

INSPECTION REPORT

CHISLEHURST AND SIDCUP GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Sidcup, Kent

LEA area: London Borough of Bexley

Unique reference number: 101466

Headteacher: Jim Rouncefield

Lead inspector: David M Bain
3258

Dates of inspection: 27 September – 1 October 2004

Inspection number: 268775

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar (selective)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1311

School address:	Hurst Road Sidcup Kent
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dennis Charman

Date of previous inspection:	1 March 1999
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chislehurst and Sidcup is a popular, large, mixed grammar school. It is one of four selective schools in the London Borough of Bexley. There are 1355 on roll, with more boys than girls in all years. About a quarter of pupils in Bexley attend selective schools. Pupils' attainment on entry is well above average, although some abler children in the area choose to attend more highly selective grammar schools in neighbouring boroughs. About three-quarters of pupils come from local wards, but about a quarter travel some distance. Whilst over four-fifths of pupils are of White British background, the other fifth includes pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is higher than average nationally, although it is low for London and none are at an early stage in learning English. The socio-economic background of pupils is above average overall; the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportions of pupils identified as having special educational needs and with statements of need are both well below average. The school has a large sixth form of 401 students. Few leave at the end of Year 11 and an increasing number of students are joining the sixth form from other schools: 47 this year. The school has achieved Investor in People, the Schools Achievement Award, Sportsmark and Sportsmark Gold. In 2003, it gained specialist status as a sports college jointly with the neighbouring boys non-selective school, Hurstmere.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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33189	Lesley Leak	Team inspector	English Years 7-11
12003	Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English Years 12-13, drama, citizenship and personal, social and health education
31238	Gordon Clubb	Team inspector	Mathematics
23402	Birendra Singh	Team inspector	Science, biology
2686	Brian Oppenheim	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Years 7-11, special educational needs
6364	Geoff Strack	Team inspector	Computer science, physics
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design
32998	Helen Penny	Team inspector	Music
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Design and technology
32297	Chris Martin	Team inspector	Geography
2712	Derek Hawley	Team inspector	History, English as an additional language
28178	John Connor	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
10761	Patrick Willan	Team inspector	Religious education
2628	Jim Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education
27082	Geoff Henshall	Team inspector	Business studies, government and politics, work related learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective and popular school, with many strengths and a few areas for development. Overall, standards are well above average. Pupils achieve well. There is a very good ethos; everyone gets on well together. Pupils' very positive attitudes support very good learning. Teaching is good in Years 7-11 and very good in the sixth form. Leadership is good overall, and that of the headteacher is very good. Management is satisfactory. The school is housed in buildings which do not fully meet the needs of the curriculum. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement of all pupils is good, resulting in very high standards being attained in national tests in Year 9 and GCSE in Year 11.
- The school has a very strong ethos: pupils wish to learn and have very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance.
- Most teaching is good, much very good, with excellence observed in English, science, religious education and, often, in music.
- The quality of pupils' learning is very good; it improves as they move through the school, as they develop the skills and capacity to work independently and collaboratively.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher, ably supported by other senior managers.
- The large and successful sixth form attracts students from elsewhere and attains well above average results.
- Assessment, particularly in Years 7-9, is not used sufficiently to enable teaching to respond to individual needs and to provide pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Some aspects of curricular organisation and provision for the arts, the national strategy for Years 7-9, work-related learning and gifted and talented pupils are unsatisfactory.
- The school's accommodation and some resources are unsatisfactory.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. In particular, there is a wide range of trips, sports and musical activities. The acquisition of sports college status is enhancing this further.
- The school has not involved pupils sufficiently in its work and development by regularly and systematically seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection because standards have improved significantly at GCSE and A-level. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Overall, there has been satisfactory progress on the key issues identified in the last inspection. However, the monitoring role of middle management requires further development and the issue of collective worship has not been addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A*	A*	A*	C
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.

Overall, in each year, pupils' achievements are good. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE at the end of Year 11 are high. Results in sixth form examinations are well above average. Good achievement was seen in most subjects; very good in art, music, religious education, and, in the sixth form, English and physics. The achievement of those with special

educational needs or English as an additional language matches that of other pupils. The gap in attainment between boys and girls is narrower than nationally.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality to school are very good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of students' personal development are good, although cultural diversity is insufficiently celebrated.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7-11 and very good in the sixth form. The quality of learning is good in Years 7-9 and very good in other years. Teachers' use of assessment is less than satisfactory overall, although good in the sixth form, where it is used effectively to inform students what they need to do to improve. Curriculum provision is satisfactory, but good in the sixth form. Provision for the few pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment, such as in music, are good, and participation in sport is very good. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Provision for care, guidance and support for pupils, whilst sound overall, contains many good features. The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools, colleges and higher education are good. The school has begun to make effective use of its specialist status as a sports college to strengthen its partnership.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good, overall. The school is very well led by the headteacher: as a result there is a strong ethos that is focused on pupils' learning and achievements. He is well supported by senior managers, who share a commitment to the individual and provide very good role models for others. The leadership provided by other key staff is good, overall. Governance is satisfactory. Governors give good leadership in most respects, but have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met fully. Sound management ensures that the school runs well, although the process used to check the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have high expectations of the school and are generally very well satisfied. Only a few express concerns. These mainly relate to the way the school consults them and the information provided on their children's progress. The school gives parents limited opportunities to express their views. Not all reports give parents a clear picture of how their children have progressed, or show what pupils can do to improve. Some parents feel there is not a good range of activities for pupils, except for sport and music. Almost all feel teaching and achievement are good. Almost all state their children are happy at the school.

Questionnaire responses from pupils are largely very positive, especially about the quality of teaching and standards that are attained. Whilst pupils feel there is some bullying, it is rare and dealt with effectively. A minority feels that the school is not interested in their views, that not all pupils are treated fairly and that they haven't an adult to go to if they have a problem. In discussions, pupils indicated they were treated fairly by most teachers, but some older pupils had personality clashes with a few. Most would consult a senior manager if they had a problem. Most are happy in school: 'it is a good community.'

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality and use of assessment;
- Review curricular provision and organisation including the work related curriculum;
- Ensure further innovative action is taken to improve accommodation and the infrastructure for information and communication technology (ICT);

- Involve pupils in its work and development by regularly and systematically seeking, valuing and acting on their views;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide for a daily act of collective worship; ensure accurate ICT levels are reported to parents at the end of Year 9; ensure risk assessments are carried out for all activities in physical education.

THE SIXTH FORM

The very large sixth form provides a wide range of academic courses. An increasing number of students are joining the school's sixth form from other schools.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a very good education for students. It is very effective. Results in 2003 were well above those attained nationally and reflect good achievement by students. They were even better in 2004. The quality of education provided is very good, as there is a wide range of academic courses appropriate for pupils in a grammar school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Leadership and management of the sixth form are sound, despite having undergone frequent changes over the last two years. There is a very positive ethos, reflected in students' attitudes. The school is rightly proud of the young adults that study in its sixth form. It provides very good value for money and has made good improvement since the last inspection.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students' attitudes are very good. Their maturity contributes very well to their learning.
- Attainment at AS and A2-level is well above average. The proportions of subjects passed at the highest grades, A or B, and students attaining high point scores have risen rapidly in recent years.
- Achievement is good in most subjects. It is very good in English, art, music, physics and religious education, but only satisfactory in mathematics, biology and design and technology and unsatisfactory in drama.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good, especially where collaboration, independence and student initiative are encouraged.
- The breadth of the academic curriculum is good.
- Accommodation and ICT infrastructure for use by the sixth form, for socialising, for private study and for lessons, are inadequate.
- Students experience a good range of enrichment activities, particularly school trips, editing the school magazine and as members of the "Charities Committee."

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. Some, not listed here, were sampled.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good in English literature: well above average standards and very good achievement; good teaching and very good learning. Good in French: teaching and learning are very good; standards are well above average. Students achieve well and produce an impressive range of writing.
Mathematics	Satisfactory in mathematics: teaching and learning are satisfactory. Standards are above average; achievement is satisfactory, although a significant number of students do not continue beyond AS-level.
Science	Good in biology: standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good. Achievement is satisfactory. Very good in physics: standards are well above average, students work hard, enjoy their lessons and there is very good teaching, which results in students learning well.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory in computer science: standards attained are well above average and students' commitment and interest make a strong contribution to this.
Humanities	Good in government and politics: standards are well above average and represents good achievement. Teaching is good: encouraging students' initiative and independent learning is a strong feature. Good in history: Good teaching and an emphasis on examination preparation allied to strong student learning skills lead to high standards and good achievement. Good in psychology: teaching and learning are good. Standards are well above

	average and represent good achievement. Assessment is very thorough. Very good in religious education: examination results are well above average. Students make very good progress as a result of strong motivation and very good teaching.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Good in design and technology: standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good; achievement is satisfactory. Students work with a good level of independence.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art and design: achievement is very good. Teachers have very high expectations and challenging tasks are set for students. Teaching and learning are very good. Unsatisfactory in drama: below average standards and unsatisfactory achievement in spite of good teaching and sound leadership. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and limit achievement.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Very good in physical education: standards are well above average. Students achieve well as a result of very good attitudes, and good teaching and learning.
Business	Good in business education: standards are well above average and were high at A2-level in 2004. Teaching and learning are good, as is achievement.

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

Satisfactory: there is an effective form tutor system. Most students feel they have an adult who knows them well and they trust for care and advice, but some of the support is underdeveloped. It is insufficiently based on data gained from tracking of students' progress. Once identified, the school has an appropriate range of responses to students who are not achieving at the expected level for their ability. Induction into the sixth form is good. A lot of guidance work is done with students in the summer holidays before they take up their courses. Guidance is good for those intending to go to university but is only satisfactory for those seeking a possible alternative career route.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Satisfactory leadership and management, overall: over the past two years, there has been a high turnover of staff responsible for leading the sixth form. As a result, developments have not moved forward as fast as the school would have liked. However, day-to-day issues are dealt with effectively, by senior managers, so that the process of transition from Year 11 to the sixth form is good.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very positive about the sixth form. In particular, they appreciate their teachers' commitment to support their studies and their considerable subject expertise. They feel teaching is challenging and demanding and that they are helped to study independently. About a third feel there is no adult who knows them well. This may be a consequence of changes in sixth form management or because the inspection took place early in the school year. Students are full of praise for the time devoted by senior staff to ensuring they obtain their subject choices. However, responses to the student questionnaire show nearly a third feel they did not receive enough independent advice. Those not interested in higher education feel that advice on other career paths is limited. Students feel they have relatively little input into the running of the school and would like to be more actively involved. The sixth form have strong views on a number of issues, especially the poor state of their study areas, which can mean that they are unable to use their private study time effectively. Some feel there is a lack of breadth in enrichment activities, but others interviewed strongly disagreed. Students have nothing but praise for senior managers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Standards are well above national levels on entry to the school. Compared to all schools, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE at the end of Year 11 are very high. Results in the sixth form AS and A2-level examinations are well above average. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language matches that of other pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in all years. This is a result of pupils' very positive attitudes, good teaching and the quality of learning, which improves as they move through the school.
- Attainment at the end of Year 9 in national tests is high, but the proportion attaining the highest levels is lower than it should be.
- Attainment at GCSE is high. The proportion attaining five or more A*-C grades is well above average compared to similar schools.
- Attainment at AS and A2-level is well above average. The proportions of subjects passed at the highest grades, A or B, and students attaining high point scores have risen rapidly in recent years.
- Achievement is good in most subjects. From work inspected in Years 7-11, achievement is very good in art, music and religious education, but only satisfactory in mathematics, science, physical education and, in Years 7-9, geography.
- In the sixth form, achievement is very good in art, English, music, physics and religious education, but only satisfactory in mathematics, biology and design and technology and unsatisfactory in drama.
- Teachers are skilled in preparing pupils for GCSE, AS and A2-level examinations. This enhances attainment in most subjects.

Commentary

1. Overall, when pupils join the school in Year 7 their attainment is well above average. In the Borough of Bexley, about a quarter of pupils transfer to selective schools. Some grammar schools in neighbouring local authorities are more highly selective and attract some of the ablest pupils from the school's catchment area. The vast majority of pupils joining the school attained an above average Level 5 in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in their primary schools. However, about a quarter in English and one in eight in mathematics and science attained only the average level, Level 4. Attainment on entry in some subjects is less high. In physical education, for example, skills on entry are often at a low level.

2. Pupil achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. Results in national tests in English, mathematics and science are consistently very high when compared to national averages. All in mathematics, and almost all in English and science, attain at least Level 6, one level above the nationally expected level. In 2003, nearly 90 per cent of pupils attained Level 7 or better in mathematics (20 per cent Level 8), but less than a third did so in English and science. Consequently, compared to similar schools, based on prior attainment, pupils' average point score in 2003 was in line with expectations in mathematics, below expectations in English and well below in science. In 2004, the proportion attaining Level 7 or better rose in English and was in line with expectations, but dropped in mathematics. Girls consistently attain better than boys in English, although the gap is narrower than nationally. In some years, boys attain better than girls in mathematics, although in 2003 they attained as well, as they do consistently in science. Results since the last inspection have improved in line with the trend nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	40.3 (39.9)	33.4(33.3)
mathematics	45.5 (44.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	40.5 (41.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 192 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils' achievement from the end of Year 9 to Year 11 is good. As might be expected, pupils' attainment at GCSE is very high when compared to all schools. When compared to similar schools, the proportion attaining five or more grades A*-C is well above average and the proportion attaining five or more grades A*-G is very high. This is because the school is successful in entering all pupils for examinations at the end of Year 11: none drop out. The average point score attained by pupils is only average when compared with similar schools. However, the school's average point score has improved at a faster rate than the trend nationally since the last inspection. As nationally, girls attain better results than boys, but the gap is narrower. Pupils for whom English is an additional language attain in line with their peers.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	99 (96)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	52.4 (50.7)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 189 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Whilst there are differences in results between subjects, results are significantly better than national averages in all subjects, except those, such as Latin, where nationally candidates tend to be from selective schools. When compared to results from other selective schools, results are well above average in art and design, classical civilisation, English literature, single science, ICT, physics and religious studies and, in 2004, also in German, food studies, child development. They are close to average for selective schools in most other subjects in most years. They are below average in drama, geography and music. In general, where a subject is below the average for selective schools, it is the proportion of highest grades, A* or A, that is lower than average. In contrast, the proportion of A* and A grades is very high in art and design, ICT and physics, textiles in 2004, history and religious studies in 2003. In 2003, girls performed significantly better than boys in drama, English language and literature, French, German and religious studies, but in the latter, boys attained well above the average for boys nationally. Pupils also enter short course GCSEs in religious studies, physical education and ICT. Results for the last Year 11 were well above average in religious studies, with nearly three-quarters attaining grades A* or A, but less good in ICT, where only three-quarters attained grades A*-C.

5. The school carries out detailed analyses of its results at GCSE. It uses the results of individuals to produce target grades for AS and A2 level in the sixth form. It also uses analyses as part of annual subject reviews. Governors use the analyses to challenge the school's leadership and carry out enquiries of their own when they are concerned about results in a particular subject. This is an example of good practice. The school sets appropriate targets, both for the end of Year 9 tests and at GCSE. These targets are consistently met or exceeded.

6. Overall, in their work seen during this inspection, pupils' achievement over Years 7-9 and Years 10-11 is good. Whilst comparisons with results in selective schools nationally might suggest achievement is better in Years 10 and 11 this was not apparent in lessons observed and work sampled. The standard of work seen was not always as high at this early stage in Year 11 as past GCSE results might suggest. It is clear that in most subjects, teachers are skilled at preparing pupils for GCSE examinations, and consequently pupils make rapid progress during Year 11. In contrast, in Year 9, teachers have placed less emphasis on preparing pupils for national tests. However, this is being addressed through the use of booster classes for those likely to achieve the highest levels.

7. Achievement in individual lessons is rarely less than satisfactory and good or better in around two-thirds of lessons. Achievement is very good or better in about one-sixth of lessons. Achievement was unsatisfactory in about seven per cent of lessons. The greatest influences on pupils' achievement are their very positive attitudes and desire to learn. Achievement is best where pupils experience a range of teaching styles and where they are encouraged to work collaboratively.

8. In Years 7-9, achievement is good in most subjects. It is very good in art, religious education and music, although only satisfactory in mathematics, science, physical education and geography. There is clear development of pupils' skills over their first three years in school. By the end of Year 9, pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are well above average. This represents good achievement, because the high standards on entry have been maintained. Achievement in mathematics is best where teachers interest pupils by using a variety of different teaching styles and allow pupils to discuss their mathematics and, by so doing, extend their knowledge and understanding. In science, the ablest pupils are not achieving sufficiently well. Too little emphasis is placed on enabling pupils to explain their results using appropriate vocabulary. In Years 7 and 8, where pupils have discrete ICT lessons, they achieve well.

9. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is again good in most subjects: it is very good in art, music, religious education and full course ICT, satisfactory in mathematics, science and physical education. The quality of pupils' writing is very good. In English, for example, their response to literary texts displays considerable maturity in thinking and expression. Achievement in mathematics is only satisfactory because dull teaching in some lessons does not help pupils to understand underlying concepts. In science, achievement varies between courses. Whilst very good for many in separate sciences, some do not achieve as well as they should in double and single award science. Achievement in ICT is varied because teaching lacks urgency, particularly for those only following the short course at GCSE. Achievement in drama and dance at GCSE is good, but is adversely affected by pupils' limited exposure to the subjects in Years 7-9.

10. Pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve well and in line with other pupils. Where pupils have identified needs they receive some additional support from learning support assistants. The quality of this support is effective and pupils make good progress in developing their skills and overcoming their learning difficulties. The achievements of pupils with special needs are monitored well on an individual basis, and the results show that pupils achieve well. As the school does not identify gifted and talented pupils in most subjects, other than physical education, it is impossible to judge whether their achievement is satisfactory. However, some pupils achieve very high standards in a range of subjects, producing coursework of exceptional quality in some cases. This suggests that some of the needs of the ablest are being addressed in most subjects. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is good. They often make very rapid progress on joining the school, as are highly motivated.

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	93.4 (94.4)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	37.3 (38.7)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	324.3 (300.6)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 175 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

11. Overall, results in the sixth form AS and A2-level examinations were well above the national average in 2003. As nationally, female students attained higher results than male students. In 2004, results improved further, especially for male students, whose results were within the highest five per cent for schools nationally. Students' average point score has risen significantly in recent years. The proportion with a score above 360 points has doubled in the last four years to nearly half of the students in 2004. (*Note: Grade A at A2 is 120 points and at AS is 60 points. AS results are only used for subjects not taken at A2-level*) The proportion of entries at A2-level passed at the highest grades A or B rose from 48 per cent in 2003 to 58 per cent in 2004.

12. In 2003, results at A2-level were well above national standards in business studies, French, history, physics and physical education, but below average in art, drama and design and technology. In 2004, they were also well above average in biology, chemistry, English literature, geography, computer science, information technology, mathematics, music, music technology and psychology, but were also below average in classical civilisation and Latin. Results in design and technology improved significantly and were above average. Results in business studies were very high. Results in government and politics and religious studies were above average in both years.

13. In 2003, results at AS-level were well above national standards in business studies, economics, design and technology, general studies, geography, German, history, and government and politics and above in biology, music and religious studies. Only in mathematics were results below average. About a third entered for mathematics did not continue the subject to A2-level. Overall retention rates are very good, with failure to complete courses being very rare. Students make sensible choices as to which subjects to continue to A2 level. In 2004, there was a very high proportion of A and B grades at AS-level in Latin, music and English literature and a good proportion in art, business studies, general studies, German, history, information technology, physics and religious studies.

14. The school produces good analyses of students' results, including value-added analyses based upon students' average point scores at GCSE. Those for 2004 showed students attaining results above expectations at A2 level in business studies, religious studies, physical education, music and music technology, psychology, computer science, physics, mathematics and French, but below expectations in drama, art, information technology, chemistry, Latin and German. There are no significant variations in results between students from different ethnic backgrounds, nor between male and female students. However, there are significant differences in the gender balance within groups studying subjects. In 2003, A2 groups in economics, design and technology, information technology, mathematics and physics were predominantly male, in German, predominantly female. It is of particular concern that only one of 26 entered for physics and two of 23 in mathematics were female. The gender imbalance between subjects remains in current groups, particularly in physics and mathematics. The school is aware of the issue, but, so far, has been unsuccessful in its attempts to address it effectively.

15. Whilst standards in external examinations are generally well above average, the standard of work seen in lessons and work sampled was broadly above average. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the inspection took place at the start of the academic year. Consequently, particularly in subjects which are new to students, it was too early in the course for them to display

higher standards. For example, in psychology, students in Year 12 are learning about psychological theories and research: something which is entirely new to most of them. Secondly, teachers in most subjects prepare students very effectively for both final examination papers and their coursework. Thirdly, in a few subjects, where there are insufficient strategies for independent learning and collaborative work incorporated into teaching, students do not make the progress of which they are capable. However, standards, in subjects inspected fully, are well above average in English literature, art, religious education and physics and in some classes in other subjects. The standard of work seen in art was consistently higher than that suggested by A2-level results over the last two years.

16. The standards of work seen represents good achievement in almost all subjects, very good achievement in art, English, music, physics and religious education. Achievement is generally only satisfactory in mathematics, biology and design and technology. In drama, although achievement in individual lessons is sometimes very good, achievement overall is unsatisfactory. Achievement is good because of students' attitudes, their well-developed learning skills, their hard work and good teaching. It is best where teaching is challenging and encourages students to be directly involved in the learning process, through, for example, whole-class and group discussion, research and making presentations to the rest of the group. It is good where teachers have planned the work to build upon previous learning. In a few subjects, such as design and technology, achievement is affected by a lack of specialised resources. There are no significant differences in the achievement of male and female students, or of those with special educational needs or English as an additional language.

17. Since the last inspection, progress in improving results at both AS and A2-level has been very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality to school are very good. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of students' personal development are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and many enjoy taking part in the many out-of-school activities.
- Pupils' attendance is well above the national average.
- Behaviour is very good in and around school, despite the narrow corridors.
- Pupils form very supportive relationships with each other, with sixth form students and with staff in the school.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral development.
- Provision for social development is good. Pupils welcome the opportunities to take on responsibilities, but have relatively few opportunities to practise democracy. Sixth form students are socially aware and many take on leadership roles.
- The diversity of multicultural Britain and the school community is not celebrated sufficiently.
- The cultural life of the sixth form is strong.

Commentary

18. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work contribute to the positive learning atmosphere throughout the school. In lessons, they contribute very well in class discussions, are motivated by teachers and remain focused on their work. The ethos of the school ensures that pupils all want to work hard and to do well. Their very good attitudes are also reflected in their commitment to homework and their attendance at the many after-school clubs, especially sporting activities.

19. Pupils with special educational needs mostly have very good attitudes to their learning. The school and learning support assistants work successfully with these pupils to improve their attitudes to learning and themselves. Often, pupils' learning difficulties result in low self-esteem or personal

problems but the school is effective in helping pupils to overcome these and cope well with school life. As a result their personal development is good.

20. Very good relationships have a positive impact on the way pupils deal with each other and interact with staff. Relationships support learning very well in lessons where pupils collaborate very well with each other when working in groups.

21. Staff have very high expectations for behaviour and pupils respond very well to this, ensuring that behaviour in lessons is very good. This contributes to a very good work ethos. Around the school, behaviour remains very good, despite the limitations of the accommodation: at times the lack of space in corridors and lack of adult supervision can affect the behaviour of a small number of pupils. There were five fixed period exclusions during the school year prior to the inspection. The rate of exclusion is very low.

22. The school works very hard to ensure that there is no bullying or racism; no incidents were seen during the inspection and all pupils spoken to were confident that if it does happen, staff deal with incidents very effectively. In their responses to the parent questionnaire, parents were confident that their children were not bullied or harassed. Many of the pupils spoken to felt that one of the strengths of the school is the friendliness of pupils, who help and support one another.

Exclusions

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	1073	5	0
White – Irish	8	0	0
White – any other White background	38	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	22	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	39	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	22	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	17	0	0
Any other ethnic group	17	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	32	0	0

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

Attendance

23. Attendance at the school is well above the national average and is, therefore, very good. Pupils are very eager to come to school and punctuality to school is also very good. This supports their good achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	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.

24. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory, although there is good provision in some curriculum areas, including religious education, English, drama and music. There is not, however a daily act of collective worship, and in the assemblies that are held, little emphasis is given to the spiritual. Pupils show a limited overt spiritual awareness, but do exhibit respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. There is very good provision for moral development: high expectations in the school lead to the very good behaviour and very positive attitudes of most pupils. This is a very civilised community. Provision for social development is good: the strengths are that pupils have opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as being form prefects, and to participate with others in teams and on school visits. As yet, however, there have been relatively few opportunities for democracy to operate, for example, in an elected school council. The school provides well for cultural development in its focus on music, literature, and the classics, for example, not to mention the plethora of school visits, many of them overseas. However, the diverse nature of the school's community is not celebrated as well as it could be

The sixth form

25. Students in the sixth form have very positive attitudes to their learning and have very high standards of behaviour. In lessons, their maturity contributes very well to their learning. They make good progress as a result of their own efforts and interest. They have some very good opportunities to take on additional responsibility, such as looking after the homework club, mentoring pupils in Year 7 and being school prefects. They act as ambassadors for the school on open evenings by showing prospective parents around the school. Many become members of the "Charities Committee": a major task for this committee is to organise a Christmas party for local elderly residents, and to organise the fundraising to pay for the event. The work students undertake on behalf of the committee supports their personal development well, by encouraging them to think of others and how they can support them. Relationships between students and with others are very good. Students are free from all forms of harassment. Some students have been trained to act as peer counsellors for younger pupils and value the opportunity to address any concerns brought to them. Attendance and punctuality in the sixth form is very high.

26. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory overall, although daily collective worship is not observed. Not all students received statutory lessons in religious education last year, and the move to holding day conferences to meet requirements is a timely one. However, religious studies is a popular A-level option, and spiritual topics are well provided for in English literature: lessons were observed on Donne's *Holy Sonnets* and on themes of salvation and damnation in *Doctor Faustus*. Sixth formers exhibit very positive attitudes and their behaviour is a credit to the school. They are socially aware. The annual party for senior citizens is an excellent example of what they can do and many are able to take on roles of leadership, editing the school magazine, leading sports teams and acting as prefects. A school council is taking shape, although democracy has not, it must be said, been a strong feature of sixth form life to date. The cultural life of the sixth form is strong. Several were seen rehearsing for the

school play, *Oedipus the King*, and music features strongly at this level. Sixth formers participate in many of the school visits, in this country and further afield, and are considerably enriched by what the school has to offer, although cultural diversity is not celebrated as much as it might be.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7-11 and very good in the sixth form. The quality of learning is good in Years 7-9 and very good in other years. Teachers' use of assessment is less than satisfactory overall, although good in the sixth form. Curriculum provision is satisfactory; good in the sixth form. Opportunities for enrichment are good, and participation in sport is very good. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Provision for care, guidance and support for pupils, whilst sound overall, contains many good features. The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools, colleges and higher education are good.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7-11 and very good in the sixth form. Learning is also very good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of learning is sometimes better than that of teaching because pupils are highly motivated and use learning skills learnt in one subject across others. The quality of assessment improves as pupils move through the school. Whilst it is good in the sixth form, it is less than satisfactory in Years 7-9.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all teaching is at least satisfactory; most good or better. Unsatisfactory teaching is rare.
- Pupils are self-motivated and achieve well because they acquire effective learning techniques.
- Teachers have good command of their subjects and are very well informed about examination requirements at GCSE, AS and A2 levels.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good.
- In most subjects, teachers use a good variety of effective teaching strategies. Teaching is most effective where it is interactive and pupils are encouraged to collaborate, discuss, question and develop skills of independent study.
- Some teaching, as in mathematics, provides few opportunities for pupils to discuss their thinking and form hypotheses. Such an approach potentially deters girls from opting for the subject in the sixth form.
- In Years 7-9 activities and demands are not always matched sensitively to pupils' needs, because assessment is less than satisfactory.
- The short thirty-five minute lesson is a significant barrier to effective learning in some subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 241 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9 (4%)	52 (22%)	108(45%)	66(27%)	6(2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

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

27. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7-9. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching remains good, but the quality of learning is very good. Whilst teaching was very good or excellent in nearly a quarter of lessons seen, the quality is not very good overall because pupils experience some fairly mundane teaching in some subjects. It is the quality of pupils' learning,

much of which does not rely on their teachers' skills but on their own desire to succeed, which has the most impact on achievement.

28. In contrast, outstanding teaching was observed in lessons in English in Year 9, science in Year 10, religious education in Year 11 and in music in Years 7, 8 and 10. All teaching in art was very good. Around half the teaching in music and religious studies is very good or excellent and around a third in English, science and history. Very good teaching was also observed in ICT, design and technology, geography, physical education, and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). All teaching was good or better in German, religious education, drama, classical civilisation and dance and in most in design and technology and French.

29. The only unsatisfactory teaching was observed in English, science, ICT, geography and PSHE, but in each subject this was rare. However, in only a third of lessons in mathematics is teaching good and only in around half in ICT, geography, history and PSHE. Overall, there is little difference in the quality of teaching and learning between year groups, although in lessons seen, the best teaching occurred in Years 7, 9 and 10. It is not unusual for pupils in Year 8 to receive less good teaching than other years, more surprising is the low proportion of very good teaching seen in Year 11 in about a sixth of lessons compared to a third in Years 7, 9 and 10.

30. Most teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, but their command of delivery of courses is more varied. For example, not all teachers, especially in mathematics, have embraced the requirements of the National Strategy for Years 7-9. However, teachers' understanding of the demands of GCSE examinations ensures that pupils' learning is reflected in results. For example, in English, pupils of all ages are explicitly taught how to make subtle and discriminating comparisons within and between a range of texts and the written work arising from such critical reading is impressive. Foreign language teachers use the target language judiciously in lessons to raise expectations and set a high level of challenge. Many teachers use their good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subject to capture pupils' interest and imagination. All music teachers are skilled musicians who provide examples of excellence, which inspire their pupils. They convey the magic of music.

31. Teachers' planning is generally effective. In many subjects, teachers plan thoroughly. However, not all place a sharp enough focus on learning objectives. In some lessons, it is not clear enough what pupils should understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson. In these lessons, pupils do the work but their learning is not moved on as far as it should be. In religious education, for example, teachers plan well for pupils to be involved in their own learning. In good science lessons teachers plan well, building on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and opportunities for consolidation are used effectively. The short thirty-five minute lesson is a significant barrier to an effective delivery in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, because opportunities to divide the lesson into three or four parts are diminished.

32. Most teachers engage well with pupils and give them appropriate encouragement. Good relationships are a feature in most lessons. Pupils are very appreciative of the efforts teachers make to enable them to succeed. However, in discussions, pupils are quite forthright in their views that this varies greatly between teachers. Whilst generally positive about the quality of teaching they receive, an unusually high number of pupils speak of clashes of personality with some teachers. They indicate that they do less work for these teachers and achieve less well. Teachers' expectations are generally good, providing good challenge to pupils, but there are some issues of equality of opportunity. Teachers do not always match activities and demands sensitively to pupils' needs. For example, across a range of subjects, although there is a good level of challenge in lessons, the highest attaining pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to demonstrate higher order skills. In contrast, in many subjects, pupils are challenged well. For example, in drama they are challenged to create imaginative work, to avoid stereotypes and to evaluate their own work and that of peers effectively.

33. Across the school a good range of teaching methods are used. Teaching and learning are most effective where teaching is interactive and learning open-ended; where students are afforded

opportunities to focus on challenging tasks in collaboration with others. For example, in an English lesson on war poetry, pupils showed a high level of engagement in response to an interactive whiteboard quiz, which led to an animated class discussion. In religious education, an exceptional lesson in Year 11 enabled pupils to explore the major philosophical concepts and arguments for and against the existence of God through discussion and debate. Teaching is less effective where teachers dominate the lesson, with little opportunity for individual pupils to use initiative or collaborate with others, as in some geography lessons, for example. Exposition in some mathematics lessons is dull and does not help pupils to understand underlying concepts. In contrast, the quality of questioning in music is a particular strength. Teachers probe deeply and challenge pupils to make deductions and extend their learning. Teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour is very good. The rare occasions where pupils become inattentive, occur because teachers over direct and do not place sufficient responsibility with pupils for their learning.

34. Teachers use resources and time effectively. ICT is used well in geography to support independent learning, in religious education to reinforce and stimulate learning and in art to introduce pupils to the content of lessons. In history, good use is made of an interactive whiteboard to give pupils access to a variety of stimulating visual historical sources. Language teachers use time well and only when the tight timing of activities drifts slightly is there a loss of momentum and consequently pupils lose focus. In drama, teachers inject plenty of pace in lessons. However, the short lessons restrict the range of teaching styles that teachers can employ. This can result in lessons being too teacher-directed in some subjects.

35. Homework is used with increasing effectiveness to reinforce and extend pupils' learning as they move through the school. It is set regularly, but is not always as challenging as it could be. Both parents and pupils spoke of more being set in some years, with the least amount set in Year 8. The pressure of coursework alongside regular homework puts an enormous strain on some in Year 11, who spend excessive hours on it. However, many in that year group show a mature attitude to handling the pressures and recognise that time spent should be kept within sensible parameters, ensuring they have time for a good social life as well.

36. As pupils progress through the school, they acquire skills, knowledge and understanding with growing confidence. Learning is not fast enough when teachers spend too much time talking, leaving insufficient time for either group or independent work. In these lessons, pupils' interest wanes. Learning is strongest where tasks are more open-ended and abler pupils have opportunities to achieve at higher levels. In design and technology, for example, in effective lessons pupils are engaged quickly through the use of activities, which fully involve them. When given the opportunity, most pupils display confidence and contribute well in discussions, enabling them to demonstrate considerable subject knowledge.

37. Pupils' application and productivity are very good. All are very keen to learn, put a great deal of effort into their work, are self-motivated and enjoy learning. When presented with challenges, they rise to them very well. Good use of paired and group work has a strong impact on pupils' learning. Pupils have an unusually good capacity for working in groups and sharing ideas. In a Year 10 history lesson on racial segregation in the USA, for example, pupils were able to take on the roles of various interested parties, listen to each other and deploy arguments skilfully. The capacity to work independently and collaboratively improves as pupils move through the school. It is very good in Years 10 and 11, where many teachers encourage collaboration and coursework encourages independent research. However, even at this stage, some teachers discourage collaborative work. In some classrooms, for example in mathematics, desks are arranged so that all pupils are sat separately and collaboration is impossible. Pupils speak of some teachers not accepting any talking in class. This they resent, because they know how much they learn from informal discussion in many other lessons.

38. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with statements of educational need and those on school action plus is good overall. Where pupils are taken out of class and taught separately by learning support assistants teaching and support are targeted well. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory and used appropriately to identify

progress and inform future learning needs. However, the school is able to provide individual support without disruption to others because the number of pupils with special educational needs is small. As a result pupils with special educational needs often get good individual support, which helps them to do well. There is no additional support in subject lessons and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is broadly good. Subject teachers have a good awareness of pupils' needs and have good access to their individual education plans. However, the plans do not give teachers enough guidance on approaches to teaching and this means that pupils are not always challenged fully.

39. There is little experience in the school of assessing the extent to which pupils who, while not at an early stage in learning English, may have their learning impaired by misunderstanding when encountering teaching or reading which makes very high demands on their English. Where this is pointed out to teachers, they address the issue well.

40. Assessment overall is unsatisfactory. The school has identified the need to strengthen assessment for learning and to improve target setting in Years 7-9. There are policies for assessment, marking and homework, which set out the school's requirements, but there is no whole-school policy on pupil peer assessment. Most departments, while broadly following the principles of these, are insufficiently aware of pupils' attainment on entry to the school and are using their own marking schemes, with little reference to National Curriculum levels in order to inform teaching and learning. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the usefulness of the marking and other assessment varies. Only a minority of marking includes guidance on ways to improve the work and this limits its contribution to learning. Assessment is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and unsatisfactory in Years 7-9. Where marking and assessment are satisfactory or better, pupils are helped to improve their work. Good examples of this were found in religious education and in design and technology where pupils are assessed in each activity against National Curriculum levels and examination criteria. In a Year 11 French lesson, the sharing of examination assessment criteria with the pupils raised their expectations and enabled them to reach a very good standard. Oral feedback to pupils in some classes gives indications as to how individuals could improve their work, but this is not evident in every department. Summative assessment is good and data are stored on the school's central computer system. A data manager has been employed to manage the transfer of assessments onto software, which will facilitate the greater use of information from assessments by all staff.

The sixth form

41. The quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form is very good. It is the amalgam of good and very good experiences in lessons which makes it so. In the subjects inspected fully, teaching was always very good in art, most music lessons and half the lessons seen in business education, physics and religious education. Teaching was always good or better in business education, chemistry, economics, French, German, government and politics, Latin, music, physics and religious education. Only in computer science and mathematics was teaching generally satisfactory.

42. Teaching is stronger in the sixth form than in earlier years in the school. Teachers have a very good command of their subjects at this level and are very well informed and familiar with the requirements of examinations. Expectations are often high. Work is planned well to provide the right amount of challenge. Some teachers adopt particularly imaginative approaches. In drama, students are presented with challenging tasks, which give them scope for different interpretations of texts. In one example seen, this led to lively renditions of character and a real sense of the humour of the text.

43. Many teachers are more confident in involving students more directly in their learning than they are in earlier years. Collaborative work and independent study are encouraged in most subjects. Group tasks, of a quite challenging nature, are given in English and psychology, for example. Individual and group presentations are made and discussions are often very good. In religious education, there is a strong emphasis on engaging students through ensuring regular small group and whole-class interaction. In government and politics, business education and psychology,

students are challenged to develop firm ideas and express their opinions through lively discussion. In history, essential information is conveyed in an interesting way in some lessons, whilst in others there is more emphasis on students finding things out, organising information for themselves and working together to draw conclusions. In art, students are actively encouraged to analyse and evaluate their own work and that of other artists.

44. Good use is made in many subjects of interactive whiteboards and other resources. In religious education, for example, the use of ICT very effectively aids students' absorption and consolidation of new knowledge. Good use of questioning is made in physics, for example, where questions are designed to make students think. However, in mathematics there are insufficient strategies for independent learning incorporated into the teaching and learning and too few opportunities for students to form mathematical hypotheses. Even in the best lessons, students are presented with few opportunities to discuss their mathematical thinking. Such an approach deters girls from opting for the subject. Student participation is insufficiently encouraged in biology and computer science as there is too little discussion.

45. Assessment in the sixth form is good. The school has identified the need to improve target setting for these students to enhance the achievement and some departments have already begun work on this. Marking of work is, in many instances detailed, informative and gives guidance on how to improve. A good example of this was in music where the marking gives detailed suggestions for improvement to students. Work in psychology is also thoroughly assessed and informs future planning and teaching. In design and technology, teachers make good use of one to one tutorials to give verbal and written feedback. In many lessons, discussion of their work with students helps them to take the steps necessary to improve. There is little evidence of teachers using ICT to maintain or analyse students' assessments.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is satisfactory in Years 7-11 and good in the sixth form, where a range of new subjects is offered for study. It does not comply fully with National Curriculum requirements in respect of a daily act of collective worship and the collation and reporting of accurate ICT levels in Year 9. Opportunities for enrichment are good, and participation in sport is very good. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good, but provision of technician support is inadequate in some areas. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in the curriculum.
- Pupils experience a broad academic curriculum, with good provision for a range of modern and classical languages.
- The award of sports college status is encouraging curriculum development.
- The National Strategy for Years 7-9 is not having sufficient impact on the quality of teaching and learning. In particular, short lessons are inhibiting the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies.
- The sixth form curriculum offers a broad range of courses, although the reduction to four AS-levels has reduced the breadth experienced by individual students.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Most classrooms are undersized and inhibit more innovative and student-centred teaching and learning and many specialist areas are inadequate.
- Provision for the arts lacks a coherent philosophy, although that for music and art is strong.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. In particular, there is a wide range of trips, sports and musical activities.
- Access to ICT resources is restricted within some subjects and for private study in the sixth form.
- Although appropriate conferences are planned for this year, there was no provision for religious education for sixth form students last year.

Commentary

46. The main school curriculum is essentially academic. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils and expectations of parents. No vocational options are offered in Years 10 and 11. The school has a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in the curriculum. Grouping by ability occurs only in mathematics from Year 8 and the main foreign language in Years 10 and 11. The timing of the school day, with its mixture of short and long lessons, is generally considered to work well. Short lessons, however, are not allowing enough scope for effective implementation of the three and four part lessons recommended by the National Strategy for Years 7-9. This is having an adverse effect on the impact on learning, despite some very good teaching. Particularly affected are the literacy and numeracy strategies, which require longer lesson times for delivery of the programme. The short lesson straight after lunch is often further curtailed by lateness.

47. Pupils at 11-14 have a suitably balanced and broad curriculum. All have the opportunity to study two modern foreign languages, as well as Latin from Year 8. Provision in art and music is good and pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in the latter. The National Strategy for pupils of these ages is not sufficiently applied in mathematics. Careers education begins in Year 8, as part of the personal and social education programme. Recent legislation now requires this to start in Year 7. Citizenship is taught in Years 9 and 10.

48. The 14-16 curriculum offers a broad selection of GCSE options including dance, drama, classical civilisation, child development and Greek as new subjects. There are good opportunities for pupils to continue to study two foreign languages and single, double or triple science. All pupils follow courses in ICT, religious studies, citizenship, and physical education to at least GCSE short course level. As there are no discrete drama lessons until Year 10, pupils are under great pressure to acquire the necessary level of skills in the two years to GCSE. The choice of drama is also set against English literature. This means that some students who may wish to study drama post-16 will not have a GCSE qualification, and may be ill-prepared for access to the AS-level course. Similarly, pupils in Year 11 currently studying dance experienced insufficient opportunities to study the subject within physical education in Years 7-9 to prepare them adequately for the GCSE course.

49. The acquisition of sports college status is enabling curriculum innovation and development. The re-timing of the school day has allowed greater access to sport for all pupils as an enhancement to their academic studies. Some departments have introduced sport-related activities into their provision. However, other developments, such as the National Strategy for Years 7-9, and the overall provision for the arts, bringing together art, music, dance and drama, have been less well implemented. This suggests that there are some limitations in a holistic overview of the curriculum, and in overall curriculum philosophy. For example, there is currently no comprehensive work-related curriculum. However, in contrast, provision for modern foreign and classical languages, as well as the opportunity to study classical civilisations has been well thought through.

50. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by staff. The support is usually provided on an individual basis and support assistants, and senior staff, have a good knowledge of pupils' needs and background. Until recently, this work has been carried out as a response to concerns raised by teachers or parents and co-ordinated by heads of year. Broadly this has worked well but has lacked a whole-school focus. However, as the school recognises, more pupils are being identified with specific learning needs, such as dyslexia, and this requires planned co-ordination across the school. The school has already identified this and has appointed a SENCO from September.

51. As part of the school's work as a sports college, it has appointed a co-ordinator to identify a programme for talented and gifted pupils within sports. This is an example of good practice and is addressing the needs of some talented pupils. However, as yet, the identifying of gifted and talented pupils across the school varies widely between departments. In music it is good, but in some subjects there is an assumption that, as a grammar school, all pupils are gifted and talented.

52. Most pupils who speak English as an additional language are fluent and this poses few problems for the. Indeed, for many, it is an advantage when studying other foreign languages. Occasionally, learning or behavioural difficulties arise and these stem from language difficulties. The school takes determined action to support these pupils by seeking the support of the local English Language Support Service and also draws up an individual education plan to raise teachers' awareness of their needs.

53. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils. Provision is particularly strong in sport and music; drama and dance productions are regular events. School teams are successful in games and fixture lists are comprehensive. There is an inter-house competition in a range of sports and pupils support these well. The option system for Year 10 has begun well and pupils have access to a wide range of activities and expertise such as coaches from outside clubs and sporting governing bodies.

54. Other activities include language trips to France, Spain and Germany and most year groups experience residential trips to complement their personal development. Geography field trips and science trips add to these experiences. The school has been successful in Young Enterprise and won a national competition as the Consumer of the Year. An art club has achieved similar success in a national competition and pupils have access to ICT after school. The overall quality of enrichment for pupils is good and has a positive impact of pupils' attitudes and achievements. Both school journeys and other enrichment activities are used effectively to enhance curricular experiences.

55. In most subject areas, there are sufficient well-qualified teachers who have the relevant experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. Some departments, such as physical education, are benefiting from the appointment of recently trained teachers, who are aware of current innovations in education. Across the curriculum, there are examples of experienced teachers who are skilled in developing the curriculum. The provision for administrative support is good, but technical support, particularly for use of ICT across the curriculum, is limited. There are very few problems in appointing or retaining staff and any that do occur are resolved promptly.

56. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and in some instances is poor. A recent DfES suitability survey pointed out that most classrooms were undersized and in need of refurbishment. As a result pupils often work in cramped conditions. This is having a significant impact on teaching methods that can be employed, on learning and eventually on standards that pupils can achieve. For example, the accommodation for English is unsatisfactory because two classrooms are too small for large classes and the designated teachers can be deterred from incorporating speaking and listening activities in their lessons because the partition wall is not sound proofed. The dining hall is a poor environment, as are art rooms, which have inadequate storage, and changing rooms for both boys and girls are undersized. The ICT rooms are cramped and ventilation is inadequate, consequently they get too hot in summer. Corridors are too narrow to accommodate smooth pupil movement between lessons. However, outdoor facilities for physical education are very good. Plans have been drawn up to refurbish and extend the technology block, which will have a positive impact on art and design and technology. The library is used for independent reading lessons and provides a valuable resource.

57. Despite the difficulties with the accommodation, many teachers are skilled in adapting their rooms to encourage group activities. The governors and leadership team have used finances imaginatively to bring about some new buildings, for example with the new music block. A pavilion and dance studio are currently being built. A leisure centre is proposed as part of the provision related to sports college status and will significantly enhance indoor facilities for physical education.

58. ICT resources are unsatisfactory. Whilst most subjects have enough textbooks, provision for ICT within departments is inadequate. The current ratio of pupils to computers remains below the government target. There has been a significant investment in ICT infrastructure, but computers in some areas remain outdated.

The sixth form

59. The sixth form curriculum, like that of the main school, is essentially academic, and meets the needs of most students. Few students leave the school at the end of Year 11 and a substantial number are now joining at the start of Year 12. There is a wide range of courses for students from this and other schools, particularly with new subjects like business studies, government and politics, and psychology, all of which attract large numbers. The reduction to four AS-level choices as from September 2004 has drastically reduced numbers of students taking general studies. No vocational courses are offered. The religious studies entitlement, which was delivered through general studies, now takes the form of five seminar days during the year. Provision is good in design and technology, with courses in food, product development, resistant materials and graphic products. Advice for progression of students into higher education is good, but is not as thorough for those wishing to take up employment or enter vocational colleges.

60. Enrichment activities for students in the sixth form are good. There is a wide range of sporting activities available for students in Year 12 during curriculum time. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is developing well and makes a positive contribution to the personal development of some students. A debating society and a chess club extend cultural experiences for students and opportunities are given for students to take on responsibilities within the school. For example, the homework club, which takes place on four evenings in the week, is organised by the sixth form. A strong link exists with Marlborough Special School where sixth form students offer their expertise working alongside teachers and pupils. Sixth form students are encouraged to undertake community service and a charity committee meets regularly and has raised an impressive amount of funding over the past few years. This range of activities gives students the opportunities to develop their initiative and sense of responsibility. A range of school journeys is offered by subject departments to enhance students' curricular experiences. For example, Year 12 went to Russia last year as part of their history studies.

61. In most subjects, there are sufficient teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver the GCE AS- and A2-level curriculum. However, in music, two different courses are taught at the same time in the same room in Year 13. There is no specialist teacher of drama. The inadequate accommodation and large class sizes in some subjects inhibit more innovative or student-centred teaching and learning. ICT resources are unsatisfactory. There are not enough computers in the library to meet the needs of the sixth form and there are none in the sixth form study area. Students complain about restricted access to computers and to up-to-date and appropriate software packages. The ratio of students to computers remains below the government target.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory, whilst some features are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are cared for well.
- Effective behaviour management strategies are used effectively.
- There is insufficient systematic tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress to focus advice and guidance, especially in Years 7-9 and the sixth form.
- The extent to which the school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views is limited. Some mainstream pupils and sixth form students feel they do not have a voice in the school.
- Most pupils have good relationships with adults in the school and feel they get support.
- Induction of pupils into all year groups is effective, as is induction for new students into the sixth form.
- There are some health and safety concerns, mostly regarding the unsatisfactory accommodation.

- Guidance and support for students going on to post-16 is good. However, guidance offered to sixth form students is focused almost entirely on higher education.

Commentary

62. Staff, especially senior managers, know pupils well and offer good care and support to pupils who seek it and also offer good support to vulnerable pupils once they have been identified, including those with special educational needs. There is a Child Protection policy and an effective procedure based on the LEA guidelines is in place should any problems arise. The school's provision for first aid and for caring for pupils who are unwell is appropriate. The school office has a number of trained first-aiders supported by a school nurse who visits the school once a week and offers 'drop in' sessions to all pupils.

63. The school has a good range of support services to help pupils. Pupils speak of having a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school, in most cases their form tutor, head of year or one of the deputy headteachers. However, responses to the pupil questionnaire showed that over a third of the pupils felt there was no one they really trusted to approach if they had a problem. There is an effective pastoral care system based on year heads, who move up through the school with their year group. Pupils have access to a range and variety of support and guidance sources during their time in the school. These include an effective induction procedure in Year 7 in which pupils have an opportunity to visit the school and to meet staff prior to transfer. A "buddy" system helps them settle in and pupils speak of being well supported whenever they started at the school. There is a range of support and guidance services offered by the 'Connexions' personal adviser for older pupils. The adviser contributes towards the guidance given to pupils to inform their option choices in Year 10 and further study or careers after Year 11. The school provides good guidance on option choices at the end of Year 9 and again in Year 11 but insufficient use is made of external sources. Careers guidance is given via the PSHCE programme in all years apart from Years 9 and 10 when that time is given over to citizenship. A mentoring system has been developed to encourage older pupils to support younger ones, such as sixth form students helping GCSE candidates to revise effectively.

64. The school's procedures for monitoring the achievement of individual pupils are being revised. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 now have individual targets to improve their rate of progress. Sometimes underachievement is recognised and dealt with by staff as part of their pastoral role. However, tutors and heads of year are generally limited in their capacity to identify and react to pupils' needs to prevent underachievement as monitoring of individual progress is not rigorous enough.

65. Pupils with identified special educational needs are given good care and support and they receive sensitive guidance, often from senior staff, who know them well. Pupils value this support and guidance and feel that they have improved their work as result of getting practical help. They particularly value the support given by learning support assistants. However, the quality of pupils' individual education plans is only satisfactory: targets are not sharp enough and there is too little guidance for teachers. Reviews are carried out regularly, and in accordance with the Code of Practice, but IEPs do not always show clearly when reviews are due.

66. Parents expressed the view that they would like more regular feedback on the progress, both academic and social, of their children. Currently, the school planners help both parents and form tutors to communicate and raise any concerns over individual pupils.

67. Pupil involvement in the life of the school is variable with few systematic opportunities for them to express their views or contribute to the running of the school. It is hoped that the new school council may fulfil some of this role once systematic approaches to gathering pupil opinions and electing representatives are established. A significant number of pupils commented that the school did not listen to their views or take any action based on them. Opportunities to take responsibility in the school below sixth form level are too limited.

68. Behaviour management is good. There is a clear behaviour policy supported by a range of sanctions. This is further reinforced by the high standards of behaviour that the pupils see as the expected norm. They are proud of their school and behave appropriately. The rewards system does not fully recognise the positive contributions made by pupils to the school community, although excellent use is made of praise in some lessons. The school is very successful in helping pupils to have positive attitudes to behaviour and in developing self-confidence.

69. Health and safety issues are managed through a health and safety forum of staff and governors and once identified are dealt with promptly. The school takes its responsibility for pupils' safety very seriously. However, whilst risk assessments are carried out in most areas, no assessments have been made in physical education recently.

The sixth form

70. Currently care and support are satisfactory in the sixth form. There is an effective form tutor system. Most students feel they have an adult who knows them well and whom they trust for care and advice, although the student questionnaire showed that well over a third of the sixth form felt they did not have such a relationship. Some elements of support for students is underdeveloped. Guidance is good for those intending to go to university but is less good for those seeking a possible alternative career route. There is no systematic approach that ensures all students explore a variety of future options. Some students indicated that there was a mismatch between their sixth form courses and their career aspirations. Overall, careers advice is satisfactory.

71. There is a system of monitoring students' progress and setting targets, through formal interviews with form tutors, and this is effective in identifying underachievement. Once identified the school has an appropriate range of responses to help students who are not achieving at the expected level for their ability. The new head of sixth form is already making monitoring more detailed to better inform guidance and pastoral care.

72. Students feel they have relatively little input into the running of the school and would like to be more actively involved. Their views are rarely sought systematically and acted on, although they were consulted about the introduction of trousers for girls in the sixth form. They do have a strong voice on the new school council but currently they are appointed rather than elected representatives. Students are very loyal to the school and are keen to do things to help as demonstrated on the recent open morning at the school. The sixth form have strong views on a number of issues, especially the poor state of their study areas, which can mean that they are unable to use their private study time effectively.

73. Induction into the sixth form is good and there is an inclusive approach with a number of students joining from other local secondary schools. Considerable work is done in Year 11, to prepare them for joining the sixth form. A lot of guidance work is done with students in the summer holidays before they take up their courses. Students are full of praise for the time devoted by senior staff to ensuring they obtained their subject choices in the sixth form. However, responses to the student questionnaire show nearly a third felt the advice was not always helpful.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools, colleges and higher education are good. The school has begun to make effective use of its specialist status as a sports college to strengthen its partnership with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school, who support both its work and pupils' learning.
- The school's status as a specialist sports college is beginning to have a positive impact on the life of the school, its partner schools and the local community.
- Information provided to parents on their children's progress, although satisfactory, is inconsistent. It doesn't always give parents a clear picture of how their children have progressed, or show what pupils' can do to improve.
- The good links with other secondary schools enhance the ease with which students enter the school at sixth form level.
- Good links exist between the school, further education and universities.
- Good community links support the curriculum.

Commentary

74. Parents are very supportive of the school and assist their children's education very well. The very active Parents' Association is also very active and raises significant funds as well as organising social events. However, at the pre-inspection parents' meeting, a small but significant number of parents expressed concern over the way in which the school consults and informs them. This was also reflected in the responses to the parents' questionnaire. The school has made efforts to consult on some issues, but gives parents limited opportunities to express their views.

75. Information for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters are sent out regularly, and these give general information about what is happening in school, as well as dates of events. The school works closely and effectively with parents where there are particular concerns and parents say they are comfortable about approaching the staff.

76. A significant number of parents indicated that they did not feel they received sufficient information about their children's progress. Parents are given opportunities to discuss their children's progress and they receive written information through interim reports and a full, end of year report. They inform parents clearly what pupils know, understand and can do, but they are inconsistent in that they do not all give parents a clear picture of how their children have progressed, or show what pupils can do to improve. There are sound procedures for working with parents of pupils with special educational needs to review individual education plans each year. Parents are involved in developing appropriate strategies to support their children.

77. The school is in its second year as a joint sports college initiative with the nearby Hurstmere School. It is now beginning to develop initiatives identified in its bid and there are regular meetings of the steering group committee to ensure that relevant progress is made. A school sports co-ordinator has been recently appointed with plans to link closely with feeder primary schools. The involvement of the community within the school is supported with the appointment this year of a director of community. The inadequate accommodation has prevented the desired progress of these links but the current building programme, which is now taking place, is expected to encourage a more positive involvement of community. The school makes good use of outside sports coaches and instructors to benefit the pupils and it is hoped that these will increase.

78. A number of departments in the school have adopted the sports college ethos into their schemes of work. Sport has a high priority. The school is aware of developments needed and these are identified in a comprehensive school improvement plan.

79. Whilst links with parents are similar to those at the time of the last inspection, links with the community and other schools have been enhanced by the move to sports college status.

The sixth form

80. Good curriculum links with local schools enable staff and students to work together for their

mutual benefit. Links with other schools ease transfer for students wishing to enter the school at sixth form level. There is also a range of good and supportive links with colleges and universities.

81. When they start in the sixth form, many students become members of the charity committee. Students take these duties very seriously and support the local community very well in this venture.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good, overall. Leadership of the headteacher is very good and other staff with responsibilities lead their areas well. Good management ensures that the school runs well. Governance is satisfactory. Governors give good leadership in most respects, but have not ensured that all statutory requirements are met fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very well led by the headteacher: as a result there is a strong ethos that is focused on pupils' learning and achievements.
- The leadership provided by senior managers and other key staff is good overall. Senior managers share a commitment to the individual and provide very good role models for others.
- Data is used well to monitor pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 and inform areas for improvement but the process used to check the quality of teaching and learning across the school is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The corporate development plan identifies the school's main priorities for the year well: over the longer term, planning is less robust.
- Governors support the school well and effectively hold it to account for its work.

Commentary

82. Governors know the school well: many have, or have had, children at the school. Governors are closely involved in helping to set the school's overall direction, for example, in becoming a sports college. They bring a range of expertise and professionalism to the governing body. Governors' committees are well constituted and cover a range of business effectively. The chairs of committees are well informed about their areas. Governors make good use of local authority training sessions and are conscientious. Governors have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They provide effective support and challenge for the school's leadership team. For example, when they had concerns about performance in mathematics, they not only discussed issues at meetings but also monitored classroom practice. Whilst governors generally have a thorough knowledge of their statutory responsibilities and discharge them well, a few responsibilities are not met fully. Provision for religious education in Years 12 and 13 did not occur last year, nor was accurate information on pupils' attainment in ICT collected and reported in Year 9. Risk assessments are not consistently undertaken in physical education. As at the time of the last inspection, provision is not made for a daily act of collective worship.

83. The school is led effectively overall. The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures that there is a clear vision for the school that is understood by pupils, parents and teachers. It is focused on pupils' achievements and permeates the life of the school. This is one of the reasons for pupils' very positive attitudes to school and learning. Senior managers work successfully as a team and contribute skilfully to the effective leadership. Many other key staff, including heads of year and departments, also provide good leadership and have established successful teams. A few departments, however, are not led effectively enough and this hampers pupils' achievements and curriculum development.

84. The clear vision provided by the headteacher and senior managers has helped to give the school an unmistakable focus on learning. However, the vision is not only about pupils' academic

achievements: the development of broader skills and personal achievements are also a central part of the school's work. The gaining of sports college status illustrates this commitment to developing well-rounded young adults. Teachers have successfully created a strong climate for learning which permeates many aspects of school life, from the many after-school sports activities to lessons and assemblies. Pupils know that they come to school to learn and understand the part they play in making this happen. This is what makes the school successful and goes a long way to explain pupils' good personal development.

85. Most middle leaders and managers contribute well to the school's effectiveness but their contributions vary. Some leaders are rigorous in the way they use performance data and know the strengths of their departments and what they need to do to improve. In art, for example, leadership contributes very strongly to pupils' achievements. In a few cases, however, middle leaders rely too much on the apparent high achievement of pupils and their informal evaluation is not rigorous enough to provide sharp priorities for improvement. There are some good examples of effective teamwork in both subject departments and year teams. Developments in the religious education department, for example, illustrate that good teamwork is improving quality.

86. One of the features of the school is the commitment to the individual. This is apparent in the knowledge senior managers have of pupils and the way they work with individuals to support their learning. This is partly because there are relatively few pupils who have special needs but it is also due to the way the school collects and monitors pupils' progress, especially in Years 10 and 11, which provides personalised information. As a result, pupils do not fall through the net. There is however, a weakness with this: it means that while senior managers have first hand knowledge of individual pupils, and provide close support, the bigger picture in relation to support across the school is missed. Until recently, for example, there was no special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and pupils were dealt with by heads of year on an individual basis: however, the school has now appointed a SENCO and raising teachers' awareness of support strategies is a priority. Similarly, whilst the tracking of the progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is effective, it is less refined in other years. The role of form tutors and heads of year in collating and tracking academic progress is underdeveloped in these years.

87. The school is well managed. There is a clear process to evaluate and review subject departments. At present this is through the review of examination results although greater use of prior performance and target grades is being developed. Broadly, this evaluation of examination outcomes is used to trigger more detailed reviews of subjects: this has happened, for example, in mathematics. This process is generally successful in promoting improvement in areas that are not performing well and senior managers have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, this work is not yet as sharp nor systematic as it could be. First, the focus on under-performing areas means that teaching and learning are not routinely monitored across the school making it more difficult to share and celebrate good practice. Second, the process tends to be reactive rather than identifying issues before they become difficulties. On the other hand, the school is planning to have a department self-review and evaluation programme in place by September 2005. In addition, the school's professional development programme has involved staff in looking at the characteristics of successful teaching and learning. As a result, teachers know the school's expectations but, again, without systematic evaluation it is not always possible to be sure that these are being realised.

88. There is a well-structured corporate development plan. This identifies appropriate priorities and time scales, and success criteria are all linked well to both the actions and the key tasks. The development plan also includes priorities for the sports college: this provides a clear strategy for developing the work of the sports college in its second year and is a useful tool for consolidating and improving the school's provision in sports. Overall, the corporate development plan provides a clear focus over four terms or so: longer-term priorities are implied, for example building the new sports pavilion, but time scales are sometimes rather vague. A longer-term strategic focus is missing from the plan.

89. Special educational needs is led and managed satisfactorily overall but there are some weaknesses. Individual education plans are not sharp enough in relation to targets and do not inform teaching strategies sufficiently. The role of SENCO is very new and it is too early to judge how effectively it is carried out. However, appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified: these include making sure that all teachers know about pupils' special needs and improving the quality of IEPs. Procedures for identifying pupils' needs, producing individual education plans and managing support for those with statements are satisfactory overall. Much is achieved for individual pupils by the staff because of their commitment: and practical involvement: however, the management of special educational needs as a whole, as yet lacks a strategic focus.

90. Financial management is efficient. Although limited, funds are allocated effectively to the school's development priorities. The budget shows a relatively high surplus but this is money that the school has allocated to the building of the sports pavilion. Governors are involved fully in the finance and budget process and monitor spending patterns regularly. Broadly, money is allocated well to subject departments on the basis of a maintenance budget and a separate developmental budget for which subject departments bid. Decisions about the development budgets are based on the quality of bids as well as the extent to which bids match priorities identified in the corporate plan. However, some subjects are allocated too little and this results in a lack of resources: this is the case in drama, for example.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,531,014	Balance from previous year	121,743
Total expenditure	4,215,702	Balance carried forward to the next	315,312
Expenditure per pupil	3215		

91. Continuing professional development is good. Teachers are able to access a good range of courses that contribute appropriately to their own and the school's development. The induction of new staff is sound: newly qualified teachers are supported through a structured programme. Other teachers new to the school do not receive as much help. The school has a commitment to initial teacher training through the graduate teaching programme.

The sixth form

92. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory, overall. Over the past two years, there has been a high turnover of staff responsible for leading the sixth form. As a result, developments have not moved forward as fast as the school would have liked: for example, there is no consistent sixth form tracking and monitoring of students' progress. However, day-to-day issues are dealt with effectively, by senior managers, so that the process of transition from Year 11 to the sixth form is good. One of the deputy heads, for example, interviews all students wishing to enter the sixth form while the other ensures that students with particular needs or concerns receive the support they need.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision for work-related learning is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A work-related curriculum has yet to be implemented fully.
- Work-related elements already appear in various parts of the school curriculum, but there is no overview to link them in to a comprehensive plan.
- The provision of work experience is of good quality, but not compulsory.

Commentary

93. The school has no formal work-related curriculum. However, many aspects of work-related education appear at various stages of a pupil's career. The short course citizenship GCSE, which all pupils follow in Years 9 and 10, contains many aspects about employment, such as law, rights and responsibilities, and discrimination. The coursework element centres on a community-based enterprise. Careers education in Years 8 and 10 focuses on familiarising pupils with the world of work. These disparate elements have not been measured against the nine criteria laid out in the statutory requirements. The school has not, therefore, gained a clear picture of what is already covered and what is needed to fill any gaps. There is as yet no formal audit of how individual departments in the school can contribute to the work-related curriculum.

94. The present work experience scheme in Year 11 is good, and well supported by the local education business partnership, but not sufficiently integrated into the work-related provision. It takes place after GCSE examinations, therefore there is no formal debriefing. Pupils have little opportunity to reflect on their experience or help their personal development by formally presenting a short evaluation. Work experience is not compulsory, but over two-thirds of Year 11 pupils took part in 2004, an increase over previous years. There is no opportunity for those pupils, who have part-time jobs, to reflect formally on their experience, nor is there any follow-up on those who did not participate in work experience.

95. The school has planned four days of work-related activity for 2005, including mini-enterprise and industrial awareness. So far there are no links with employers to provide simulated applications and interviews to increase pupils' hands-on experience of job seeking. There is no scheme ensuring continuity into post-16 education.

The sixth form

96. As there is no compulsory general studies or citizenship course in Years 12 and 13, there is no work-related curriculum for all students. For those who study business education, about half in both years, there are tasks with linked business sites, which require research and initiative to complete.

97. Three groups of students are involved in Young Enterprise and there is a link with a local Premiership soccer club, which supports two aspects of the business curriculum. There is no work experience scheduled in either year. Whilst support is provided to students applying to higher education, support for others is less well developed, as is preparation for work after completion of their studies.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Courses in English, English literature, French and German were fully inspected. In addition, all pupils study Latin in Years 8 and 9 and about 20 per cent do so in Years 10 and 11. Latin was sampled during the inspection. Standards in Latin have been consistently above average in recent years, and in 2004 there was a significant improvement over those attained in 2003. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the course followed prepares pupils well for examinations. In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge, teachers use time well and lessons proceed at a good pace, with a good variety of activity. The subject is well led and managed, and there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Standards are well above the national average.
- Subject leadership is good.
- Advice to students in Years 7-9 on how well they are doing and what they should do to improve is too limited.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning and the use of performance data are underdeveloped.

Commentary

98. Since the last inspection, results for pupils at the end of Year 9 have improved in line with the national trend. They are well above the national average with girls performing marginally better than boys, which reflects the national picture. However, compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels is lower than average. Standards in English are similar to those attained in science but not as good as those in mathematics. However, whilst the 2004 English results are broadly similar to those attained in 2003 overall, there is a welcome increase seen in the number of pupils attaining the highest levels.

99. GCSE results for both English and English literature are well above the national average. Girls do better than boys and this replicates the national picture. The proportion achieving grades A* or A in English is below that achieved in similar schools. However, GCSE English literature results are better than those attained in similar schools nationally. They are better than those attained in English, because candidates for English literature are selected on the basis of ability with the rest of the year group taking drama instead.

100. In work seen, by the end of Year 9, pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are well above the standards expected for this age group. This represents good achievement, because the high standards seen on entry to the school have been maintained. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to reach well above average standards in both English and English literature: the quality of their writing is very good, particularly in response to literary texts, where considerable maturity of thinking and expression is found. However, the bias towards close reading of literary texts at the expense of non-literary texts may account for some differences in examination performance at the higher grades. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others. When given the opportunity for paired or group discussion work, pupils show a high level of speaking skills. They behave well in lessons, and their consistently positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to their good achievement.

101. The quality of teaching is good and the quality of pupils' learning is very good, overall. This together with the mature attitudes of the pupils is why achievement is good. All of the teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and teaching expectations are high. The teachers' understanding of the demands of the tests and examinations ensures that pupils' learning is reflected in results. Pupils of all ages are explicitly taught how to make subtle and discriminating comparisons within and between a range of texts and the written work arising from such critical reading is impressive.

102. Teaching and learning are most effective where teaching is interactive and learning open-ended; where students are afforded opportunities to focus on challenging tasks in collaboration with others.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 9 English lesson on war poetry, where excellent use was made of interactive teaching to stimulate discussion

In one lesson, Year 9 pupils, who were at the beginning of a war poetry project, showed a high level of engagement in response to an interactive whiteboard quiz about the context and background to World War One. The teacher focused the class's attention on a large recruiting poster that he flashed up onto the screen. There followed an animated class discussion that drew out a wide variety of sophisticated uses of persuasive and visual language to be seen in the poster. The pupils demonstrated a high level of excitement and enthusiasm for learning in this lesson. The high quality of interactions, with all pupils fully involved, made this an excellent lesson.

103. Some teachers are employing a wide range of teaching approaches and a sharper focus on learning objectives from recent national strategies but this is not a consistent approach across the department. The use of ICT is currently being developed. However, the short thirty-five minute lesson is a significant barrier to an effective delivery of the National Literacy Framework in Years 7-9 because opportunities to divide the lesson into three and four parts are diminished.

104. Written work is not always marked effectively. Pupils lack specific advice on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further, particularly in Years 7-9. There are few opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work but learning is effective where these strategies form an integral part of the teachers' planning. The advice on how to improve is better in Years 10-11 because it is focused on examination criteria and leads to higher standards. The subject contributes to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are helped to face questions about moral and social dilemmas as they arise in class texts. They are given greater insight into the culture of this and other countries by considering the beliefs of others.

105. The department is well led by an experienced head of department who has the capacity to build on the progress that has clearly been made since the last inspection. Management of the subject is effective. However, the quality of teaching and learning is not monitored sufficiently and assessment procedures, including use of performance data to track pupils' progress, are not securely in place. Resources are used well, with the interactive whiteboard increasingly integrated in many lessons. The accommodation for English is unsatisfactory because two classrooms are too small for large classes and the designated teachers can be deterred from incorporating speaking and listening activities in their lessons because the partition wall is not soundproofed. The library is used for independent reading lessons and provides a valuable resource.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

106. Standards of literacy in the school are well above average. The quality of teaching ensures that few pupils have any difficulty accessing the taught curriculum from the time they join school. Even though a literacy co-ordinator has not been appointed, aspects of the National Literacy Strategy have been used effectively in some subjects, including music, modern foreign languages, history, geography, religious education and mathematics. At best, this involves pupils learning subject

specific vocabulary and “key words”. Teachers pay attention to pupils’ handwriting and presentation skills but not to the accuracy or otherwise of their written work.

107. In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils are good at exploring ideas in class and group discussions. In some subjects, such as science, geography and English, challenging questioning is built in to lesson plans, so as to develop and sustain the quality of debate as well as the pace of lessons. However, pupils are generally not provided with guidance to examine their own strengths as contributors to group talk together with an opportunity to reflect on their oral performance both individually and collaboratively.

108. The library is a valuable resource. Year 7 pupils benefit from an induction to the library. The library is available for all subject areas especially for Internet access and project work. The library is well stocked with fiction for Years 7-9 but there is room for improvement for Years 10 and 11. The new librarian is keen to maintain strong links with the English department and is continuing to organise the ‘Carnegie Book Award’. There is a strong collaboration with the local educational authority that results in the promotion of writers’ workshops as well as writing competitions.

Modern foreign languages

Pupils study both French and German in Years 7, 8 and 9, and continue to study at least one language in Years 10 and 11. Between a fifth and a quarter of pupils in Years 10 and 11 choose to study both languages. The provision of two languages is a strength of the modern languages curriculum.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- There is too much emphasis on testing as the main method of assessing pupils’ progress.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Teachers have a very good command of French and good subject knowledge.
- Teachers insist on high standards of work and behaviour.
- Pupils who attain very highly are not systematically identified, and there is no specific provision for them.

Commentary

109. Standards in French at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above national averages. Girls performed better than boys, but the gap was narrower than is found nationally. This well above average level of performance was maintained in 2004. By the end of Year 11, in 2003, standards at GCSE were well above average. French was one of the best performing subjects in the school. Girls performed better than boys, but the gap was much narrower than that found nationally. Results in 2004 were slightly better than those obtained in 2003.

110. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average. This is because pupils are at the start of their courses, and are just beginning to develop the skills required by the assessments they will undergo. Pupils show good comprehension skills in both listening and reading, and are confident in speaking French, even if their pronunciation is sometimes approximate. By Year 9 they can produce extended pieces of writing containing complex sentences and referring to different time frames. Teachers build on this good foundation in Years 10 and 11. By Year 11 pupils produce some quite sophisticated writing, drawing on a wide range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. They are generally accurate and confident in speaking. Pupils’ achievement is good across the five years of their course.

111. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are good, overall. Teachers have a very good command of French and use the language judiciously in lessons to raise expectations and set a high level of challenge. One or two members of staff are becoming skilled in the use of ICT, but it is not consistent across the department and there are few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their achievements in French. Teachers use time well, particularly in the short lessons. There is a good variety of activity and working context, and as a result pupils are engaged and work productively. They learn well. Only when the tight timing of activities drifts slightly is there a loss of momentum and consequently pupils lose focus. Also, teachers do not always match activities and demands sensitively to pupils' needs. For example, although there is a uniformly good level of challenge in lessons, the highest attaining pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to demonstrate higher order skills. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, but marking is not always explicitly linked to National Curriculum levels or GCSE criteria. Pupils do not always know what levels they are working at, or what they need to do to improve to the next level.

112. The leadership provided by the subject head is good. She has created a good hardworking team who work well for each other. She has a clear vision for maintaining high standards in the subject, and leads by example in the classroom. There is some informal monitoring of teaching quality, but it is not systematically embedded in the work of the department. Therefore, it does ensure consistency of good practice. The management of French is satisfactory. The department runs well on a day-to-day basis, and documentation to support planning is well developed. There are areas where the focus is less sharp, however. There is no policy for identifying those pupils who show the highest levels of attainment, nor any specific provision made for them. The use of data to inform planning and raise standards still further is underdeveloped. There is an over-emphasis on the use of testing to track pupils' progress, rather than continuous assessment of classwork and homework.

113. There is a well-established programme of visits and exchanges, which supports learning well. The balance of time allocated to languages creates some constraints, particularly in Year 9, where there are no long lessons available. This makes it difficult for teachers to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum in as much depth as they might like.

114. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is more consistently good, and there have been improvements in the acquisition of hardware and the use of ICT.

German

Provision in German is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Ongoing assessment of pupils' work is not consistently developed across the department.
- Standards are well above average.
- Teachers have a very good command of the language.
- Expectations of work and behaviour are high.
- There is no system for identifying the higher attaining pupils, nor any specific provision made for them.

Commentary

115. In 2003, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected National Curriculum standard by the end of Year 9 was well above average. Most of these pupils attained higher levels. This level of performance was maintained in 2004. By the end of Year 11, in 2003, standards at GCSE were well above average. Girls performed better than boys, but the gap between the two was approximately half that found nationally. German was among the better-performing departments in the school.

Results have been consistently well above average in recent years, and in 2004 there was some improvement over 2003.

116. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. Pupils have well-developed comprehension skills, and can cope with complex texts and listening passages. They speak confidently and with good levels of accuracy, although in some younger classes pronunciation can sometimes be approximate. In relation to their levels of prior attainment, pupils achieve well in German, maintaining high levels of performance throughout their school career.

117. Teaching and learning are good, overall. There is a consistent level of performance by teachers. They have a very good command of German and use it well to set high expectations. The use of ICT is in its infancy at the moment, but interactive whiteboards have been installed and one or two members of staff are developing expertise in this area. Teachers use time well, especially in the short lessons, and the combination of very good subject knowledge and the range of learning experiences that they provide leads to good learning on the part of pupils. This is enhanced by the attitudes of pupils, who are ready to learn and participate well in the activities that teachers organise. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, but the feedback given to pupils does not always inform them of the level they are working at, or how to improve to the next level. The short lessons restrict the range of teaching styles that teachers can employ. This can sometimes result in lessons being too teacher-directed, as there is little time for effective pair and group work. In the light of the department's outcomes, however, teaching is effective.

118. The leadership of German is good. The subject leader has created an effective team. She has a clear vision for the development of the subject. Management is satisfactory. Documentation to support teachers' work is in good order. Schemes of work are appropriately pitched and sequenced and there are helpful policies in the department handbook. There are, however, some areas which are not fully developed, for example, systems for the identification of the highest attaining pupils and guidance on specific provision for them. There is also little guidance on the use of day-to-day assessment to raise standards still further. Extra-curricular provision is good, with long-established visits to Germany motivating pupils, enhancing their experience and contributing to the well above average standards they reach.

119. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There is a more consistent standard of teaching, and teachers are beginning to bring in approaches using ICT. The use of pupils' performance data to inform planning is not yet fully developed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the examinations at the end of Years 9 and 11 are well above the national average.
- The teaching lacks variety and fails to inspire the pupils.
- The assessment of pupils' work is not being used to raise achievement.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and secure in the subject and this raises achievement.

Commentary

120. In 2003, the test results at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average and were in line with those schools with a similar intake of ability. Results remained well above average in 2004, although the proportion attaining the highest levels, Level 7 or above, dropped below that of similar schools. Over the course of the last five years the GCSE results have consistently been well above the national figure. Boys and girls achieve similarly.

121. Current standards are well above average in Year 9 and in Year 11. The achievement of pupils in lessons is satisfactory. The pupils achieve best when teachers interest the pupils by using a variety of different teaching styles. This was particularly evident in a lesson with a group of Year 7 pupils who were investigating algebraic relationships. Here the pupils were allowed to work in pairs for part of the lesson, which allowed them to discuss their mathematical thinking and extend their knowledge and understanding. In a Year 11 lesson pupils were constructing histograms and then using them to form hypotheses about what they showed. The teacher raised the level of achievement through the use of timed exercises. In both of these instances all pupils achieved well and were actively engaged in learning throughout the lesson.

122. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. The department has not fully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 7-9, although short, motivating starter activities were seen in some lessons. These served to focus the pupils on the subject. The quality of teaching ranged between satisfactory and good. In the better lessons, teachers' explanations, based on their good subject knowledge, capture pupils' interest and imagination. For instance, in a Year 10 lesson, more able pupils were motivated by the challenge of solving quadratic equations from first principles. In less successful lessons, exposition is dull and does not help pupils to understand underlying concepts. In these lessons, pupils are asked to copy the teacher's work from the board; they carry out calculations mechanically and do not appreciate why a method is appropriate. Pupils' work is marked diligently but includes few comments on what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils do not know what level they are working at and do not understand what they need to do to progress from one grade or level to the next. Pupils behave very well, concentrate and work hard.

123. The head of mathematics is new to the school and is clearly focused on raising standards. Strategies have been introduced to raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching and learning. Good developments include the introduction of motivating starter activities to lessons, the compilation of an extensive handbook which defines departmental philosophy and the determination to enter gifted pupils for the National Mathematics Challenge. Some whole-school decisions have had an adverse effect on raising standards. For instance, the decision not to provide the subject leader with a fixed teaching room is obstructing effective monitoring and evaluation. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory.

124. The last inspection identified some areas for development, which have still to be improved. For instance, there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT in the subject. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

125. Pupils' numeracy skills are well above average and are sufficiently developed to help them cope with mathematical work in other subjects. In GCSE physical education, pupils are required to monitor and record pulse rate. Pupils plot graphs in science and manipulate molecular formulae in chemistry. The use of logarithmic scales features in Year 9 geography where pupils discuss the Richter scale. There is good support for Year 7 pupils in design and technology when they are required to draw to a given scale. Although opportunities to use mathematical skills across the curriculum are not systematically planned the provision overall is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are generally well above average.
- Overall, achievement is good, although that of some of the higher attaining pupils in Year 9 is not high enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils receive insufficient feedback on what they need to do to improve their work.

Commentary

126. The standard of pupils' attainment in Year 9 national tests has been consistently well above the national average over a number of years. Work seen during this inspection confirms this position. The work of the higher attaining pupils, however, is not of a sufficiently high standard for their capabilities. Thus, although results are well above average, the proportion attaining the highest levels, Level 7 and above, is consistently lower than that attained in mathematics and, in 2004, in English. Pupils in Year 9 carry out experimental procedures safely and methodically and their understanding of a 'fair test' is good. They are less sure in explaining their results using appropriate scientific vocabulary. In one Year 9 class, for example, pupils were able to carry out an experiment to study the effect of air resistance on time of fall of a paper parachute. They knew the names of the two forces involved and also knew that the forces acted in opposite directions to each other. However, they were unable to describe their observations using words such as factors, and independent / dependent variables, nor were they able to use scientific vocabulary to describe the directions in which the forces were acting.

127. Standards attained at GCSE are consistently well above average and have regularly matched or surpassed those attained in selective schools nationally. However, standards seen in Year 11 are more variable. They are well above average in biology, chemistry and physics, above average in double award science and average in single award science. Pupils are able to carry out complex experimental procedures methodically and safely in chemistry, physics and biology and can explain their results using appropriate vocabulary. In chemistry, they are able to describe procedures well, although some are less successful in plotting a suitable graph to display results. In physics, they can make calculations and manipulate formulae, although are unsure about units of mass.

128. Overall, achievement is sound given pupils' ability on entry to the school. However, the higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are not sufficiently challenged and some pupils in double and single award science do not achieve as well as they should. In contrast, the achievement of many taking separate sciences is very high.

129. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lesson planning is generally good. Most lessons have clear learning objectives. In some lessons, particularly in physics and single award science, however, expectations are not made clear and learning objectives are not explicit. In most lessons work is appropriate and challenging, particularly in biology and chemistry. In the better lessons, teachers use information from the marking of homework effectively. In such lessons, teaching builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and opportunities for consolidation are used effectively. Consequently, learning is good or better and pupils achieve well. In a few lessons, opportunities for consolidation are missed, and work does not fully connect with or build on pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils achieve less well. There are individual examples of good written and oral feedback to pupils. However, this is not consistent throughout the department. The quality and frequency of feedback to pupils on how to improve are generally inadequate. There are examples of pupils' active involvement in lessons but this was seen only in a minority of cases.

130. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. Chemistry and biology are led well. Resources are adequate, except for provision for use of ICT, which is unsatisfactory. Accommodation is inadequate and adversely affects the provision for science. Many laboratories are in poor condition and impede the effective delivery of an integrated science course.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent Year 10, double award science lesson on the structure of chemical formulae.

Although the class is new to the teacher, he has researched pupils' prior attainment and has a good knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. He has identified gifted and talented pupils and also the ones who are likely to need extra help. He begins with an excellent interactive starter activity, with a clear learning objective, on chemical symbols and chemical formulae. The teacher encourages pupils to think and connect with previous learning, provides prompts and leads everyone to a successful start of the lesson. At the end of this episode he gets all to check their progress in this topic using their progress charts.

The lesson's main learning focus is explained clearly and succinctly, before a very good interactive discussion of how chemical formulae are developed, using an excellent presentation using ICT. Pupils are encouraged to think hard and asked 'to see in their mind's eye' the structure of the formula. He tells them, "in your mind's eye you should have a hypothesis". The teacher's subject knowledge is excellent. Then follows a very well organised class practical – a circus of four short experiments including a flame test. Everyone is on task, fully engaged with work and completes all four experiments.

There is excellent questioning and very good dialogue with pupils, and carefully focused teaching with very good on-going feedback. Praise is measured but constantly encouraging and challenging with 'why', 'how' and 'I wonder if' type of questions and expressions. The teacher seems to be everywhere, checking, clearing small spillages without fuss, reminding pupils of available time. He does not hurry them unduly but keeps them on task, demanding in a friendly and calming way more and more from pupils, and they rise to the challenge. Every pupil is supported, encouraged, given feedback and challenged. Learning is excellent. Pupils enjoy the experience and achievement is excellent. Pupils have excellent attitudes and are fully engaged with the lesson, responding enthusiastically to feedback, engaging in sustained dialogue, arguing their case and thoroughly enjoying the encounter. It is their engagement in sustained dialogue and encouragement to argue their case which makes this into an excellent lesson.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well in Years 7 and 8: new courses and a teaching programme linked to the National Strategy for secondary schools support learning well.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils taking the short GCSE course do not achieve as well as they should but achievement in the full course is very good.
- Teaching and learning are not monitored and evaluated rigorously enough.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work because the school has a strong climate for learning.
- On-going assessment is not used effectively enough to inform the next stage in learning.

Commentary

131. Pupils start school with a wide range of levels of skill and knowledge in ICT. Overall, these are slightly above what might be expected nationally. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average but it is in Years 7 and 8 where many pupils, both girls and boys, achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make similar progress, mainly because of their good attitudes to learning. Pupils who study the full GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress: compared with the national picture, examination results are very high. However, some of the pupils who take the short GCSE course are not doing as well as they should: overall standards are above the average but should be higher given pupils' attitudes to learning and capabilities.

132. This mixture of standards and achievement is confirmed by the work seen during the inspection. In Years 7 and 8 pupils develop an understanding of word processing, data retrieval and analysis, searching for information and control. They create some good presentations by bringing together information and pictures. Pupils in Year 8 make good progress in using appropriate search methods and learning to check the reliability of the outcomes. In Year 10, pupils are beginning to understand about how to structure their GCSE coursework and some make good progress in learning how to construct a database. In Year 11, about a third of pupils achieves well and shows a good understanding of how to use ICT effectively and efficiently. Others, however, reach only average standards and achieve too little. This is mainly because teaching lacks urgency.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Some teachers plan their lessons well. They have clear objectives, which means that pupils know what is expected of them. Good use of paired and group work also has a strong impact on pupils' learning, enabling them to develop their ability to work together productively. However, in other lessons, teachers spend too much time talking, leaving insufficient time for either group or independent work. As a result, pupils' motivation and interest wanes and they produce too little. The great majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and it is this that often has the strongest impact on their learning and achievement, rather than the impact of teaching.

134. Broadly, relationships are good and teachers manage pupils well. As a result behaviour is very good in Years 7 and 8 and good in Years 10 and 11. New materials for courses are beginning to make a difference to pupils' learning: however, some worksheets are not matched particularly well to pupils' needs and questions are too vague to push learning forward quickly enough. This is particularly so in Years 10 and 11.

135. Assessment is under-developed. In Years 10 and 11, there is a reasonably comprehensive system to track pupils' progress and predict GCSE results, whilst in Years 7 and 8, end of year tests help teachers to judge achievements. However, assessment is not yet at the centre of the department's everyday work. This means that teachers do not always have enough assessment information to refine their teaching programmes and pupils do not always have a clear view about how well they are doing. The National Strategy for secondary schools is starting to make a difference in Years 7 and 8 by providing more opportunities for teachers to assess pupils' learning and act on the information.

136. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is improvement since the last inspection. A significant feature, to the department's credit, is that the computer hardware has been updated and that standards in the GCSE full course have remained very high. In addition, respectable progress has been made in implementing the National Strategy in Years 7 and 8. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluating teaching mean that there is not enough emphasis on improving quality and raising standards. The department's development plan, for example, mentions little about teaching and learning or standards. There is not enough technical support for the computer network, which means that equipment can be out of action for too long.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

137. Across the school, the use of information and communication technology in subjects is broadly satisfactory. In some subjects, for example English and geography, ICT is used well to build on pupils' previous work or develop new ideas. In other subjects, teachers use either interactive white boards or multi-media projectors as part of their approach to teaching. Often this motivates pupils well and enables teachers to explain ideas in interesting ways. In design and technology, there are some facilities for computer aided manufacture but those for design are not as good. The use of ICT in subjects is limited by the access to computers: few classrooms have computers and those that do are used for dedicated ICT lessons most of the time. The library has some computers, which are well used by pupils although it is a relative small network. The development plan for ICT identifies the right priorities.

HUMANITIES

Courses in geography, history and religious education were inspected fully. A GCSE course in classical civilisation in Year 10 and 11 was sampled. Results in the last two years have been lower than average for selective schools nationally and the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* or A, 25 per cent in 2004, is lower than in most other subjects in the school. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards, achievement and learning were good in the sampled lessons. This is because teaching is good, marked by clear and high expectations, constructive relationships and constant reinforcement of key information through questioning to check recall and understanding. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in all years is well above average.
- Good use is made of a wide range of geographical learning resources.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment in all years in order to match work to pupils' needs.
- Effective use is made of ICT for geographical research.
- Development of geographical skills, especially map work and fieldwork, is too limited in lower years.
- There is very good reinforcement of subject specific vocabulary.

Commentary

138. Overall, attainment is well above average. Over two-fifths of the entry at GCSE in 2004 gained grades A* and A. Standards in lessons and in pupils' work sampled are average in Year 7 and steadily rise to above average as pupils move through the school. This suggests there is very effective preparation for examinations, which results in well above average attainment. There are few opportunities provided to enable more able pupils to achieve at higher levels in lessons. There are no significant differences in the standards attained by different groups of pupils.

139. Teaching overall is satisfactory but is stronger with the older, examination classes. Staffing of the department is relatively inexperienced and at times this shows in lesson planning. When teaching is most effective, teachers are knowledgeable and have an enthusiasm for the subject. They often link issues to current events or pupil experiences, so motivating pupils to learn, as in the case of a Year 9 pupil who survived a recent earthquake in Turkey. There is, however, little evidence of the National Strategy for Years 7 to 9 having an impact on classroom practice. Teaching is less effective where teacher input dominates lessons with little opportunity for individual pupil initiative, interaction or independent work. This is a particular problem when it is a short lesson. Some lessons lack pace, challenge and a clear geographical structure designed to progress the pupils' learning. There is often too much stress on content, using excessive worksheets, rather than developing specific geographical concepts or skills. Too little use is made of developing map skills and fieldwork for the younger pupils. Marking lacks detail and clear directions to help pupils improve their work and track their academic progress.

140. Learning is satisfactory for most pupils. Where tasks are open-ended, more able pupils have opportunities to achieve at a higher level. Pupils show good geographical knowledge and understanding in lessons, appreciating a wide range of physical and human geography interactions, such as the effects of earthquakes which are studied in Year 8. An effective range of data sources encourages independent work and develops geographical skills, including numeracy, as in the case of the analysis of population pyramids undertaken in Year 10. This is reinforced by an effective development of ICT to support independent learning. This was used well in Year 11 to model glacial landform formation. The department puts a stress on understanding key subject terms so aiding

pupils' geographical literacy and raising the standard of written work. In discussions, most pupils display confidence and contribute well, demonstrating considerable geographical knowledge and a desire to learn. Achievement of older pupils is good, but it is less good in Years 7-9 where pupils' geographical knowledge varies significantly.

141. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They are keen to learn and respond well to the demands made on them. Pupils listen attentively and concentrate for extended periods of time. Most pupils enjoy the subject and value its contribution to their knowledge of the world and the environment.

142. Leadership in the subject is good; management sound. The head of department is an effective team manager with clear ideas on the delivery of the geography curriculum. The appropriate priorities for the development of the subject are recognised, but without a structured development plan, changes in staffing have left little time for curriculum development. Accommodation is satisfactory and there is a good range and variety of teaching resources, including an effectively used interactive whiteboard.

143. Since the last inspection, examination results have remained high and some of the problems previously identified have been tackled, such as an improvement in the use of computers for research and independent work. The systematic monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work is still underdeveloped.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are usually very high and pupils achieve well by the end of Year 11.
- Pupils are well motivated and learn effectively.
- Preparation of pupils for examinations is good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- There are weaknesses in leadership and management of the department.
- Assessment through target setting and diagnostic marking is undeveloped, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

144. Recent results in GCSE are well above the national average. Usually a very high proportion achieve A* and A grades. In 2003, this exceeded the national average for selective schools but fell back sharply in 2004. Some individual students achieve outstanding results. Girls do slightly better than boys. Pupils usually do as well or better in history examinations than in the other subjects they study. Standards are similarly high in lessons and pupils' achievement is good. These good results are achieved by good teaching, which emphasises examination preparation. Teaching builds effectively on pupils' well-developed learning skills, which enable them to analyse complex historical situations, reach well thought through conclusions and write confidently about them.

145. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 shows that standards are well above average. Similar standards are seen in many but not all lessons. Pupils' achievement is good. There is clear development of pupils' skills over their first three years in the school. Many have strengths in evaluating the significance of historical sources and in the depth of their knowledge and understanding. Answers to questions in class can show considerable insight. Pupils write analytically and at length, showing a good grasp of important historical concepts.

146. Teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and is good overall. Pupils arrive at lessons motivated and ready to learn and teachers use a range of approaches, which usually capture pupils'

interest and build well on their strong learning skills. Teachers know the subject well and have a good grasp of examination requirements. Much of the teaching builds well on pupils' high levels of skill in reading and writing. In the better lessons, teachers ensure that the work moves at a strong pace. Good relationships are a feature in most lessons and pupils have an unusually good capacity for working in groups, sharing ideas, building a case and presenting it to others. In a very successful lesson on racial segregation in the USA, Year 10 pupils had been well informed of the issues in an earlier lesson and were able to deploy their knowledge while taking on the roles of various interested parties. They listened well to each other, deployed their arguments skilfully and demonstrated very good understanding of the issues involved. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboard in one of the history rooms to give pupils access to a variety of stimulating visual historical sources stored on computer, for examples, images of First World War posters designed to influence the views of women.

147. While no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, there is some which has shortcomings. Some teachers' planning is not clear enough about exactly what pupils should understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils are on occasion set tasks which they do willingly enough but which do not move their learning on as far as it should go. Books are usually marked regularly but, in Years 7 to 9, some of the marking does not pay enough attention to helping pupils understand how to develop their history skills further and improve the level at which they are working.

148. The overall success of the department in enabling pupils to achieve at a high level and fulfil their potential speaks well of aspects of its leadership and management in the past. However, the head of department's part-time role has led to a lack of a clear direction which the members of the department can pursue together. The evaluation and analysis of the department's performance are too general to lead to a precise plan for further improvement. The extent to which the teachers in the department share a coherent view of the history curriculum and the characteristics of effective teaching and learning is limited. This leads to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Since the last inspection there have been some improvements in information and communications technology provision but its place in pupils' learning remains modest. There has been some progress in course planning but little improvement in formal monitoring and evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress and target setting. Overall, progress has been unsatisfactory. This together with the shortcomings already mentioned make leadership and management, on balance, unsatisfactory.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.
- The experienced team of teachers has very good subject knowledge and expertise, and plan their lessons effectively to engage pupils.
- Very good relationships with pupils contribute to very good learning.
- The assessment system in Years 7-9 is not in line with national developments.

Commentary

149. There are no reported grades for the end of Year 9 in 2003. The proportion of pupils gaining higher grades in GCSE in 2003 was high compared with the national average. This represents very good achievement in religious education through Years 7-11.

150. On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' standards are well above national expectations. By the end of Year 9, pupils have achieved very well over time, and standards are high compared with national expectations. All pupils, by this time, are able to show considerable knowledge of the major faiths they study. Most show in their writing and other work an understanding of aspects that religions have in common, as well as the significant and symbolic features special to each.

151. Standards of pupils in Year 11, studying for both long and short GCSE courses, are high compared with national expectations. This represents very good achievement from Year 9. For example, in their study of gender and attitudes to women, pupils move rapidly from looking at everyday attitudes to women's roles, to considering what relevance Biblical texts might have for people today. Higher attaining pupils readily suggest differences they think they can detect between Old and New Testament teachings. They consider the potential implications of this for those today who observe these teachings.

152. Teaching and learning are very good. The experienced and very knowledgeable team ensure they plan for pupils to be involved in their own learning. They support GCSE pupils very well through regular monitoring, tracking of progress and encouragement. They develop very good relationships, which contribute to pupils' very good achievement over time, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, and boys as well as girls. Information technology is effectively employed to reinforce and stimulate learning. Time and resources are carefully planned and lead pupils very effectively to intended lesson outcomes.

153. Leadership and management are very good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There has been effective management of change in line with the National Strategy for pupils in Years 7-9, for example, the developing use of ICT and the use of teaching and learning styles that have an increasing emphasis on the direct engagement of pupils in their own learning. Standards of attainment and achievement throughout have increased. Accommodation is of a good standard. The principal teachers work well as a team. Pupils in Years 7-9 do not benefit from a structured approach to assessing their work. Currently assessment does not enable them to effectively judge their own progress or make clear the action they need to take in order to improve.

Example of outstanding practice

Amongst much very good teaching, an exceptional lesson was seen in religious education in Year 11. Through discussion and debate pupils explored the major philosophical concepts and arguments for and against the existence of God.

Pupils had previously been introduced to some significant categories of propositional knowledge, refreshed by the teacher through a brisk revision exercise. Lesson objectives were made explicit. The class was directed to timed, small-group discussions on arguments for and against the existence of God. In the feedback from this session, it became evident that a high level of engagement from all pupils had led them close to several classical arguments for the existence of God.

The teacher then skilfully and progressively built in additional information and tasks that led pupils to higher levels of discussion, debate and articulacy. By the end of the lesson, eight groups of pupils engaged in vigorous but controlled debates that demonstrated a high level of engagement with, and understanding of, major philosophical concepts and arguments.

The key to this lesson's success was the sustained engagement and enjoyment of pupils throughout, the simple and excellent use of time, the very effective deployment of ICT to reinforce and illustrate objectives and key definitions, and a firm expectation of high outcomes.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 9 pupils reach standards that are above the national average.
- In Year 11, GCSE results are well above the national average.

- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good.
- A limited range of materials is used in resistant materials and there is insufficient use of systems and control technology.
- Accommodation is inadequate, particularly in food technology.

Commentary

154. Attainment on entry is broadly average and overall standards at the end of the Year 9 are above average. Pupils quickly develop the basic skills to facilitate making and begin to show a sound knowledge of the design process. This is reinforced across the various disciplines within the subject. Higher attaining pupils generate ideas that match the task presented and annotate designs well to explain the possible solutions to the problem. Some pupils are sometimes less clear in their design work but still achieve at a level above average for their age. Pupils identified with special educational needs make good gains in their knowledge and understanding, as do pupils from different cultural backgrounds.

155. Provisional results for 2004 indicate a performance well above that expected for the age and broadly in line with those for selective schools. This represents good achievement with pupils producing well-finished, quality products that reflect the original designs. In the three full course areas completed in 2004, overall almost half the pupils gained A or A* grades which is well above that for all English schools. Results at GCSE for 2003 are difficult to compare with national results as only short courses were offered. National comparisons are only available for candidates taking full course GCSE.

156. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and generally plan effectively. In the most effective lessons pupils are engaged quickly through the use of activities that fully involve them. Teachers are able to explain what is expected and through effective demonstrations provide pupils with sufficient understanding to move quickly into independent working. Pupils generally are well motivated and have very positive attitudes to their studies. They relate well to teachers and peers, helping one another as required. On the occasions when pupils become inattentive, it is because teachers over-direct and do not place sufficient responsibility with pupils for their learning. Behaviour in classrooms and workshops is good. However, sometimes the workshop rules are not followed where pupils are reluctant to wear protective clothing or follow accepted procedures of tying hair back. There is a genuine enthusiasm for the subject that is reflected in the level of learning that takes place through all years. Concentration levels are high across the majority of years. Pupils are appreciative of the efforts teachers make to enable them to succeed. Those with special educational needs perform well in the workshop but the lack of learning support assistants puts unnecessary pressure on teachers and impacts on the progress made by other pupils.

157. Overall the curriculum meets national requirements. Pupils have a range of experiences but these are limited in the area of systems and control technology. Opportunities to work in the full range of resistant materials are also limited; the emphasis being on wood. This constrains the development of more innovative designs in higher years. All specialist accommodation is in poor condition and there are insufficient facilities for food technology.

158. Leadership in the department is good. Management is satisfactory. There is a desire and a drive to improve. Morale is good and there is a sense of common purpose. Performance is monitored but could be further enhanced with systematic monitoring in addition to performance management. Overall, the approach to assessment within the subject is good with potential for further development particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.

159. Because the range of experiences provided to pupils is limited, achievement at the end of Year 9 has fallen since the last inspection. At the end of Year 11, standards continue to be above average which is a good achievement given the move to full courses. Teaching has shown improvement with no unsatisfactory teaching being observed. Improvement has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Courses in art and design, drama and music were fully inspected. Dance is taught as part of physical education in Years 7-9. It has been offered as a GCSE course for the last two years, although numbers were too low for it to be timetabled in the current Year 10. The Year 11 lesson was sampled. Whilst pupils are enthusiastic and the quality of teaching is good, standards are well below those expected at this stage of a GCSE course. Pupils' limited experience of dance when in Years 7-9 adversely affects their practical skills. However, achievement is good given their starting point at the beginning of Year 10.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department has created a highly challenging and exciting learning environment.
- Achievement from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11 is very good.
- Pupils are very well taught and learning is very good.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 experiment successfully with a wide range of media and materials.
- Standards are very high at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- The art studios are dilapidated.

Commentary

160. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is below national expectations and pupils enter the school with weak drawing, painting and craft skills. However, they enjoy the subject and work well to improve their knowledge and understanding and to develop their basic skills. By Year 8, the majority of pupils are producing work of a standard that is above national expectations. In Year 9, they continue to make very good progress and by the end of the year attain standards that are well above national expectations. Achievement from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9 is very good.

161. In GCSE art and design in 2003, all pupils attained grades A*-C, a very much higher proportion than the 65 per cent nationally. Attainment in art and design was the highest of all subjects in the school. Similar attainment was achieved in 2004. These pupils performed much better in art and design than in their other subjects. Standards achieved by both boys and girls have consistently been well above the national average over the past four years. Achievement from the start of Year 10 to the end of Year 11 is very good.

162. Teaching and learning are very good, overall. Teachers possess very good subject knowledge and are adept at getting the best from their pupils. They prepare very well. Planning prior to lessons is conducted thoroughly and with attention to detail. Very good use is made of exemplar material, in the form of reproductions of the work of professional artists and pupils. Teachers make excellent use of ICT presentations to introduce pupils to the content of individual lessons, and to set objectives that can be clearly understood. They have very high expectations of their pupils who are expected to work to the best of their abilities at all times. Most pupils settle to their work with a real sense of purpose, to explore their own ideas and concepts through art design that requires creative manipulation of a wide range of media and materials. They are very highly motivated and very keen to acquire new knowledge, understanding and to improve their technical skills in drawing and painting. As pupils progress from Year 9 into Year 10 there is evidence that they develop the capacity for working with much greater independence.

163. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a very clear vision for the future development of the art and design department, which she shares with the rest of the team. She is a very good role model for staff and pupils alike. She is firmly committed to the creation of a challenging and exciting learning environment for pupils that will enable them to achieve

their full potential. Pupils' work is currently assessed and records kept, but this is an area that does require some improvement so that more accurate targets can be set for individual pupils.

164. Accommodation in the art studios is poor. The rooms are dilapidated and are not conducive to effective learning. Some lessons take place in design and technology rooms that are wholly unsuited to art, design and craft activities. Pupils work at benches that are designed for woodwork, not for drawing or painting. Resources are unsatisfactory. There are benches and stools that make it extremely difficult for pupils to develop their basic skills. The computers in the art department are old and some of the software is unsuited to the production of sophisticated imagery.

165. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. From the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11 pupils make very good progress and achievement is now very good, despite the poor condition of accommodation.

Drama

Provision in drama is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and results are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement.
- There is sound leadership and management.
- Accommodation and resourcing of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- Drama is not taught as a separate subject below Year 10. Its place, as an alternative to English literature in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

166. Examination results in GCSE drama were above average in 2003, with nearly all pupils gaining A*-C grades. Similar results were obtained in 2004. However, only a relatively small proportion of these grades are at the highest levels. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average: the quality of writing by Year 11 pupils is already of a promising standard, and pupils perform well in lessons. This represents good achievement, particularly because pupils have no experience of drama as a specialist subject in Years 7-9.

167. The subject is taught by two very experienced teachers of English, who are knowledgeable about the subject. They manage their classes well, and inject plenty of pace into their lessons. Effective teaching methods are used. Pupils are challenged to create imaginative work, to avoid stereotypes and to evaluate their own work and that of their peers effectively. Pupils contribute to their own learning by the way they work independently and collaboratively. Assessment is sound.

168. The head of drama provides sound subject leadership. Pupil data is monitored, but there is still scope for improvement in this area. The other drama teacher is the head of English and a former head of drama. The two teachers work well together to ensure common standards are set and to share information and ideas. There is provision for extra-curricular drama, including clubs. School productions feature most years, although this year the play, *Oedipus the King*, is being mounted by the classics department.

169. However, overall, provision in drama is unsatisfactory. The subject does not have the status it deserves in the school. Drama, as a subject, developed from school productions, and has not been given adequate time in the taught curriculum, from Year 7, in order to prepare pupils effectively for external examinations. There is a drama studio, but it is in poor condition. Some lessons have to be taught in classrooms or other unsuitable spaces in the school. Resources are limited, as the subject has a limited budget and there is no specialist subject teacher.

170. The most unusual feature of the provision for drama is its place in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Rather than being offered as an option, it is taught as an alternative to English literature to those who choose it. Drama pupils have to drop a subject that most are quite capable of doing well in, and have done half the work for in English. This is not a huge incentive for able pupils to choose the subject; they have to be very keen on drama or to lack an interest in literature. The department does well to maintain good examination results. However, there have been few improvements in the provision of drama since the previous inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject knowledge and commitment of all the music staff are excellent.
- Good teaching, with several examples of excellence, supports very good achievement.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities supports high standards and is a strength of the school.
- The extensive use of ICT is a major strength of the department.
- Assessment in Years 7-9 needs to be linked more explicitly to National Curriculum levels.
- Procedures for pupil self-assessment still need development.
- Provision of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments is limited.
- The lack of technician support in the department is hindering further development of ICT.

Commentary

171. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 over the last three years show that all pupils reach the nationally expected level for their age. The majority reach a higher than expected level. GCSE examination results are well above the national average. Compared to selective schools GCSE results in 2004 were average, with a drop in A* and A grades on the previous year. Work at GCSE is assessed reliably against the examination criteria. Recorded examples of pupils performing demonstrate knowledge of a wide range of styles and genres. Project work in Years 7-9 encourages research and is also of a high standard. The standard of performance in extra-curricular groups is very good. Senior groups and the junior choir are particularly good, with high standards of performance. After only three weeks in the school, the junior choir is singing well in three parts.

172. Many pupils enter the school with well-developed instrumental skills and achievement subsequently is very good at every level of ability. The quality of instrumental teaching makes a valuable contribution to attainment. Most year groups have some accomplished performers. The studious and mature attitudes of the pupils lead to very good achievement in listening, appraisal and composition. Work is demanding and expectations are high. Achievement is never less than satisfactory and in many lessons is very high. In a Year 7 class, pupils mastered the rhythms of "Bolero" by Ravel through movement, the use of their voices and the help of a snare drum on which many of them were able to replicate the complicated rhythm. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to write variations on a theme in the style of Mozart. In all years, pupils' obvious enjoyment of the lessons is a major contributor to their achievement.

173. All members of the department have a thorough knowledge and love of their subject. All are skilled musicians providing examples of excellence, which inspire their pupils. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in many lessons is very good or excellent. Planning is thorough and effective, recognising the strengths and learning needs of the classes taught. All staff have high expectations and present challenges to pupils according to their potential. They engage all pupils, maintain very good relationships and convey the magic of music. Their enthusiasm is clearly one of the main causes of the high standards achieved. Questioning is a particular strength, probing deeply, reminding pupils of what they already know, while challenging them to make deductions and

extend their learning. The emphasis on the use of correct terminology and vocabulary is making a significant contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Teachers evaluate the work of pupils during lessons giving individual help when required; praise is used effectively. Pupils in Years 7-9 know how to improve their work, but would benefit from a clearer understanding of National Curriculum criteria to assess how well they are doing. Sixth form students make a great contribution to the department and to the school through their commitment and the high quality of their work. The development of computer-aided work since the last inspection is very good.

174. Leadership is very good; the head of department is a committed enthusiast and a charismatic teacher who inspires those he teaches. He works well with his colleagues and management is efficient. The work of the instrumental and vocal teachers, providing in excess of 50 hours tuition, is well organised. The accommodation provides a good learning environment, but timetabling does not make the best use of the building. At times accommodation is underused, whilst at other times it is crowded. The assistance of an ICT technician and linking computers into the school network could support raising standards further, especially in Years 7 to 9.

175. Progress since the last inspection has been good. High standards have been maintained, but the department still has not been able to address the lack of pitched and unpitched percussion due to limited funding. This is hindering further progress, especially in the junior classes. The accommodation, whilst being a major improvement, needs more power points in the main teaching rooms, as trailing electric leads are a hazard; none of the practice rooms has been soundproofed and sounds carry into all areas of the building, impinging on work in progress. This is a very good department, which is a strength of the school.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent teaching of 'Blues' to pupils in Year 11 led to a performance incorporating improvisation that was impressive.

Pupils were nearing the end of their study of 'Blues'. In order to widen their horizons, the teacher introduced 'Blues' in 6/8 time. He used his considerable skills as a pianist to demonstrate various pieces familiarising the class with the different 'feel' this gives to a piece. The class then performed "All Blues" by Miles Davis to a high standard. A discussion of modal scales followed, with the class playing scales both individually and in pairs or groups in the Mixolydian and Dorian Modes. The pupils were fully involved in the activity, demonstrating their knowledge of a range of chords during questioning by the teacher. Assessment criteria for composition in this genre were shared, with emphasis on structure. The class performed the piece again. This time they were asked individually to improvise either in the Dorian or Mixolydian modes. Improvisations followed around the room with guitars and drum kit maintaining a steady background rhythm. All pupils performed very good improvisations, never losing the continuity of the piece and not knowing until it was their turn which mode they would have to use. They all rose to the challenge! Great sensitivity was shown by the rhythm section when the music demanded it. Teacher's praise and feedback of, "That was outrageously good," summed up the lesson.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the GCSE examination are well above average.
- Teaching is good and relationships with pupils are very good.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities in sport.
- Dance has been successfully integrated into the curriculum.
- The use of assessment is unsatisfactory; it does not indicate clearly to pupils what they need to do to improve.
- There have been no risk assessments carried out recently.

Commentary

176. Results in the GCSE examination in 2003 were well above average. They improved further in 2004, with more pupils achieving the higher grades. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show standards were well above average but they do not match the standards observed in lessons in the current Year 9, which were average. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with a low level of skill and a range of experiences but they achieve well in rugby and dance by the end of Year 9. A sports co-ordinator has recently been appointed with a priority to improve links with primary schools. Dance is a recent introduction into the curriculum and although standards are well below average in the GCSE course, pupils have achieved well on this new course.

177. In the lessons observed, standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are average. They are above average in dance where girls in Year 9 performed a class dance with good choreographic skills and good control. They use space effectively and plan group dances with a clear understanding of vocabulary and co-operation. There is no access to dance for boys in Year 9. At present all pupils study the short course I physical education at GCSE, some study the full GCSE course as well. For some, teaching does not fully cover all elements of examination requirements by the end of Year 11. Standards at GCSE are average in theory lessons but pupils' personal exercise plans are well above average in terms of presentation. All pupils demonstrate a high level of knowledge in their chosen sports. Presentation using word processing skills indicates pupils' high level of pride in their work. In Year 10, standards in basketball and hockey are below average. Knowledge and understanding of these games are good but performance is below that expected. In hockey, pupils lack stick control on passing and receiving the ball and in basketball the technique of the lay up shot is below average.

178. The quality of teaching and learning is good and has been maintained since the previous inspection. Lessons are planned with clear objectives but these are not always shared with pupils. Very good teaching matches objectives with those of the National Curriculum but this is not consistent with all teachers. Teachers possess very good knowledge of the activities taught but are not up to date with all aspects of the National Curriculum. Assessment is inconsistent and does not reflect levels of 'Curriculum 2000'. By the end of Year 11, assessment uses examination criteria and pupils are not always clear as to the progress they are making. The marking of pupils' work at GCSE is unsatisfactory. There are few comments which help pupils to improve and on some occasions no marking exists. Teachers form very good relationships with their pupils and this contributes to the very good, sometimes excellent, attitudes of pupils. They arrive enthusiastically to lessons, are well prepared and work hard. There are few non-participants in lessons. Pupils on the GCSE course demonstrate a mature attitude to their work and this also contributes to their success at examination level.

179. Pupils are appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer and there is a high level of participation. School teams are successful and many pupils have achieved success at regional and national level in a range of sports – this is impressive. There are good links with outside clubs and sporting bodies and pupils have benefited from coaching in rugby, cricket, hockey and dance both within and outside the curriculum. The option system in Year 10 is developing well and a range of activities are offered to all pupils both on and off site. The Junior Sports' Leaders Award supports pupils' leadership and personal development. The award of the prestigious Sportsmark Gold indicates a clear commitment of the school to physical education.

180. Leadership in the department is good. Most of the teachers in the department are recent appointments, including the head of the boys' department. The head of the girls' department is on a temporary contract covering a maternity leave. Both are good teachers and provide good role models for pupils. They have established an effective team of teachers and the two newly qualified teachers make a valuable contribution to the department. A co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils in sport has been a recent appointment and he is in the early stages of constructing programmes for identified pupils. Management of the department is satisfactory and there has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The school is in its second year as a sports college and development plans are in place as part of the school improvement plan. Development

planning has improved since the last inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory and reports to parents do not indicate the levels that pupils reach and do not state what pupils know, understand and can do. Grades are awarded for effort and behaviour only.

181. Statutory risk assessments have not been carried out recently. Accommodation indoors is unsatisfactory and restricts the range of activities that can be taught. Storage is unsatisfactory. ICT is used by teachers, with presentations using interactive whiteboards complementing teaching. As there is no dedicated room for theory lessons, not all classes receive this. There is a building programme in place at present which will address the current weaknesses in accommodation.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

No business or vocational courses are studied in Years 7-11.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement.
- The use of ICT, including the departmental website for both pupils and teachers, is a real strength.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils.

Commentary

182. The whole area of personal, social and health education and citizenship makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils. Work of a good standard was seen in lessons; as yet, no pupils have taken any external examinations. The present Year 10 will be the first year group to sit the short course citizenship GCSE. Work in Years 7, 8 and 11 is not formally assessed, but that seen indicates that, although standards do vary a little, most pupils are achieving well overall. They are able to participate in a range of discussions on topics across this area of the curriculum, and show considerable interest in the lessons.

183. Teaching is good overall, particularly where the lessons are taught by heads of year or senior members of staff. The school has deployed a strong team of teachers in this area, and most cope very well, setting stimulating tasks. Where teaching is good, classes are well managed and are provided with good resources. These include some imaginative uses of ICT, relevant handouts and occasional visitors.

184. The subject area is well led and managed by an assistant headteacher. The teaching is organised on a carousel basis, with 'specialists' taking lessons in their own area with different groups, covering drugs, sex and health education, careers and so on. Whilst this is good use of specialist skills, it can mean that the teachers do not get to know their pupils very well. Pupils in Years 9 and 10 study citizenship. The requirements of the short GCSE course are covered over these two years. There has been no formal audit as yet as to where citizenship occurs across the curriculum. Pupils are expected to supplement their learning by visiting the department's website, which provides support for the assessed work that is required at GCSE. There is also software for teachers to use, containing schemes of work and lesson materials. This is a real strength of the subject in this school. Pupils are also able to put citizenship into practice through community service and charity events, another strength of the school.

185. The focus on citizenship in Years 9 and 10 does mean that other aspects of the PSHE curriculum have to be largely put on hold for two years; careers education is probably the most affected. Work experience takes place in Year 11, so pupils cannot include any reflection on this in their citizenship portfolio. The provision has improved since the previous inspection; there is now more consistency in the quality of teaching.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 15 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003, which is the latest year for which national comparisons are available. Results in AS-level courses, mostly taken in Year 12, are those for Year 13 students who did not continue the course to A2-level. Classical studies includes results in both Latin and classical civilisation; information technology includes results in computer science; and other social studies for this year group was government and politics.

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	1	0	80.1	0	23.7	0	29.9
Biology	18	61.1	65.2	27.8	11.1	25.6	20.6
Business Studies	18	94.4	76.4	22.2	16.3	35.6	26.2
Chemistry	9	66.7	72.7	22.2	13.9	23.3	24.1
Classical Studies	2	100	87.4	0	34.3	30.0	35.2
Drama	5	80.0	86.5	20.0	19.6	30.0	30.6
Economics	5	100	73.6	40.0	20.1	36.0	26.4
English Literature	12	91.7	85.9	16.7	19.1	30.0	30.2
French	6	83.3	78.2	0	18.9	21.7	27.6
Design and Technology	9	88.9	74.9	33.3	15.1	37.8	25.3
General Studies	171	94.2	73.9	24.6	17.8	36.0	25.7
Geography	11	90.9	74.3	45.5	19.8	34.5	26.5
German	14	100	81.5	21.4	19.3	37.9	28.9
History	11	81.8	80.7	36.4	19.5	36.4	28.6
Information Technology	15	80.0	67.0	0	10.9	21.3	21.4
Mathematics	29	34.5	61.9	13.8	17.1	13.1	22.1
Music	8	87.5	86.5	12.5	21.4	35.0	30.7
Other Social Studies	8	75.0	69.7	37.5	16.7	32.5	24.1
Physics	16	68.8	68.6	0	14.4	18.8	22.7
Religious Studies	5	100	80.2	40.0	22.6	38.0	29.8
Sports/PE Studies	1	100	73.2	100	11.4	50.0	23.1

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	20	100	98.6	30.0	50.2	77.0	87.5
Biology	34	100	96.4	26.5	39.2	73.5	78.6
Business Studies	78	100	98.7	56.4	36.8	90.0	80.1
Chemistry	28	100	97.6	46.4	49.0	83.6	84.9
Classical Studies	13	100	99.5	53.8	55.9	90.8	90.9
Drama	10	100	99.5	30	40.1	74.0	83.6
Economics	20	100	98.9	45.0	52.0	86.0	88.3
English Literature	41	100	99.5	43.9	46.5	85.4	86.5
French	8	100	98.8	75.0	51.5	100.0	87.6
Design and technology	15	100	97.8	0.0	35.0	68.0	77.9
Geography	20	100	98.7	50.0	44.5	87.0	84.0
German	14	100	98.4	50.0	47.9	87.1	84.8
History	40	100	99.0	65.0	44.6	93.5	84.6
Information Technology	47	100	95.6	27.7	24.6	74.9	69.5
Mathematics	23	100	96.7	60.9	55.6	94.8	88.8
Music	5	100	98.8	40.0	38.9	80.0	81.1
Other languages	3	100	96.9	100	64.5	106.7	93.8
Other Social Sciences	41	100	97.4	56.1	42.7	88.8	81.8
Physics	26	100	96.7	61.5	44.6	93.8	81.7
Religious Studies	23	100	98.8	52.2	46.7	90.4	85.6
Sports/PE Studies	16	100	98.0	62.5	30.9	93.8	75.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

AS- and A2-level courses were inspected in English literature and French, and sampled in German and Latin. In German, teaching was good, promoting good learning by the students who are achieving well. In Latin, teaching and learning were good, leading to above average standards. Learning was enhanced in one lesson by the use of ICT. The teacher presented grammar points well on an interactive whiteboard, and students used a website-based activity to consolidate their knowledge. This development gives further evidence of good improvement since the previous inspection. The subject leader has achieved a good deal in a relatively short space of time, re-establishing Latin as a viable option.

English literature

Provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Results in 2003 were above average; 2004 examination results show further improvement.
- Teaching is good and learning very good, leading to very good achievement.
- There is good leadership and sound management.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning and of student performance data is satisfactory but could be improved further.

Commentary

186. Examination results in 2003 were above average. Although male students did not do as well as female students, their results were also above average. The 2004 results show an improvement in the proportion of students achieving the higher grades at A2-level, and there were quite outstanding results in the AS-level examination. Out of 60 candidates, 21 secured A grades and 16 B grades. The other candidates were all successful, 15 of them reaching grade C. Work seen during the inspection was well above average, both in the students' written work and in lessons. Students make mature contributions to lessons and are able to relate their learning to other literary texts. They are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment. This includes students with special educational needs.

187. The very good achievement is partly due to the very positive attitudes that the students bring to the subject: they learn very well because of their application to the work. Their folders show that they are very productive, taking copious notes and writing very effectively. They are also taught well. Some very good lessons were seen. These were when the students were more directly involved in the learning process. Group tasks, of quite a challenging nature, are given to students. A Year 13 class was seen getting to grips with Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* by brainstorming ideas in groups and finding supporting evidence from the text, recording them on large sheets of paper for presentation to the whole class. Notes are taken both from group presentations or from teacher-led discussion. All teachers have a very good command of the subject and relate well to their students. The younger teachers have particularly imaginative approaches, and relate assessment objectives to the work in progress. Good use is made of videos and interactive white boards as well as paper resources.

188. There is a strong well-qualified team of teachers, covering a range of age and experience. They benefit from good subject leadership. The high aspirations and sense of purpose of the head of English are quite evident: he has deployed his team well and leads by example. Leadership is knowledgeable and management is sound, although there is some lack of innovation. The head of department is aware of the need to broaden the monitoring of teaching and learning and to sharpen up on self-evaluation generally. Student data is used to track performance but this too is not yet sufficiently monitored to ensure maximum progress.

189. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The latest examination results show that, if nothing else. English literature is a popular subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

190. Students in the sixth form all have sufficient language skills to access their chosen subjects. Key skills are not now taught as separate subjects in the curriculum. Students receive good training in the writing of well-structured prose in a range of subjects. Good opportunities for discussion also arise in many subjects, although in some, such as mathematics, discussion is discouraged. Whilst fluency in speaking is a strength of many students, some lack the skills involved in making presentations to others.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Standards are well above average in Year 13; students achieve well and produce an impressive range of writing.
- The critical analysis of student performance data to inform teaching and learning styles is not yet fully developed.

Commentary

191. Standards in French in Year 13 in 2003 were well above average in the A2-level examination. This was an improvement over the previous year, and students attained a similar level of results in 2004. In the AS-level examination at the end of Year 12 in 2003, standards were in line with national averages. This was a slight drop from the previous year, but in 2004 there was an improvement.

192. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average. Students have a good grasp of grammar and syntax and can use idiomatic French with complex constructions and a wide range of vocabulary. They speak confidently and take the initiative in discussions. They can sustain an argument coherently with evidence of personal reaction. They are developing a good knowledge of French society and institutions.

193. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a very good command of the language and use it to good effect in lessons. High expectations encourage students to give of their very best. Teaching is very well organised and staff know the requirements of the examination specification well and use this knowledge effectively to give students plenty of practice in examination technique. They assess written work carefully and thoroughly, and give students high quality feedback aimed at improving their performance. Teachers work hard to prepare challenging tasks and ensure that lessons proceed at good pace. As a result, students are helped to develop good approaches for dealing with complex texts. They are keen to participate in discussions and can sustain and develop their views well, often by means of presentations given to the rest of the group. They achieve well.

194. The subject is well led in the sixth form. There is a drive to attain high levels of performance, and a good commonality of purpose among staff. The management of French in the sixth form is also good. The allocation of staff to the teaching of different aspects of the specification means that students have access to a wide range of differing expertise. This benefits their learning significantly. Teachers do not routinely analyse student performance data to inform planning for different teaching and learning styles.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered the A2- and AS-level examination courses offered by the school. A small number of students also study further mathematics in some year groups.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high proportion of students studying for A2-level mathematics pass the examination.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, but not enough opportunities are provided to develop students' independence of learning.
- A high number of students leave the course at the end of one year.
- The subject is not appealing to most of the young women in the school.
- Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and this aids achievement.

Commentary

195. In 2003, all of the students studying the subject passed A2-level mathematics with a grade E or better, 61 per cent of these passed with the top grades of A or B. These results are above the national average. At the end of Year 12 students take the AS-level examination. In 2003, 94 per cent of students passed and half of these with grades A or B. This was an improvement on the 2002 results when only 57 per cent passed.

196. Standards in lessons are above average overall and the students' achievements are satisfactory. For example, in one lesson a Year 13 group of students confidently calculated the vector equation of a line. Where achievement is good the teachers have planned the work to build upon previous learning. For instance, in a Year 12 lesson students had to use and apply their knowledge of indices to develop complex number sequences.

197. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge for AS- and A2-level which motivates students to work conscientiously. The students are keen and willing learners and they respond well to work, which is challenging but within their grasp. The formal teaching style and academic rigour of the course prove too challenging for some students who discontinue their study of the subject after one year. There are insufficient strategies for independent learning incorporated into the teaching and learning and too few opportunities for the students to form mathematical hypotheses. The marking of students' work is not linked to examination grades, which reduces their knowledge of how to improve.

198. Pupils answer questions confidently but rarely respond with questions of the teacher which clarify and extend thinking. It is unfortunate that even in good lessons students are presented with few opportunities to discuss their mathematical thinking and philosophy. In the least successful lessons, students have questions dictated to them by the teachers and are made to sit in rows of single desks, which inhibit discussion. This is unsatisfactory.

199. There are nearly three times as many young men on the course as there are young women. The lack of appeal of the subject to young women has not been addressed effectively.

200. The head of department is new to the school and has presented plans for raising standards. Some whole-school decisions have had an adverse effect on teaching the subject. For instance, some of the lessons are only 35 minutes long and this is limiting achievement because topics cannot be studied in depth. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

201. At the time of the last inspection mathematics in the sixth form was not reported on as a separate subject and therefore it is not possible to evaluate progress since that time.

Mathematics across the curriculum

202. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Students in Years 12 and 13 speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences within the school and how these have prepared them for their present courses and for entry into higher education. The school library has a satisfactory range of material to support independent study of the subject.

203. Although evidence of students using their mathematical knowledge, outside of subject specific lessons, is limited, a good example was found in the coursework for A2-Level psychology, where students perform statistical analyses within their coursework unit.

SCIENCE

AS- and A2-level courses were fully inspected in biology and physics, those in chemistry were sampled. Students in chemistry apply themselves well and show interest; the good teaching and organisation of the department is leading to good learning and well above average standards.

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average.
- Achievement of higher attaining students is inadequate.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Attitudes to learning are very good.
- Students' understanding of how they can improve is unsatisfactory.
- Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Commentary

204. The 2004 A2-level results were well above average and represent a considerable improvement over the results in the previous two years, which were only average. The work of current Year 13 students shows that standards are generally above average, with just under half working at grades A-B. AS-level results have remained above average over the last three years. Work of Year 12 students seen during the inspection is also above average.

205. Achievement in Year 13 is sound. The standards of work are above average. In one Year 13 class, students were able to explain in broad terms how the body's immune system works. However, consolidation of learning from previous lessons is not always strong - work done on photosynthesis, for example, is not secure. Too little revision of previous work occurs on a regular basis. Most students in Year 12 achieve well. The standard of work seen is above average. In one Year 12 class studying the structure of the cell membrane, most students understood the concepts involved. Some also understood the mechanism by which one of the fatty acids is replaced. Students are motivated and show mature attitudes to learning. They apply themselves to tasks well and take responsibility for their own learning.

206. Overall teaching is good. Attitudes to learning in Year 13 are very good. This enhances learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They provide very good support and guidance for coursework and examination preparation. Overall, learning is good. Relationships are very good. Learning objectives and feedback on how to improve are not always made explicit. In some lessons, there is insufficient active participation by students.

207. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The good guidance now being provided on coursework and examination preparation have led to improved examination results.

Physics

Provision in physics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at A2-level are consistently well above average.
- Students have a sound grasp of concepts, apply themselves well in practical work and overall are achieving well.
- Teaching is very good; lessons are well structured with a range of activities that help students to build up their knowledge and understanding effectively.
- Students have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to develop their own work.

Commentary

208. Standards for Year 13 students, as shown by A2-level results, have been well above the national average for the last two years but in 2002 they were above average. Standards for Year 12 students at AS-level were average for the last two years, although in 2002 they were well above average. In 2004, results at both levels were well above average.

209. The standards attained in lessons are high and this is as a result of very good teaching, the good relationships and interest that students show in their work. Students in Year 13 demonstrate a good grasp of work on waves that includes interference patterns, diffraction and fringes. Year 12 students are confident in their practical work and in calculations on resolving forces. The challenging teaching and positive attitudes seen is resulting in very good achievement. Very few female students have studied physics in recent years, but those in Year 12 are achieving at least as well as the male students.

210. Teaching is mostly very good and students learn very well as a result. Teachers show good subject knowledge in their questioning and explanations and in the tasks they set. A lesson on interference in Year 13, for example, included a demonstration on fringe patterns, presented in a way that met the needs of all learners. Lessons start promptly and students are clear about what is expected of them. At the start of lessons teachers ask good questions that are designed to make students think about previous work and provide a good basis for the current lesson. Teachers make good use of ICT in their teaching but students' access to ICT to develop their own work is unsatisfactory.

211. At present, leadership and management is satisfactory. Planning, the monitoring of teaching and assessment and recording are under-developed but the new head of science and the new head of physics have good strategies for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The AS- and A2-level courses in computer science were inspected fully, whilst those in information technology were sampled. In information technology, lessons lack challenge and pace but students are highly committed and work hard; standards are above average.

Provision in computer science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results at A2-level are consistently well above average.
- Students have very positive attitudes and come to lessons with a commitment to learn.
- Monitoring of teaching, self-evaluation by the department and development planning are under-developed.

- There are insufficient computers and software for most sixth form students to develop their own work.

Commentary

212. Standards for Year 13 students, as shown by A2-level results, have been well above the national average for the last three years. Standards for Year 12 students at AS-level are more varied. They were well above average in 2004 but were only average the year before. In 2004, student results at both levels were below what was predicted.

213. The standards attained in lessons are good as a result of the positive attitudes of the students, their application and their commitment to learning. Students demonstrate a good grasp of the different levels of programming languages and are able to write and amend programs using "Pascal". The few female students are doing slightly better than the male students.

214. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of what the students need to cover and are making good efforts to use ICT to prepare and present their lessons. The teachers create an environment in which the students are able to learn through concentrating on their work and by supporting each other. The learning needs of all students are not fully met because there is insufficient variety in teaching methods used, planned outcomes are not always clear and student participation is insufficiently encouraged. As in the previous inspection, teachers' efforts are frustrated by unsatisfactory accommodation, by hardware and software that are out-of-date and inadequate technical support.

215. Overall, the management and leadership of the department are unsatisfactory. Features, including regular minuted meetings of the department and schemes of work that are easily amended and updated, are sound. There are also good arrangements for moderating students' work. The development plan, however, is focused on resources rather than how the department might improve standards and success criteria for lessons are too broad to be of value. The lack of formal monitoring of teaching makes it difficult to identify weaknesses and how they might be improved. As indicated by the department's own self-evaluation, there is an unrealistic and inaccurate perception of strengths and weaknesses.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

216. Many teachers are making good use of ICT to prepare and present their lessons but the use of ICT by students to develop their own work is unsatisfactory. This is because there are insufficient computers, both within departments and for private study, and there is no network that extends to most areas of the school. The use of ICT is good in art, computing and ICT, physical education, music technology and business education but limited in all other subjects.

HUMANITIES

AS- and A2-level courses were inspected in government and politics, history, psychology and religious education, and were sampled in geography and classical civilisation

Standards in geography are well above average at both AS- and A2-level. In 2004, all the students entered at A2-level gained a grade C or higher. Achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good with a stress on structured independent learning and practical geographical skills.

Classical Civilisation AS-level results improved strongly in 2004, with a high proportion of A and B grades. However, at A2-level there was a drop in the proportion of higher grades, though students achieved in line with expectations based on their GCSE results and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is good overall; it is knowledgeable, well planned and expects much of students. However, sometimes, the teacher's voice is too dominant and teaching does not pay enough attention to the different starting points of students. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Government and politics

Provision in government and politics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at A2-level are well above average.
- Encouraging students' initiative and independent learning is a strong feature of the teaching.
- ICT does not sufficiently support students' learning.
- Performance management does not ensure sufficient sharing of good practice.

Commentary

217. In 2003, standards at A2-level were well above the national average, with over half of the candidates gaining grade B or above. All candidates taking the examination in the past few years have passed. The 2004 results continued this consistency of performance. At AS-level, in 2003, just under half of students gained grades A and B, but that dropped to just under a quarter in 2004. The subject is, however, a popular one, and retention rates are good. The work of the current Year 13 is of high quality. Most have improved greatly over time, particularly those who entered the course with lower than average point scores at GCSE. As students progress through the course, arguments are better organised, and presented with greater clarity of expression. Initial problems with lack of illustrative detail are overcome, analytical skills improve, and the focus on answering examination questions accurately becomes sharper. Standards are well above average and represent good achievement for able pupils learning a new subject.

218. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good expertise and are enthusiastic about their subject. In class they consistently strike a good balance between teacher-led and student-centred activities. They have a profound influence on the reading and viewing habits of their students, and challenge them to develop firm ideas and express their opinions through lively discussion of current affairs. This has a very good impact on their learning and personal development, as they learn to use their initiative and to work independently, or in pairs and groups. There is good diagnostic marking of work. Students are therefore always aware of their level of attainment, and receive very good constructive feedback on how to improve their performance. A more rigorous use of assessment to aid target setting is being developed.

219. Leadership of the department is good. The team works closely together, and there is clear vision and direction. Management is satisfactory. The good self-evaluation and the development plan show that the department is aware of areas where improvements can be made, and is implementing strategies to bring these about. The current monitoring and evaluation of teaching is insufficiently systematic to ensure that colleagues can regularly see and share good practice. A more integrated ICT programme has been designed to support students' learning more effectively.

220. The previous inspection highlighted the qualities listed above. The department has maintained its high standards of attainment, teaching and learning, and student support. Improvement is satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and students achieve well, often gaining examination results which exceed expectation.
- Teaching is knowledgeable and skilled.
- The emphasis on examination preparation pays dividends as students achieve high results.

- Students have good learning and oral skills and work well together.
- There is insufficient emphasis, both within routine teaching and in students' writing, on the differing opinions of historians.

Commentary

221. Results at A2-level in recent years have been well above average with a much higher proportion of students achieving grades A and B than is the case nationally. Students' achievement over time is good and often exceeds what might be expected from their earlier GCSE results. Results in AS-level examinations at the end of Year 12 are also well above average with students achieving in 2004 above expectations. Students achieve well in examinations and lessons because they are well motivated, work hard and benefit from good teaching, which pays close attention to examination requirements. They have very good essay writing skills and, because they are encouraged to acquire a thorough grasp of the knowledge required by the syllabus, many are able to argue a case very convincingly and with the ability to make references to a wider sweep of history. The strong progress made through the sixth form is evident in the confidence shown in group discussion and presentation of their ideas by students in Year 13. Students, who have recently embarked on the AS course, are making appropriate progress and, very early in the course, writing advanced essays to a high standard.

222. Teaching is good and students respond well; their learning is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and lessons are productive because teachers are clear about what they want students to achieve and relationships are good. Teachers have high expectations of work, which most students meet. Students encounter different styles of teaching and classroom organisation and have confidence in their teachers. There are good examples of clear teaching, where essential information is conveyed in an interesting way. Because of this, students understand the knowledge they need in order to make judgements and comparisons. Students are articulate and are willing to raise issues and ask for further clarification. Their note-making skills are well developed. In other lessons there is more emphasis on students finding things out and organising information for themselves and working together to draw conclusions. In a Year 13 lesson on continuity and change in Russia, collaboration and interaction was very good as students worked in groups and presented their conclusions to colleagues. Learning was very good and standards high as students, drawing on past work, expressed subtle and sophisticated understanding. Overall, students' learning is good.

223. In the teaching seen there was limited reference to the differing interpretations and views of historians. Students' essays, while often of high quality, make limited reference to alternative views and relatively little use of quotations from historians that might demonstrate their wider reading. In routine essay writing they are not expected to list books and other sources of evidence they have explored. In this respect, their already good learning is capable of further improvement.

224. After the last inspection A-level results declined sharply. Important decisions to change examination board and place more emphasis on direct examination guidance and preparation have turned the situation round, so that results are now very good. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection in developing students' skills in analysing documents and making better use of their oral participation skills in lessons. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning remains too informal. Overall, the leadership and management of post-16 history are satisfactory.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained at A2-level are well above average and represent good achievement, whilst those attained at AS-level are more varied.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, especially where a range of strategies is used.

- The department is well led and managed.
- Assessment is very thorough. Students receive good support for coursework, although it is too task specific and restricts opportunities for students to display initiative and flair.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

225. Psychology is a popular subject, introduced only recently. Attainment at A2-level is well above average. In 2004, the first year of entry, over a third achieved grade A and over half grade B or better. This represents very good achievement compared to the standards these students reached at GCSE. Whilst attainment at AS-level in 2003 was also well above average, that attained in 2004 represented some under-achievement. Less than half those entered attained grades A-C. Around half of Year 12 students now study the subject, including many of those who achieved least well at GCSE. Not all appreciate the rigour and complexity of the course when making their subject choices, which partly explains why results were less good in 2004, compared to those in 2003, when the entry was far smaller.

226. Evidence from lessons and work seen indicates a wide variation in standards, which are generally in line with those nationally at this stage of each course. This represents good achievement, overall. The quality of much written work is very good, but some displays limited understanding of psychological theories and research. Achievement is best where students are encouraged to collaborate with each other. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students worked well in pairs answering multiple-choice questions as revision of work on pro- and anti-social behaviour. They then worked in groups, identifying possible content for part of their coursework assignment. In both tasks, discussion enhanced understanding and helped students develop confidence. Achievement is least good for those students who resist participating in collaborative work. Many Year 12 students start the year with limited facility in making presentations to the whole class. This impedes progress in the early stages of the course. Those who carry on to A2-level display good skills in presenting the findings of their research.

227. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Students experience a good mix of teaching styles, with the strengths of the three teachers complementing each other. A good emphasis is placed on developing students' capacity to work both collaboratively and independently. Good use is made of question and answer sessions, both at the start and finish of lessons. Students appreciate the opportunity given to express their views. They are encouraged to read more widely and to access research journals.

228. Assessment is very thorough. Students undertake regular key assessment tasks and receive supportive feedback on what they need to do to improve. Students receive good support for coursework in Year 13. However, students are not given a choice of task and the excellent handbook provided is too task-specific. This restricts opportunities for abler students to display initiative and flair.

229. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department's experience as an examiner and moderator is used effectively to plan delivery of the courses. Students are given some choice in electing the modules to be covered in Year 13. Good use is made of ICT to give feedback to students on their work. However, limited resources beyond textbooks are available for the subject. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Rooms are small, cramped and inappropriately laid out. They impede effective curriculum delivery.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic teachers have very good subject knowledge and provide very good support to students.
- Achievement in examination classes is very good.
- Students are well motivated and relationships are very good.
- Opportunities to extend students' learning experiences beyond the classroom and the school are under-developed.

Commentary

230. Results in the A2-level examination for 2003 were above the national average, and reflected the trend of rising standards in recent years. Department data show that students achieved very well, and continued to do so in the 2004 examination. AS-level results for the large 2003 cohort were well above average.

231. Standards at the time of the inspection show that the large group of students in Year 13 are working at a standard well above national expectations. Their high results in the AS-level examination underline their very good achievement from Year 11. Students' work provided for inspection shows them to be familiar with significant texts and schools of thought. For example, in their research of classical arguments for the existence of God, they brought their understanding from previous learning of theories of knowledge to successfully identify weaknesses or fallacies in these arguments. There are no significant differences in the achievement of male and female students, those with special educational needs, or those with English as an additional language.

232. Overall, teaching and learning seen through the inspection was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Lessons are very well planned and make excellent use of time available. There is a strong emphasis on engaging students through ensuring regular small-group and whole-class interaction. This was seen used to good effect in an introductory lesson on ethics. Students were introduced to concepts such as moral, amoral and non-moral actions. After a brief whole-class discussion, their understanding developed through small-group work looking at true-to-life situations, which led to a real impact on understanding. This was seen in their ability to articulate complex ideas and defend them against criticism from their peers. The use of ICT is embedded in the department's planning and its use frequently provides commentary and emphasis on significant ideas and themes, very effectively aiding students' absorption and consolidation of new knowledge.

233. The department is very well led and managed, and improvement since the last inspection is good. Teaching is regularly monitored. The subject has increased in popularity and numbers choosing religious studies are now significantly higher than two years ago. Students' progress is carefully monitored, results thoughtfully analysed, and very good support given, as students acknowledged in discussion. The library resources support both core and wider reading. The department has planned a series of conferences for all students in Years 12 and 13, although in the previous year there was no such provision for all students.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The inspection covered AS- and A2-level product design, taught within the design and technology department. No other specification was sampled, although the school has introduced food technology at the start of this academic year.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of work is above average.
- Attitudes are very good and students work with a good level of independence.
- Specialist teachers have a good command of their subject, which they use to encourage and engage students.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation has an impact on curriculum delivery.
- Computer aided design and computer aided manufacture equipment (CAD/CAM) available in the department is inadequate.

Commentary

234. Overall, attainment on entry to the AS-level course is above average. The majority of students achieve a higher grade at GCSE. The proportion of A grades gained in 2003 was broadly in line with all schools, but the proportion achieving grades A-C was above average. Provisional results for 2004 show a similar pattern. This represents satisfactory achievement over the year. In 2003, results at A2-level were below average when compared to those nationally. Provisional results for 2004 show a performance in line with all schools. Attainment on entry to the A2-level course is broadly average because a number of higher attaining students do not continue after the completion of AS. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.

235. Discussions with students and scrutiny of work during the inspection indicate that students are already reaching an above average standard. Students develop their designs thoroughly as a result of comprehensive research and analysis of existing products. The higher attaining students illustrate the design process effectively, annotating in detail high quality sketches. Few students make use of the limited CAD facilities to enhance portfolios. However, they do make use of generic software to improve presentation, mainly using their home equipment. Making is of a high standard although the range of materials used is limited. The main structure of most products is softwood. There is insufficient access to CAD/CAM equipment to ensure that students reach their full potential. Higher attaining students show innovation but for most their understanding of the characteristics of different materials places constraints on the products produced. All groups of students perform equally well, particularly those from different cultural backgrounds.

236. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and have a particularly good understanding of the examination specification requirements. Students benefit because teachers ensure that they know what they need to do to achieve the higher grades. Work is usually well planned to provide the right level of challenge for all students. In the most effective lessons, introductions fully engage students because questioning is focused and targeted. Activities are designed to involve students from the outset. Teachers make good use of one to one tutorials to give verbal and written feedback as part of the formative assessment process. In the least effective lessons, teachers tend to dominate extended introductory sessions allowing students to lose interest. The learning objectives are vague and the overall structure does not allow for a good pace to the lesson. Some lessons are allowed to drift to a conclusion with no time taken to review learning. Students' attitudes are very good. They support one another well, providing mature, constructive comments for their peers. They are appreciative of the efforts teacher make to ensure their success.

237. There is good leadership and satisfactory management. Teachers complement one another's skills and there is a positive feel to the department. Technician support is good. Although there is no systematic monitoring of teaching, performance management procedures are in place. Rooms are small and in need of refurbishment. This has an impact on students' work, both in designing and making, as restricts what can be attempted.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

AS- and A2- level courses in art and design and drama were inspected fully. Courses in music and music technology, which are taught together, were sampled. Standards in music have improved over the last two years and were well above average in 2004. The standard of work in the sixth form is excellent. The sight-reading of a Bach Chorale in four parts, followed by insightful analysis by the A2 students was impressive. These students make a great contribution to the department and to the school through their commitment and the high quality of their work.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good from the start of Year 12 to the end of Year 13.
- Students work with great concentration to acquire new knowledge and to develop their skills.
- Teachers possess very good subject knowledge and provide very good advice and support.
- The head of department has created a challenging and stimulating learning environment.
- The art studios are dilapidated and are not conducive to effective learning.
- The ICT provision in the art department is inadequate to meet the demands of students.

Commentary

238. In the AS-level examination in 2003, a third of students successfully achieved the highest grades A-B, which was much higher than the national average. Over the past year there has been significant improvement and in 2004, half the students achieved grades A-B. In the A2-level examination in 2003, just under a third of students achieved grades A-B which was much lower than the national average. In 2004, only one in ten achieved the highest grades A-B. However, this does not reflect the standard of work that is produced by students. Achievement from Year 12 to Year 13 is very good.

239. Students in Year 12 make very good progress. They are highly motivated and work with great concentration to acquire new knowledge and understanding and to improve their technical skills. The work in their visual diaries demonstrates confidence and assurance in the analysis of paintings by Italian artists, such as Sandro Botticelli. Further, students produce very good written evaluation of the work of these artists. Year 13 students continue to make very good progress and have refined their research skills. They make very good use of a variety of sources to collect interesting examples of the work of artists such as Escher, Picasso and Renoir. Several students are beginning to make very good use of photography and ICT as a means of generating exciting imagery. Students demonstrate that they have the self-confidence to work from their own concepts, attitudes and beliefs as starting points for their art and design work. Achievement is very good from the start of Year 12.

240. Teaching is very good, with some excellent features. Teachers possess very good subject knowledge and they provide very good advice and support for students. They are very well informed and familiar with the requirements of the AS- and A-level examination specifications and assessment objectives. Very good relationships exist between teachers and students, who are expected to work with a high degree of independence. They are actively encouraged to analyse and evaluate their own work and that of other artists. Teachers constantly set challenging targets for students who are expected to resolve problems largely unaided. Work is assessed regularly and oral feedback provided for students about what to do to improve.

241. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a very thorough understanding of the requirements of the examination syllabuses. It was due to some level of

concern on her part that she took the decision last year to change from one awarding body to another. She has created a learning environment that both challenges and stimulates students. Although informal assessment is carried out regularly, more formal written procedures are not as well developed and do not ensure that accurate targets are set for individual students.

242. Accommodation is poor and resources are unsatisfactory. The rooms are dilapidated and are not conducive to learning. The computers in the art department are old and the available software is not suited to the production of sophisticated visual imagery. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is very good and progress made by A2-level groups is now very good. There is much more evidence of independent working on the part of students in Years 12 and 13.

Drama

Provision in drama is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average, but recent results are below average.
- Teaching is good, although achievement over time has been unsatisfactory.
- Students learn very well and take responsibility for their own learning.
- There is sound leadership and management.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

243. Examination results in drama in 2003 were below the national average for the subject. For male students, they were well below average. There was no improvement in 2004. Although most students secure passes at AS or A2-levels, not many achieve the higher grades. The standards shown by current students, however, particularly those in Year 13 are higher. Some of their work, both written and in performance, is above average, but achievement overall remains unsatisfactory given the standards reached in GCSE.

244. Teaching is good. The two English specialists who share the drama classes have built up a subject expertise and present their students with well-planned and challenging tasks. These tasks give the students scope for different interpretations of texts and different ways of presenting work. In addition, students learn very well, both independently and collaboratively. Year 13 students are clearly very good at working in groups. A lesson in which they worked on the opening scene of *The Government Inspector*, by Gogol, was particularly impressive, with lively renditions of character and a real sense of the humour in the text.

245. The below average standards in examinations are a consequence of a number of factors. Although many students have studied drama for GCSE, they had no opportunity to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject before Year 10, and there is still much for them to learn. Only a minority of students take drama at GCSE, with abler students generally taking English literature instead of drama. In addition, the accommodation and resources are limited and this has an impact on the work that can be done. There is no specialist drama teacher at the present time. Sound subject leadership and management ensure that good use is made of the very limited resources. Students have very positive attitudes to the subject; several of them are taking part in the current production of *Oedipus the King*, directed by a classics teacher.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education was inspected at AS and A2-level. A recreational games session is also offered to all students in Year 12. This was sampled.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the A2-level courses are well above average.
- Students achieve well as a result of very good attitudes.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- The enrichment programme in sport in Year 12 is very good but there is no such programme in Year 13.
- Personal performance portfolios are of a very high standard.
- Accommodation for theory lessons is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

246. Results in the A2-level examinations in 2003 were well above average with a high proportion of students achieving the higher grades, A or B. In 2004, these results showed an improvement. At AS-level, results in 2003 were well above average. In 2004, they were above average but more students achieved the higher grades, A or B. In the lessons observed and the scrutiny of work, standards are above average. Students show pride in their written work and their personal performance portfolios are of a very high standard. Students use word processing to enhance their presentation and these individual projects indicate an above average knowledge and understanding of their research.

247. Students in Year 12 know the distinction between play for leisure and play for competition. They understand that everyone, adults and children, should gain from the experience of play in terms of fitness, self-fulfilment and sociability. In the social history of physical education, students in Year 13 understand the development of court games. They know, for example, when, where and why real tennis was developed. They learn what equipment and buildings are needed and how this links with public schools and churches, and how, because poor people could not afford equipment, the game was adapted. Standards are above average in Year 13 where, for example, students use their observational skills to analyse performance in soccer. They study a video of a soccer match and observe individual players. Students' knowledge of the game is good and they are articulate when reporting to their peers.

248. Students achieve well in lessons as a result of both good and very good teaching and their very positive attitude to their work. They are keen to learn and they form very good relationships with their teachers. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers possess very good subject knowledge but the quality of lesson planning varies. Teaching takes place in a range of rooms and the accommodation available is not satisfactory for theory lessons. Marking is unsatisfactory and on some occasions, students' work is not marked. As a result students do not receive grades for their work and they are not always aware of the progress they are making. Homework is set regularly and supports students' learning. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory and the department makes good use of its' teachers' expertise.

249. A recreational session adds enrichment and is available to students in Year 12 during curriculum time. All students are enthusiastic and there is a high level of participation. At present there is no such arrangement for Year 13 but a range of extra-curricular activities are available. School teams are successful; a high number of students are successful at regional and national

level. Rugby is popular and successful and the school makes positive use of a coach from the local Blackheath rugby club.

BUSINESS

The business studies course was fully inspected at AS and A2 Levels, whilst those in economics were sampled.

Standards in economics are well above average both in examination results and in work seen. Achievement is good; students make good progress over time in skills development. Teaching and learning are good, with students contributing fully to lessons.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at both AS and A2 Level are high and consistently improving.
- ICT facilities are limited, but support students' learning very well.
- Encouraging students' initiative and independent learning is a strong feature of the teaching.
- Members of the department work closely as a team and consistently share good practice.
- There are insufficient business links to support the curriculum.

Commentary

250. In 2003, standards at A2-level business studies were well above the national average, with over half of the candidates gaining grade B or above. Male students performed better than female students. The 2004 results showed further improvement, as three-quarters of the students gained grades A or B. At AS-level in 2003, just under half gained grades A or B, an achievement repeated in 2004 with an entry of 100. The subject is a popular one, and retention rates are good. The work of the present Year 13 shows good progress over time in developing examination skills. Their level of attainment improves along with their analytical and evaluation skills and their ability to illustrate theory with practical examples. They match independent research skills with a thorough understanding of the different aspects of business. Standards are well above average and represent good achievement for able pupils learning a new subject and new skills. Year 12 students, who are totally new to the subject, are just learning to apply structure and logical analysis to their tasks. Their level of attainment is reflected in their ability to apply theory to practice, and offer clear explanations.

251. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a profound knowledge of their subject, and consistently strike a good balance between teacher-led and student-centred activities. They encourage students to keep up to date, via the media, with the latest developments in the business world, and challenge students to express and develop their ideas through lively discussion of current topics. This has a good impact on their learning, as they learn to work independently and to collaborate responsibly and profitably in pairs and groups. Marking and assessment are regular and consistent. Students are always aware of their level of attainment, and receive very good constructive feedback on how to improve their performance. A new system of recording and tracking student attainment and progress is improving the process of target setting.

252. Leadership and management of the department are good. There is clear vision and direction. The department has used its limited ICT facilities to set up individual teachers' personal websites, which students can access from school and home. They can find all the support materials they need, particularly for homework. There are also tasks with linked business sites, which require research and initiative to complete. This provides very good support for students' learning and personal development. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching take place systematically, both under the school's professional management system, and in regular opportunities for

colleagues to observe each other and share good practice. Three groups of students are involved in "Young Enterprise". A link with a local Premiership soccer club supports two aspects of the business curriculum, but there is currently insufficient diversity.

253. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have consistently risen, the quality of feedback to students is very good, as is the use of ICT.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

254. There are currently no personal development and general programmes undertaken by all students timetabled on a weekly basis. Core religious education was not inspected. Although there was no provision last year, a series of conferences for all students in Years 12 and 13 are planned for this year. The course in general studies was sampled.

255. In 2002-3, almost all Year 12 students studied general studies as one of their five AS-level subjects. In 2003-4, most Year 12 students studied five AS-level subjects, but general studies was made optional and was taken by about a quarter of the year group. The reduction this year to four AS-level entries for most in Year 12 has drastically reduced take-up for general studies to four students. Standards at AS-level have risen significantly over the last three years. Becoming an optional subject led to well above average attainment in 2004. Current standards are average after one assessment. Teaching and learning in the one lesson seen were good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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