes a worthwhile contribution to all pupils' social and moral awareness, through the consideration of issues such as bullying and homelessness, and through providing frequent opportunities for pupils to perform publicly and to see, and work with, professional actors. There are also important links with other departments and areas, including English, modern languages, history and citizenship.
136. Teaching and learning are very good, and there is an appropriate focus on drama skills in all years. Pupils respond well, enjoying the frequent opportunities for collaborative problem solving and decision making. Lessons are carefully planned, using appropriate assessment objectives, and cover the very important areas of trust and teamwork. They also involve pupils in evaluating their own and others' performances in an objective, supportive and positive way. Consequently, self-confidence and esteem are fostered as pupils help, and learn from, each other. The departments' use of assessment information in Years 10 and 11, to guide, support and challenge all pupils, is excellent.
137. Very good leadership and management ensure infectious enthusiasm and energy which motivate pupils well. The team of highly committed teachers constantly reviews its work and plans very well for improvement. It also makes very good use of assessment data to set individual and whole-class targets; however, it has yet to incorporate the newly introduced National Curriculum level information into its schemes of work for Years 7 to 9. Drama was not reported separately during the last inspection, so it is not possible to make a judgement on improvement.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good throughout the school and the progress made by the majority of pupils ensures that standards are gradually rising.
- Teaching is good, with a good team of teachers who make the best of their complementary skills.
- Lesson planning does not meet the needs of all pupils in some lessons in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of ICT in Years 7 to 9 provides access to a broad music curriculum for all pupils and enhances curricular opportunities for pupils throughout the school.
- Accommodation and resources are very good, with a full range of good quality classroom instruments for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Extra-curricular provision is excellent, with a wide range of opportunities for pupils of all abilities to perform.

### Commentary

138. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards were above the national average in 2004. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with the national expectation as a result of staffing problems. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are confident performers on keyboards and untuned percussion instruments. They perform accurately from staff notation. Singing techniques in class are under-developed. The GCSE examination results have been consistently above the national averages. The absence of pupils in Year 11 during the inspection meant that standards of work could only be judged through their coursework. This was generally above the standard expected nationally. Pupils in Year 10 are gaining in competence in their use of ICT, which enhances the quality and accuracy of their work. Those pupils receiving instrumental tuition are frequently working at a higher standard, but only in Years 10 and 11 are they regularly encouraged to use their instruments in lessons. The achievement of pupils throughout the school is good.

139. Teaching and learning are good overall; one very good lesson was observed in Year 10. This good teaching is characterised by good starter activities linked to the main topic of the lesson, clear explanations of learning objectives and musical techniques, encouragement of pupils, including recognition and valuing of pupil contributions, and command of a range of instruments. There is good use of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 to help pupils to improve, and very good oral feedback to older musicians, although the marking of pupils' work is not consistent across the department. Pupils are interested in their work. Where learning is good or better, pupils' progress is aided by impressive teacher demonstrations. In Years 7 to 9 the main weakness now is that content and tasks do not consistently match pupils' needs, although this was not the case in some lessons. There is lack of such aids as listening diaries for pupils to consolidate learning and widen their general musical knowledge, particularly in the GCSE course.

140. Leadership of the department is very good and management is good. The new head of department has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the music department and has begun to prioritise the necessary remedial actions, linked to the targets of the successful Performing Arts College bid. Despite previous staffing instability, there is now a team spirit in the department where the staff put the needs of their pupils first at all times. There is a clear vision, shared by the staff, which at its heart has a desire to provide the best possible musical education for the pupils within the combined ethos of a Christian society and a performing arts college. Pupil performance is monitored, new staff are supported and the department has a good reputation for its practical work. Management is reflective, assessment is improving and a consistent marking policy has already been identified as a priority for improvement.

Department documentation is under constant review, for example to include the new technology, and the strengths of each member of staff are utilised well.

141. This is a well-resourced department. The new ICT equipment and accommodation provided as part of the successful performing arts status bid are excellent and, despite early teething troubles, are used extremely well by staff and pupils alike. Their positive impact on the quality of presentation and on the progress of pupils has been immediate. Extra-curricular activities are plentiful and are supported well, some of them run by members of the instrumental team. Some of the groups, especially the Canon Slade Singers, are of a very high standard and the school regularly makes CDs of their musical performances. These emphasise the Christian ethos of the school and the multi-cultural development of the pupils. Links with partner schools, the community and local churches are very good.
142. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The time for curriculum music in Years 7 to 9 is now sufficient and the department has renewed and replaced its class instruments, significantly adding to the quality and quantity. It has maintained its strengths whilst increasing the size of examination groups and is beginning to raise standards.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weakness**

- High standards have been maintained throughout the school, because of very good teaching and learning.
- The achievement of pupils over their time in school is very good but pupils in Year 7 to 9 are not always clear about how well they are doing.
- The very good leadership of the subject leads to a strong, shared commitment and vision to continue to raise standards.
- Limited access to ICT resources restricts their use in Years 7 to 9
- A high emphasis is put on pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- There are too few visits to art galleries.

#### **Commentary**

143. In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards were well above the national average. Similar results were recorded in 2004 and these are better than at the time of the last inspection.
144. The results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were well above average for pupils gaining grades A\*-C. Over a quarter of pupils gained the highest grades of A\* or A and a significant proportion of these were boys. Achievement was good. Pupils performed slightly better in art and design than in most other subjects within the school. The high standards have been maintained in 2004; the results were very similar to those in 2003.
145. Standards by Year 9 are well above expectation and of a comparable level to the teachers' assessments in 2004. This represents good achievement for all pupils, given that the majority of pupils arrive in Year 7 with an above average level of understanding and an average level of technical skills. They learn very quickly because the effective teaching and the structured nature of the course build strongly on their technical skills and understanding of art and artists. This gives them the confidence and ability to produce high quality work. In Year 9, pupils research the work of Henry Moore and produce high quality drawings reflecting his use of shape and form. Higher attainers' design sheets reflect extra research on other public artists such as Anthony Gormley, whilst lower attainers' work shows a good level of personal response. Teachers positively encourage the written evaluation and analysis of artists' work,

and pupils' literacy skills are well above average. ICT is used well; however, there are insufficient opportunities for all pupils to gain access to resources and use them for creative purposes.

146. No Year 11 lessons were observed as pupils were out of school on work experience. Scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that standards are well above average and of a similar level to the GCSE examination results in 2003 and 2004. Achievement of all pupils is very good. Many pupils reach high standards when interpreting whole-class themes and confidently use a range of materials and processes to express their creative ideas. This is particularly evident in textiles projects, where innovative and exciting techniques are used to produce wall hangings and structures. A strength of the department is the emphasis put on a pupil's personal response and interpretation. In a project based on 'Identity', pupils produced highly individual work after studying the work of artists such as Andy Warhol. The positive use of annotation, analysis and evaluation raises standards. The work of higher attainers often shows a sophisticated understanding of concepts, whilst lower attaining pupils are given the guidance and support to produce work to the best of their abilities. All pupils achieve particularly well in researching African masks and developing their ideas into clay work.
147. The quality of teaching is predominantly very good and consequently pupils improve and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11. Learning is very good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and the high expectations demanded of them create a positive climate for learning. Lessons are very well planned to include a wide range of enjoyable activities. Teachers manage pupils very efficiently when working in a variety of media in cramped conditions. This ensures that pupils experience a range of approaches and make very good progress in developing their knowledge and technical skills. By involving pupils in challenging discussion, giving very clear explanations, demonstrating techniques and building in an element of humour, the teachers stimulate and motivate the pupils to do their best. Pupils respond very well to the effective teaching and their attitudes and behaviour are very good. In examination classes, pupils are very well motivated, frequently pursue work in their own time and confidently discuss their ideas and how to research them. Teachers have a very good command of their specialisms and give a high level of individual support and advice. The marking of work is supported well by diagnostic comments but pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not always clear of the level they have attained as there are no separate marks for effort and attainment.
148. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvement overall has been good. However, there is still the outstanding issue of insufficient teaching space for ceramics. The department has extended the range of extra-curricular activities. Learning is supported well by artists in residence, but there are still too few visits to art galleries and places of visual interest for pupils on examination courses.
149. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department leads a very effective team of staff who have a strong, shared commitment to raising standards. Schemes of work and policy statements are very clear and informative, and are reviewed regularly in response to changing demands. Some good initiatives for assessment are in place but these do not yet, for example, involve pupils in setting their own targets. A high emphasis is put on pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. The ethos of the subject is strongly promoted by high quality displays within the school and art and design is a popular choice for examination classes.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because of good teaching, but occasionally lessons lack challenge for gifted and talented pupils.
- Attitudes of pupils are very good and there are very good relationships between pupils and their teachers.
- Leadership and management are good.
- There is an impressive list of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils.
- The present curriculum plan for Years 7 to 9 is in need of some improvement, and assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

150. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well above average but these appear generous and do not match the standards seen in lessons. Pupils enter the school with a range of experiences and their attainment varies between activities. Their attainment is below average in gymnastics and swimming on entry to the school, but pupils achieve well in these activities throughout the school.
151. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils have a wide knowledge and understanding of gymnastics. They plan and perform a sequence of movement with good control and flow and use space effectively. In swimming, pupils perform a range of strokes with very good technique and synchronise their stroke work with breathing. In both these activities, they achieve well to attain above average standards. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in netball and hockey are also above average; they know the rules of the game and the strategies of attack and defence. All pupils know the importance of a warm-up prior to exercise and understand the effects of exercise on the body.
152. In Year 10 standards are above national expectations and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 10, standards are above average in most activities. Standards are above average in football. Pupils possess a high level of knowledge and understanding of the game and take responsibility for coaching their peers in lessons. This makes a positive contribution to their personal development.
153. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and has been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Lesson planning contains the outline of objectives but these are not always shared with pupils. Learning objectives from the National Curriculum are not identified from the programme of study in the activities taught. However, teachers possess very good knowledge of the activities taught and they form very good relationships with their pupils. This is a strength of the department and pupils enjoy being with their teachers.
154. Pupils with a special educational need are identified and are integrated into lessons. There are no arrangements made for these pupils in planning, but they make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils are also identified but sometimes there is insufficient challenge for them in lessons. The swimming pool lifeguard makes a positive contribution to lessons.
155. Pupils' attitudes are very good, and sometimes excellent. They arrive enthusiastically to lessons, are well prepared and work hard. There are few non-participants. They are appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer and there is a high level of participation. School teams are successful in a range of sports and they have been successful at national level in cross-country running, athletics, tennis and biathlon. A high number of

pupils have achieved representative success at national, regional and local level in a range of sports; this is impressive. There are good links with outside clubs such as Bolton Wanderers Football Club and other sporting bodies. Pupils benefit from coaching in judo and athletics. The award of Sportsmark is a clear indication of the commitment of the school and its staff to physical education.

156. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Assessment only takes place at the end of Years 9 and 11, but information is provided for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 10. Frequently pupils are not aware of the progress they are making. Reports to parents are unsatisfactory. They state what pupils have done but not what they know or understand. They do not always support pupils in how they can improve.
157. Leadership and management are good, with some major strengths and some weaknesses. The head of department is enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. He is a good role model and a good teacher and has created an effective team of teachers. The ethos in the department is very good. Monitoring of teaching takes place regularly as part of performance management, results are analysed and there is a clear development plan. However assessment is unsatisfactory and whilst the curriculum meets statutory requirements and is broad and balanced overall, curriculum planning is in need of attention. The present plan indicates a different amount of time devoted to different activities, such as gymnastics, for boys and girls in Years 7 to 9. The amount of curriculum time devoted to Year 11 is below average. All teachers have completed training in ICT but there was little evidence of its use during the inspection.
158. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. A new all-weather surface is a welcome addition to the outdoor facilities. Standards continue to be above average and teaching continues to be good. There has been a high level of success in competitive sports events and individual and team achievement. The school plans to introduce a GCSE course in September 2005.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Citizenship has been successfully integrated into the personal, social and health education programme.
- The leadership and management of the course are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Achievement in Year 10 is limited by the amount of curriculum time available.
- A clear reflection of the values promoted within citizenship lessons permeates the wider life of the school.
- There are too few links with the community and the use of visiting speakers is limited.

### **Commentary**

159. Standards are above national expectation by Year 9. Pupils are developing well their knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens and how the country is governed. They think competently for themselves and have informed views about their own rights and responsibilities. Achievement is good. In Year 7, pupils learn about active citizenship and consider issues such as the need to co-operate in the school's anti-litter strategy. In Year 8, they have a good understanding of human rights and competently discuss the effects of prejudice and stereotyping in relation to the treatment of elderly people. By Year 9, pupils know how to make their voice heard at local and national level and understand the role of Members

of Parliament. At a more local level, in meetings, they strongly presented their opinions about school toilets and lunches.

160. By Year 11, standards are above national expectations. Pupils deploy their knowledge, express and justify their opinions and understand the opinions of others well. For example, pupils in Year 10 confidently discussed how they knew more about criminal law than civil law, as a result of the high profile given to more sensational trials in the media and the effect this has on people's perceptions and opinions. Pupils are given the opportunity to consider and respond to a diverse range of controversial social and political issues and debate topics such as euthanasia and 'Would Britain would be better under a dictatorship?' Achievement is satisfactory.
161. Pupils are well prepared for work; they competently prepare CVs and letters of application. Achievement overall is satisfactory in Year 10 and 11. The pace of learning slows at this level as the amount of curriculum time is halved in Year 10, which has an impact on the continuity of learning and the ethos of the subject.
162. Teaching is predominantly good. Mostly, there is a good balance between input from the teacher and class activity, and pupils are given good individual attention. Teachers support pupils well and give the pupils the confidence to respond positively to discussion. They use a good variety of methods to teach aspects of the programme. Imaginative planning and challenging questioning encourage pupils to think for themselves. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes in lessons in Years 7 to 9 and see the relevance of the subject. Attitudes in Year 10 and 11 lessons are satisfactory. Most pupils learn well because they feel their views are of some importance and they confidently express them. A clear reflection of the values promoted within citizenship permeates the wider life of the school. Behaviour is good. Pupils show respect for each other's values and rights, co-operate very well and support each other.
163. Pupils show a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. The election of representatives to the school council gives pupils a good understanding of voting procedures and the importance of an elected person representing their views. The school has also held its own Pupil Voice conference, which led to the setting up of steering groups to bring about change. Extra-curricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme strongly support pupils' development but visiting speakers are currently under-used to extend pupils' experiences. Pupils have begun to collate a record of their experiences, both through the curriculum and through other opportunities, in a citizenship log. There is a strong history of raising money for charities within the school and the pupils demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to this.
164. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Both the subject leader and the co-ordinator have a clear vision for the development of the subject and a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The informative and thorough documentation gives very clear direction to the large number of staff who teach citizenship, as different teaching staff are involved each year.

## **Personal, social and health education**

Provision for personal, social and health education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good, builds pupils' confidence and challenges them to think independently
- The programme makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Leadership and management are good and the course is well structured
- There is no permanent staff, so teaching expertise gained in one year is often not used in the following year.

### **Commentary**

165. A comprehensive programme is taught to all pupils in the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Components of the well-planned course include a wide range of subjects and issues such as racism and diversity and study skills, and there are opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation such as the St John's Certificate in first aid. The sex education programme puts an emphasis on the importance of personal relationships, with strong guidance on assertiveness, decision making and problem solving. The curriculum is supported well by events such as a Bullying Conference. A themed day on sex and relationship education is planned at the Reebok Stadium, which will be supported by outside agencies and speakers.

166. Pupils are given good guidance on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse to enable them to make informed decisions about their own response and behaviour. Defined procedures are in place for any incidents involving the use of drugs, which are clearly communicated to parents. Pupils achieve well and make sound gains across an appropriate range of areas because teaching is predominantly good. In the best practice, teachers build on pupils' confidence in discussion and challenge pupils to think independently. Lessons are well planned and supported by resources of good quality. The management and leadership of the well-structured course are very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for its development and efficiently leads a committed team of core staff. Guidance to staff is very clear and informative, and schemes of work and assessment structures are very well planned to ensure progression. The co-ordinator and the core team train staff very well but as there is no permanent dedicated team to teach the programme it does mean that in particular areas, such as sex and health education in Years 10 to 11, valuable expertise gained one year is not used the next.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **Business economics**

167. One lesson of business economics was sampled. In this lesson standards were above average and pupils achieved well, because of good, well-organised teaching. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and develop a good understanding of the relevance and importance of business planning. They develop good cross-curricular skills such as note taking. They work hard and take an active part in discussions and debates.



## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 12 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

### *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	9	77.8	80.1	11.1	23.7	26.7	29.9
Biology	3	100	65.2	33.3	11.1	46.7	20.6
Business studies	12	83.3	76.4	33.3	16.3	31.7	26.2
Chemistry	9	66.7	72.7	11.1	13.9	22.2	24.1
Classical studies	2	100	87.4	0.0	34.3	20.0	35.2
Communication studies	5	100	86.4	80.0	23.8	46.0	32.0
Drama	1	100	86.5	0.0	19.6	40.0	30.6
English / English language	2	100	82.9	50.0	17.5	40.0	28.7
English literature	5	100	85.9	100	19.1	54.0	30.2
French	3	100	78.2	33.3	18.9	36.7	27.6
Design and technology	1	100	74.9	0.0	15.1	30.0	25.3
General studies	21	71.4	73.9	19.0	17.8	24.3	25.7
Geography	2	100	74.3	0.0	19.8	40.0	26.5
German	3	100	81.5	33.3	19.3	40.0	28.9
History	7	85.7	80.7	0.0	19.5	22.9	28.6
Mathematics	11	100	61.9	27.3	17.1	39.1	22.1
Music	2	100	86.5	100	21.4	50.0	30.7
Other Sciences	6	100	71.4	0.0	15.8	26.7	24.3
Other Social studies	8	100	69.7	0.0	16.7	23.8	24.1
Physics	4	100	68.6	0.0	14.4	32.5	22.7
Religious studies	14	57.1	80.2	21.4	22.6	20.7	29.8
Sociology	1	100	71.8	100	18.4	60.0	25.4
Spanish	1	100	78.5	0.0	17.7	20.0	27.3
Sports / PE studies	4	100	73.2	0.0	11.4	35.0	23.1

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	15	100	98.6	53.3	50.2	92.0	87.5
Biology	27	100	96.4	37.0	39.2	83.0	78.6
Business studies	22	100	98.7	40.9	36.8	83.6	80.1
Chemistry	17	100	97.6	47.1	49.0	87.1	84.9
Classical studies	6	100	99.5	16.7	55.9	70.0	90.9
Communication studies	26	100	99.4	80.8	37.8	106.9	82.1
Dance	1	100	98.5	100	44.9	100	83.9
Drama	12	100	99.5	66.7	40.1	101.7	83.6
English / English language	28	100	99.4	39.3	36.3	83.6	80.9
English literature	21	100	99.5	76.2	46.5	101.9	86.5
French	11	100	98.8	36.4	51.5	80.0	87.6
Design and technology	12	100	97.8	25.0	35.0	81.7	77.9
General Studies	130	100	94.7	30.0	31.0	77.7	73.1
Geography	34	100	98.7	67.6	44.5	96.5	84.0
German	6	100	98.4	33.3	47.9	76.7	84.8
History	22	100	99.0	31.8	44.6	76.4	84.6
Mathematics	39	100	96.7	66.7	55.6	95.4	88.8
Music	5	100	98.8	60.0	38.9	96.0	81.1
Other Sciences	10	100	97.3	10.0	41.5	66.0	80.3
Other Social studies	31	100	97.4	25.8	42.7	75.5	81.8
Physics	8	100	96.7	50.0	44.6	92.5	81.7
Religious studies	27	100	98.8	33.3	46.7	78.5	85.6
Sociology	10	100	98.2	70.0	44.3	100	83.6
Spanish	5	100	98.3	20.0	50.2	80.0	86.9
Sports / PE studies	16	100	97.7	44.2	42.1	85.6	81.9

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English, languages and communication

168. The inspection focus was on English literature but English language and the combined English language and literature course were sampled. One lesson of each sampled subject was seen. Standards are well above those found nationally in both subjects and teaching and learning are very good. In the language course, students respond eagerly and sensitively to a range of written and spoken texts and, in lessons and their work, they use the subject's specialist language with ease and demonstrate a very good understanding of its concepts. They also show very good research skills in their personal topic work; consequently, they achieve very well. In the combined course, students respond very well to being given choices, both of texts and in their ways of working. They show maturity, commitment and independence; hence, their achievement is very good.

## English literature

Provision in English literature is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistently well above average.
- Very good teaching ensures that learning is both challenging and enjoyable.
- Students achieve very well because of their strong commitment and hard work.

### Commentary

169. Results for both male and female students in the A-level examinations in 2002 were above the national average and well above the national average in 2003. Unconfirmed figures for 2004 indicate that the rising trend has continued. The AS results were very high in 2003 and the unconfirmed results for 2004, from a much larger entry, are equally high.
170. Standards of work by Year 13 are well above course expectations. The most capable students write with controlled assurance. Their writing on Chaucer, Jane Austen and Shakespeare, for example, is particularly perceptive and sensitive and shows very good critical and analytical skills, as well as a close and thorough understanding of the texts. They are also very aware of the social and cultural influences upon the writers they study and how these influence their works. Essays are thoroughly planned; writing and argument are mature and interpretations well justified. Personal responses to all three literary genres show that students are not afraid to have independent and controversial views and that they justify them very well.
171. Examination results, lesson observations and students' written work show that their achievement is very good. Because of their enthusiasm and maturity, and the very good teaching, their writing, research and oral skills mature rapidly in the sixth form. A good range of theatre visits, lectures and university links also enhances their learning opportunities. A further reason for this successful achievement is the excellent relationship between students and with their teachers. As a consequence, they work very well, both independently and collaboratively, and they enjoy their lessons, particularly when using computers to research topics which they have chosen themselves, engaging in dramatic approaches to texts or giving presentations.
172. Teaching and learning are very good. Marking is of high quality and is used very effectively to show students what they need to do to improve; however, the department does not yet make full use of the assessment data available to set targets for students. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of their students, and plan well to make lessons relevant, challenging and enjoyable. This was well illustrated in a Year 13 lesson on *The Handmaid's Tale* in which students enthusiastically examined a collage of newspaper headlines and then used them to create a picture of contemporary morality. Students are inspired by their teachers and clearly share their love of literature.
173. The leadership of this dedicated team of teachers is very good. The head of department encourages and supports staff well, particularly in their professional development, and sets a good example of commitment and dedication. Management of the wide range of English subjects is also very good. The department is a thinking department which regularly evaluates its own performance and shares best practice, and it is constantly looking for ways to improve even further. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good as standards are now consistently well above average, and teaching and achievement are very good.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

174. Standards of English and literacy skills in the sixth form are well above average and this enables students to make very good progress in their chosen courses. Speaking and listening are especially strong because there are many opportunities for discussions in lessons and students are encouraged to use talk to share, explore and debate ideas and opinions, solve problems and make decisions. Teaching is very good, with research, note taking and careful planning for essay writing also encouraged in all subjects.

## Modern foreign languages

175. Although German was the focus of the inspection, lessons in French and Spanish were sampled. Standards in both languages are well above average. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well. Students show high levels of motivation and have a sound knowledge of tenses.

## German

The quality of provision is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are well above average.
- Teaching is very good and results in well above average attainment.
- Students have excellent attitudes to work and show a high level of motivation and, as a result, they achieve very well.

## Commentary

176. In the A-level examinations in 2003, the results were well above average. Provisional results for 2004 indicate that the results remain well above average. Students achieve very well in relation to the grades they gained previously in their GCSE examinations.

177. At the end of Year 13 standards are well above course expectations. Students achieve very well and this applies to both male and female students. Students understand the detail of authentic spoken and written German about topical and political issues in Germany. They have a wide vocabulary and discuss important issues in depth and detail. They have a thorough understanding of grammar for work at this level. Students write at length about such topics as military service in Germany. Written work shows a high level of accuracy.

178. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, both with the level of spoken and written German required and with the technicalities of how best to prepare students for examinations. Teachers have high expectations of students' work and use marking very well to indicate to each individual how they can improve still further. Very good assessment of written work gives students a good indication of their present level of performance and their likely grades. Students are attentive and highly motivated. They work hard and develop very good individual and research skills. There is a relaxed but very businesslike working atmosphere in lessons.

179. The number of students who choose languages in the sixth form is steadily increasing. The curriculum is good and three languages are offered. Exchange visits with a school in Germany have substantial benefits in terms of students' learning, experience and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Clear policies and schemes of work contribute to raising standards. Teachers and students work hard together and show a high level of mutual respect. The subject has made very good

progress since the last inspection. Teaching is now monitored, numbers studying German are rising and ICT is now used well to support the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

180. The focus of the inspection was on applied mathematics. Other A-level mathematics courses were sampled, including double mathematics, mathematics and statistics, and mathematics and mechanics. Take-up of all of them is high. Standards are above average and students achieve very well at AS and at A-level. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good. Students' very positive attitudes and high level of commitment ensure very productive outcomes. Some weaknesses in basic algebra persist in all courses.

### **Applied mathematics**

Provision in applied mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average for both the AS and A-level programmes and students achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good and staff have very good subject knowledge.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation erodes the overall quality of work.

### **Commentary**

181. In the AS examinations in 2004, standards were well above the national average, maintaining the good results in earlier years. The same is true of the A-level results in 2004, which were also well above national average. On both programmes, retention rates were high. In terms of the students' attainment when they were in Year 11, these results represent very good achievement when allowance is made for the increased complexity and sophistication of the mathematics being studied.

182. Standards are well above those found nationally. One class considered small angle approximations for various trigonometric ratios and, using radians rather than degrees, were able to determine accurately the value of compound functions. In another lesson in Year 12 the teacher introduced the Normal Distribution as a way to determine probabilities. The approach was careful and thorough so that students were made to refer to a sketch of the normal distribution curve to reinforce their understanding. However, even with students in Year 13, simple errors of algebra are apparent.

183. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is employed well to interest and motivate students. The atmosphere in lessons allows a good degree of interaction between the teacher and students, but often with minimal input from female students. Although students use ICT in their coursework, none occurred in lessons and its application overall is only satisfactory. Opportunities for discussion are missed when teachers talk for too long and do not involve students in sharing ideas and solutions.

184. Leadership and management are very good. The assessment and marking of work are thorough. Accommodation for mathematics is unsatisfactory, and teachers have to use a wide range of non-specialist rooms spread around the site. This erodes the overall quality of work.

185. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. The A-level examination results have improved but ICT still does not play a large enough role in lessons. Attitudes to work remain of a high quality.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

186. Numeracy in the sixth form is satisfactory. Weaknesses apparent in the main school persist, so that, even in mathematics, students make errors in mental calculations. Work in some areas, for example business education and geography, make good use of graphs – the former to demonstrate the concept of break-even points. In general, the modest demands placed on students enable them to apply their mathematical knowledge effectively in most subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

187. Biology was the focus of the inspection but chemistry, environmental science, geology and physics were sampled. Three lessons of each of physics and chemistry were seen, covering AS and A-level classes. Take-up of both subjects is high. Standards are above average overall, with many students reaching very high standards. Students achieve very well from a basis of good results in the GCSE double award science. Students sustain high levels of performance and have considerable success in A-level examinations. Teaching and learning are good and students' success is further enhanced by their very positive attitudes, high level of commitment and motivation, and capacity for learning independently.

188. One lesson of environmental science was observed in Year 13. Attainment on entry is above average and students have consistently added value to their earlier attainment over the last five years. Teaching and learning in this lesson were very good. Students achieved high standards in a role-play exercise about deforestation in Brazil. They displayed very good skills of independent research of data from books and the Internet and the best are skilled editors.

189. Two geology lessons were observed. Attainment on entry is well above average and results at AS and A-level in 2004 were well above average. Numbers following the course are steady and reasonably high. Teaching and learning are very good and students achieve well above average standards in lively practical lessons where they make models to measure dip and strike of strata or engage in strongly focused discussion on recognising the differences between fossils. There is a shared enthusiasm between teacher and students which contributes strongly to the fast pace and well-informed discussion.

## **Biology**

Provision in biology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teachers' very good subject knowledge is effectively used to produce an interesting course that promotes good learning and achievement.
- The warm relationships and readiness to offer help to students with problems in the teacher's own time are productive in raising standards and self-confidence.
- The taught curriculum is good, but the current lack of a programme of visits and a field course detracts from its effectiveness.

## **Commentary**

190. The results in the AS examination in 2003 were well above the national average and were maintained in 2004. More than half the students gained the top grades of A or B. Students obtained better grades than might have been expected from their performance in their GCSE examinations. Students in Year 12 have made a good start to their course and are achieving well. Results in the A-level examination were above the national average in 2003 and were maintained in 2004. Students gained grades that indicated good progress from their GCSE examination performance.

191. Students in Year 13 are achieving well and producing work of a similar standard to previous years, and standards are well above course expectations. There is no significant trend in improvement but, unusually, standards at AS have been higher than those at A-level. The performances of boys and girls are similar. Almost all the students who set out on courses complete them. The numbers opting for biology in the sixth form are substantial and rising. Students use the microscope well, understand taxonomy and have a good understanding of scientific concepts, for example the water relations of cells.
192. The quality of teaching is good; together with the very positive attitudes of the students, it is resulting in good learning. The teaching in all lessons was at least good and some was very good. Strong features of the teaching include very good subject knowledge that is used well to provide an interesting course, with well-crafted questions to allow the students to develop and share ideas. The warm relationships encourage an environment where learning is enjoyed, with teacher and student working well together to resolve any difficulties. As a result, students are interested, listen well and work hard. They are stimulated to think and respond well to questions; consequently, their learning is good. However, in some lessons there is insufficient challenge for the more capable students, and valuable teaching time is sometimes used for work that students could well do for themselves initially, with any problems being discussed later.
193. The subject is well led and managed. The curriculum is good; it is broad and taught to a depth that enables high grades. However, at present, it lacks any visits or a field course to bring the subject to life. Whilst assessment is good, students know what level they are working at and what is needed to improve, there is insufficient understanding and use of data on their achievement to influence curriculum and lesson planning to match students' needs. ICT is used well in teaching and by students, but this is an area for further development. Students with special educational needs are well provided for and progress well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The use of ICT has improved as has the organisation of courses.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in the AS course in Year 12 are below expected levels and students are underachieving, because planning does not meet students' needs.
- There is insufficient preparation of students with no prior experience of a GCSE course in ICT to embark on A-level courses.
- The management of the subject is unsatisfactory, as there has been inadequate planning for the A-level course.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the subject.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- There is a limited range of curriculum opportunities for ICT in the sixth form.

### **Commentary**

194. This is the first year that the school has made provision for courses in ICT in the sixth form. Standards in ICT in Year 12 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Students are creating a website as part of one unit of work. Their planning for this unit of work is very basic and lacks sophistication, although it just meets examination board requirements. Progress in producing websites using commercial software is slow, although students have made some progress in learning the technicalities of this software. Students make good use of word-processing skills to produce help sheets for web pages, showing use of fonts and screen dumps. Students' understanding of more technical software, such as spreadsheets and

databases, is less secure than might be expected. They understand simple formulae but are unsure about procedures such as VLOOKUP. In work on data bases, they understand what is meant by validation, but have limited knowledge of data capture, procedures and functions. Only one student taking the AS course has any previous experience of an examined course. Students are underachieving as they are not reaching the standards expected for the course.

195. Teaching is unsatisfactory, because planning does not match students' needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain the use of software well to students, particularly on a one-to-one basis. Lessons are planned, with objectives being shared with students to help them understand what is expected of them. Planning of lessons are in line with the AS syllabus, but this does not always match the capabilities of all students. Unit planning sheets provide students with a good outline of expectations over a unit of work and the timescales involved. The very positive attitudes students have contribute to their learning. There are very good relationships between teachers and students
196. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is vision to develop the subject further and the introduction of A-level when the Year 12 students go on to Year 13 has provided students with some opportunities to study the subject in depth. The AS course is the only accredited course available in the sixth form, and this is not be suitable for some students, who wish only to maintain and improve their ICT skills to use in other subjects.
197. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory because there has been insufficient planning and preparation to take into account students' capabilities in ICT for A-level courses. This has led to lower than expected standards and students' under-achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

198. Sixth form students make good use of their ICT skills in many subjects. In design and technology and in music technology the use of ICT leads to good standards of work. In all subjects, students make extensive use of the Internet for research purposes, and where they are required to complete projects, they make effective use of word-processing skills in the presentation of their work. Students are competent users of the technology, and make effective use of the e-mail facility provided by the school to transfer work between home and school.

### **HUMANITIES**

199. Geography and history were inspected in depth, and psychology, law, classical history, latin and sociology were sampled.
200. Two lessons of psychology were observed, one in each of Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning are good; students achieve well and overall reach above average standards. Students engage in a significant amount of independent learning which they use successfully to provide good quality study materials for other students
201. One lesson of sociology was seen, in Year 13. Teaching and learning are good; students achieve well and overall reach above average standards. Relationships are very good and the course makes a good contribution to the moral, cultural and social development of the high attaining students. The content of the unit included religion, ethnicity and cultural identity.
202. One lesson of classics was seen during the inspection and students' work was sampled. Standards are above average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Students show good attitudes to work.
203. One lesson in law was sampled. Standards are well above average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good, building well on previous work and well-prepared homework. Students tackle class discussion and individual work confidently and knowledgeably,



demonstrating mature, studious attitudes to their work. Teaching lays emphasis on the development of analytical and communication skills. Marking provides good guidance on how to improve and is related to examination criteria and grades.

204. One lesson of Latin was seen during the inspection and students' work was sampled. Standards are well above average and students achieve well. Students show very good attitudes to work.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are very high and students achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The opportunity to study three advanced level subjects in a small department is very good curriculum provision.
- Assessment information is not used effectively enough to set targets for further improvement.

## **Commentary**

205. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is well above average. The AS results in 2003 were significantly above the national average and improved further in 2004. In 2003, the A-level results were well above the national average, and were well above average for male students and above average for female students. Again, results improved in 2004 and female students did better than male students based on their earlier performance. The AS and A-level results have improved steadily over the last three years. Overall, the high standards represent very good achievement. Standards are high and students achieve very well. Numbers have fluctuated but are always high. Retention between AS and A-level is very good and about a quarter go on to study geography-related subjects in higher education.
206. Teaching and learning are very good and promote very good achievement. Students have very good prior knowledge of their subject and retain new learning from lesson to lesson very well. Shared commitment and enthusiasm for the subject between teachers and students lead to high levels of involvement and students learn fast through discussion with their teachers. Teaching styles involve the students actively in their work. Teachers provide very good guidance for writing to give structure to detailed student notes. Students work very well and unselfconsciously in mixed gender groups, the membership of which is regularly varied to promote shared learning. Students deploy very good thinking skills, to discover the processes at work at different kinds of tectonic plate boundaries for example. They share and manage work very well when studying different tourist destinations. Students are confident speakers in extended talk and are unafraid to present their detailed findings about case studies to the rest of the group. They ask and often answer their own questions. For example, a student in Year 12 asked why, with the creation of new crust beneath the sea, the Earth was not expanding. He was then able to work out for himself that balance was preserved because crust was being destroyed in other places. Teachers frequently use powerful visual images to stimulate very good learning. For example, a Year 13 lesson contained a tour de force analysis of world tourism using memorable photographs. An aerial photograph of the majestic Victoria Falls also illustrated how political management influences tourism in Zimbabwe differently from Zambia. Students collate information very well from a variety of sources and many become mature independent learners.

207. Marking is thorough and always encourages students to strive to do better. The best marking is related to examination criteria and shows students how to improve, but this is inconsistent. Teachers know their students well and assess accurately but the use of this assessment to record progress and set targets for improvement is less secure.
208. Leadership and management are very good. That this small department offers three advanced level subjects is excellent curriculum provision, testimony to the complementary skills and enthusiasm of this very effective team. The school makes generous provision for field work in the geography-related subjects and staffing is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Provision has improved from satisfactory to very good, teaching has improved and standards have risen.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to consistently high examination grades. The course both requires, and helps to produce, high literacy levels.
- Brisk, purposeful teaching conveys information but also presents some challenge to pupils.
- Relationships are very good and students' good motivation contributes to their successful learning.
- Teachers help students to build up reasoned, balanced answers firmly based on evidence and the differing views of historians.
- The provision of ICT equipment is unsatisfactory, although teachers make good use of the resources available.
- In some lessons, the accommodation limits the effectiveness of the learning.

## Commentary

209. All students normally achieve a pass grade in the AS and A-level examinations and, apart from a dip in the A-level results in 2003, many students regularly get the highest possible grades. The 2004 A-level results were the best so far and were well above the national average. This represents very good achievement and progress, particularly in the case of the female students. The results are comparable to those of most other subjects. Standards in the current Year 13 are well above course expectation and achievement is very good.
210. Work seen in class and in files demonstrates that the students handle differing interpretations and conflicting sources. They respond very well to very good teaching and make positive contributions to discussions. They show good analytical skills. In written work on source evaluation, they make critical judgements about the values of different types of evidence and the differing opinions of historians. They both acquire, and use, an appropriate technical vocabulary and demonstrate very good skills of extended writing. This partly explains why the students consistently attain the higher grades. This success makes history a popular option choice. The few students with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented are well looked after and attain standards that show good progress from previous levels. Teachers and students form very good relationships and the learning experiences make a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students.
211. The teaching in the sixth form is consistently very good. It is characterised by very good subject competence, very good relationships, very good planning and a brisk, purposeful delivery that conveys information but also calls for some challenge and individual response. The students are all very well motivated and contribute to the successful learning. Students learn very well from the teacher and from each other but in some lessons, the physical layout of the desks and chairs inhibits any form of cross-class debate and the cramped conditions

restrict the very good group work. ICT is used well where it is possible to get access to the few interactive whiteboards and specialist computer rooms but is under-developed in terms of departmental provision. Procedures to share and spread good teaching practice are good.

212. Leadership and management are good. This helps to produce very good standards, very good relationships and much improved results. Analysis of examination results in order to improve performance is thoughtful and effective, assessment is thorough, and predicted grades are reliable. Concerns raised at the previous inspection have been addressed and strengths maintained. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

## **ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING**

### **Product design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students make very good progress and their achievement is excellent.
- The quality of work is of an exceptionally high standard.
- Teaching and learning are very good and occasionally excellent.
- The department is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

213. The AS and A-level results in 2003 were very high with all students attaining levels A to D. Students made very good progress and their achievement was excellent. In 2004 results were similar.

214. The quality of students' current work is of an exceptionally high standard. Students are achieving very well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE examination results. Achievement is the result of very effective teaching, which is very demanding. The lesson structure and activities clearly focus students on their learning. They recall knowledge well and apply it in a range of contexts; their project work is of an exceptionally high standard and shows the same confidence as their class work.

215. Teaching is very good and is occasionally excellent, and students learn very well as a result. The principal features of the very good teaching are clear objectives, sharp planning, brisk pace and a range of teaching strategies to bring about learning. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses this very well in discussion, questioning and demonstration of the tasks set. Lessons provide very good opportunities for students to practise what has been discussed and to develop their skills and techniques, which improve as lessons progress. Teachers also provide good opportunities for students to carry out detailed research, working as individuals to formulate ideas, record their findings and prepare specifications. They respond confidently to the activities.

216. Students learn very well. They are attentive, work productively and respond very well to the very supportive teaching and different learning styles they experience. They rise to the challenge of designing products for a specific purpose. In lessons, time is used very well. Students support and help each other effectively and, in groups, talk and listen to each other in a mature way as part of their learning. Students are always confident when offering ideas in open discussion and this was seen in a lesson when pupils were evaluating their designs and manufacturing component parts for their lighting projects. In Year 12 pupils followed a thematic approach to their projects, their designs reflecting the influences of the work of the Memphis School and designs from Bauhaus. The work seen was excellent because students gave

particular attention to the aesthetic aspects of design, the creative use of materials and technical aspects, manufacturing products of very good quality.

217. The very good teaching and learning result from work in the department being very well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. Planning effectively reflects the course requirements and determines the level for very good teaching. Recording of progress and target setting based on careful analysis of student performance through review, evaluation and assessment are very well established. Learning outcomes are sharply focused. Improvement in the quality of work since the last inspection has been good.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

218. The focus was on art and design, performing arts and theatre studies. Lessons in music, music technology and media studies were sampled.

219. Two lessons were seen in music, one in each of Year 10 and 11. Standards in music are above average, as are the AS and A-level examination results. The students on the AS and A-level courses achieve well. They are musical, articulate, mostly confident performers and are competent in their use of composing and sequencing software. They use it well when working on, for example, two-part writing in a Baroque style or writing for a drum kit. Music students are confident in their use of figured bass and cadences, though they lack a wide general knowledge of music history. Teaching and learning are good.

220. Music technology is a new course and is currently only taught in Year 12. One lesson was seen. Standards are well above average, and achievement is good. Students benefit from good teaching, resulting in good learning. The music technology course has opened up possibilities of sixth form music education for a wider range of students. The proposed recording studio is intended to enhance this provision even further. Music technology students benefit from excellent resources and display good understanding of editing and composing, especially quantizing and using loops. There is a wide range of opportunities in the extra-curricular activities.

221. One lesson of media studies was seen. Standards are well above national expectations and teaching and learning are very good. Students enjoy the subject, show an excellent awareness of world events and respond maturely to a wide range of texts. In their lessons and practical work, they show a very good understanding of media concepts, analyse texts very well and eagerly debate moral and ethical issues associated with them; therefore, they achieve very well.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and achievement is good
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this is reflected in the high quality of individual advice which plays an important role in raising standards.
- Attitudes of students are very good; they are well motivated and keen to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The provision of accommodation for independent study is poor.
- The department offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which is a significant factor in raising achievement.
- The analysis of examination data is not rigorous enough to inform planning effectively.

## Commentary

222. Results at A-level have been above the national average in recent years. In 2003, an above average number of students gained the top grades of A and B and grades A-E, and results in 2004 were very similar. This represented a good level of achievement in relation to their results at AS-level and in the GCSE examinations and students have made progress at a faster rate than expected. Results at AS-level in 2003 were above the national average but fell slightly in 2004. Most students achieved well. Retention to courses is good. Most students successfully complete them.
223. Standards by Year 13 are above course expectations overall because students' independent decision-making skills and their knowledge and skills in art and design are good. Much of the work is conceptually adventurous, grounded in a good understanding of how to undertake purposeful preparatory studies. Students work with a high degree of individuality and most show in-depth analysis and exploration of ideas and styles. This results in some work being of a very high standard. For example, studies based on Japanese art, following a visit to the country, demonstrated a very good understanding of the cultural use of surface decoration. They were presented in a highly innovative way, which reflected a high level of personal response. ICT is used well. Students frequently manipulate imagery to develop and extend work in areas such as animation. Learning is very well supported by enrichment activities such as visits to Paris and Saturday workshops where pupils work with practising artists to extend their techniques in areas such as graphic design, textiles and ceramics. Standards of literacy are very good and the investigation of texts and images shows an informed analytical response.
224. Achievement in the sixth form is good. In Year 12, students successfully move on from their GCSE work into new areas and rapidly build in the challenge of individual study and interpretation. Standards of work are above average. The students' portfolios demonstrate a growing ability to interpret and convey ideas and to use analytical and documenting skills. In a textiles project on body adornment, students diversified and pursued new lines of thought, through a range of research including experiments with a wide range of media.
225. Teaching is very good and students learn very well as a result. The teachers have a very good command of their subject and the specialisms they teach. A major strength is the emphasis given to independent thought and learning. High quality individual attention and knowledgeable advice play an important role in developing these and in raising standards. Students are looked on as artists, and individual needs are identified well. This enables students from differing backgrounds to make equal progress. In lessons, the quality of dialogue on the analysis and evaluation of work is very good and students are given clear references but do not record targets, so valuable opportunities to measure progress arising from them are missed. Teachers are always prepared with examples to support critical analysis of artists and give direction on techniques; however, the department's accommodation for independent study is unsatisfactory. Students have no room of their own and, because of the demands on the art rooms, it can be difficult to pursue work in private study time. This, combined with the timetabling of only single lessons, has a negative impact on the continuity and progression of the whole course.
226. Relationship between teachers and students are very good. This is particularly evident when areas of improvement are negotiated individually. Students have a positive attitude to their work, enjoy art and respond well to the supportive teaching. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject encourages students to be receptive to new ideas and viewpoints and students display a willingness to consider views and beliefs other than their own. Portfolios and sketchbooks are kept well and reflect pride and commitment.
227. The leadership of the department is very good and it is well managed. There is a strong, shared commitment within the department to build on what has already been achieved and to improve standards. Analysis of examination data is being used but its use is not yet rigorous

enough to inform planning effectively. The department contributes very well to students' spiritual, moral and cultural development through multi-cultural and autobiographical studies. Art is a popular subject and a significant number of students go on to study areas of the subject at a higher level. Overall, improvement has been good since the last inspection. There is more extra-curricular activity and work is supported by artists in residence. Standards have been maintained.

### **Performing arts**

Provision in AVCE performing arts is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well as a result of very good teaching and excellent assessment.
- The course attracts students from a wide ability range and is aimed at those wanting a career in performing arts.

#### **Commentary**

228. This is a new course attracting students from a wide ability range. Overall standards are in line with those expected for this course and students make good progress and achieve well overall. Learning is best when students listen to each other and work well in groups. Practical results so far are rather clichéd, and status and characterisation are basic. Students appreciate the honest feedback from the teacher and benefit from the teacher's expertise. The majority of students have weaknesses in reading aloud and pronunciation and sometimes in understanding the meaning of fairly common words.

229. Teaching and learning are very good; lessons are fast paced and based on good knowledge of students' abilities. Assessment is excellent and contributes to raising standards. The teacher has excellent subject knowledge and provides very good feedback and continuous assessment. However, opportunities to improve students' learning are missed by not encouraging them to use a notebook to write down unfamiliar words and terms in order to build up a personal aide-memoire.

230. The subject is very well led and managed and the vision for improvement is closely linked to the school's bid for specialist Performing Arts College status. Accommodation and resources are excellent and there are very good extra-curricular opportunities.

### **Theatre studies**

Provision in theatre studies is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good and is improved by good teaching and excellent assessment.
- Standards at the end of Year 13 are above average, although in the early stages of the course they are lower than expected.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and the quality of their relationships with students are very good.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are very good.
- Accommodation and resources are excellent.

#### **Commentary**

231. Results in A-level examinations in 2003 were above average and represented good achievement for the students following the course, following a trend of several years. They were similar in 2004. Standards are in line with course expectations at the end of Year 12, but

there is good progress throughout the sixth form so that standards are above expectations by the end of Year 13. Group work, in particular, improves with more mature collaboration between the students and this results in productive, high quality outcomes. When the standard is below that expected in Year 12 it is because students have limited prior experience. Students, whilst keen to offer their own, worthy suggestions, do not listen or evaluate the ideas of others. In the very good lesson seen, students in Year 13 responded well to a variety of engaging stimuli. General knowledge of the subject, and of historical characters in particular, is weak. The achievement of male and female students is equally good.

232. Teaching and learning are both good. This strength in teaching is characterised by well-prepared lessons, good relationships with students, outstanding marking and feedback to students, good pace and very good subject knowledge. Leadership is very good and the department is managed well. There is a clear vision, supported by the targets from the successful performing arts bid, resulting in the expansion of the department and the recruitment and retention of a good team of suitably qualified teachers. The department's provision is enhanced by very good provision for extra-curricular activities and the excellent accommodation and resources. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. This is because standards at A-level have stayed above national averages, and they are improving despite the larger group sizes. Progress remains good and accommodation and resources have been vastly improved. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

The school provides no courses in this area.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Business economics**

233. One lesson of business economics was sampled in Year12. Standards are above average and achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good and students of all abilities achieve well as a result of well-planned teaching and clear explanations. Students' very good attitudes and high levels of concentration contribute well to their progress.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

The school provides no courses in this area.

## **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

### **Personal, social and health education**

234. Personal, social and health education was sampled. An inclusive programme of personal, social and health education is taught through general studies and covers a wide range of areas from drugs use and abuse, relationships and family life through to independent study skills and preparation for life as a university student. The curriculum is enriched by activities such as community service placements, charity work and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Students contribute well to the life of the school with activities such as mentoring younger pupils and holding weekly anti-bullying clinics. An active sixth form council represents students' views.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		1
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well pupils learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	3	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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