

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **CITY OF NORWICH SCHOOL**

Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121172

Headteacher: Gordon Boyd

Lead inspector: Graham Preston

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 268780

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	12-18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1447
School address:	Eaton Road Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR4 6PP
Telephone number:	01603 454015
Fax number:	01603 458796
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Lucinda Poliakoff
Date of previous inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

City of Norwich School is a very popular, large comprehensive school of nearly 1450 students drawn mainly from the southern areas of Norwich and outlying rural areas. The very large, mainly open access sixth form of nearly 500, has grown considerably in recent years with a substantial number of students coming from other schools. There tends to be more boys than girls in most years and students with ethnic minority backgrounds make up about five per cent of the school roll. These features have changed little over the years. There are few students for whom English is an additional language but there have been other changes in the school intake over the years. Students do still tend to have above average socio-economic backgrounds but increasingly the school provides for a wider range of students with different needs. Changes in the local catchment area have resulted in more socially disadvantaged students, reflected in the take up of free school meals, which is about national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs has risen considerably to be close to the national average. A number of students have visual or physical impairment though the biggest increase has been in those with particular learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Despite these changes in intake, most students come to the school with above average standards in the main core skills of English, mathematics and science.

In the last three years the school has established itself as a specialist Technology College helping it improve standards and facilities in related curriculum areas, as well as further extending its strong links with other schools, colleges and the community. Its community role is a significant feature that reflects a commitment to life long learning and includes provision for a wide range of enrichment activities including music and the arts. The school has been developing closer links with partners in the planning and provision of 14-19 education. Its work in further developing the school, including its staff, is reflected in its accredited status as an Investor in People.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1990	Graham Preston	Lead inspector	
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector	
23487	Patricia Kitley	Team inspector	English 12-16, sixth form theatre studies, English as an additional language
3242	Michael Newman	Team inspector	Science 12-16, sixth form biology sixth form co-ordinator
33139	Mark Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics 12-16 and sixth form
29742	Patricia Fyans	Team inspector	Sixth form chemistry and physics
31694	Michael Sutherland-Harper	Team inspector	French and German 12-16 , sixth form French
14633	Jean Bannister	Team inspector	Sixth form sociology
32231	Adrian Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 12-16, sixth form business studies
32367	Jo Pike	Team inspector	Art and design 12-16 and sixth form
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Design and technology 12-16, sixth form information and communication technology
34084	Mary Davis	Team inspector	Music 12-16
34521	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	Special educational needs, sixth form English
23307	Neil McDonough	Team inspector	Physical education 12-16
27492	John Barker	Team inspector	History 12-16 and sixth form
33150	Angela Pilgrim	Team inspector	Geography 12-16 and sixth form
2652	Robin Lomas	Team inspector	Sixth form psychology
32315	Peter Wibroe	Team inspector	Religious education 12-16
34089	Robin Gaff	Team inspector	Citizenship 12-16

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**City of Norwich School is a good school with many strengths including very good leadership.** Standards are above those nationally and the good teaching and learning enable students to achieve well. The school is successfully providing for an increasingly diverse intake that includes students with widely different needs. It has excellent community links. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, supported by the very effective governing body and good senior and middle managers
- Teaching and learning are good, with much that is very good
- Good care and support systems and very good provision for students with special educational needs, help to create a positive and inclusive school ethos
- Some teaching is not managing the behaviour successfully, or motivating some challenging students, mainly in Year 9
- The varied curriculum is greatly enhanced by the excellent range of enrichment activities including those for the gifted and talented
- Academic monitoring, target setting and reporting are not well enough developed and marking and assessment are underdeveloped in some subjects
- Long term absence is limiting sixth form leadership and affecting the development of the advice and guidance programme
- Unsatisfactory accommodation is affecting work in several subjects and the sixth form

**The school has made good progress since the last inspection.** Recent examination results are better and the school is monitoring and improving teaching more effectively. The school now has considerably more students that need additional, specialist support and now has very good provision in that area. Lack of sufficient and appropriate accommodation remains a serious concern though there have been significant improvements in design and technology and science.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Students achieve well overall.** The 2004 test results in Year 9 were well above average, which indicates good achievement. Current standards in Year 9 are not quite as good, which reflects the differences between year groups. In 2004, GCSE results were well above the national average and almost two-thirds of students gained five or more A\* to C grades. Students achieved well when their results were compared with their standard when they join the school. Students performed at least as well as those in schools with similar intakes. Current standards vary somewhat from subject to subject, but by Year 11, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above national average results. The sixth form standards shown in the table look to have fallen but this reflects the change in student intake from one which was smaller but academically strong, to the present more open entry sixth form which is much larger and admits a much wider range of students. The 2003 GCE A level results were a little above the national average and the students' average point scores improved further in 2004.

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



Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	B	C	
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Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

**Students' attitudes and behaviour are good.** Students like school and get on well together. Most behave well around the school and in lessons, though a minority of students misbehave, particularly in Year 9. Attendance and punctuality are good. **Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good** and is supported by effective provision for citizenship.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is good.** The school works hard to provide a good education for all its students. The curriculum provides a wide range of courses and experiences to better meet all needs. Provision for special educational needs students is very good. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities including support for gifted and talented students. The care system is supportive and protective, though academic monitoring and assessment are still in their early stages. Links with parents are good and its excellent links with schools, colleges and the local area reflect the school's work as a specialist Technology College and its commitment to developing its role in the community.

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.** In almost all subjects the teaching is good. Nearly a third of teaching is very good or excellent, with teaching stronger at GCSE and in the sixth form. However, while most teachers have responded well to new developments and the changing school intake, others have not. Consequently a number of staff are less effective in meeting the different learning needs and engaging and managing the more challenging students. Assessment is sound but marking does not give enough guidance for improvement.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has a clear vision and has successfully moved the school forward in terms of improved provision and higher standards. The new and developing leadership team is providing effective support for the many talented and hardworking middle managers. However, the lack of a head of sixth form has weakened the leadership of the support and guidance systems. Management systems are good although a number are still being developed. Governance of the school is very good. The dedicated and very well informed governors have played an increasingly active part in the strategic development of the school.

## PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have high expectations of the school and like to be regularly consulted and informed. They recognise the many strengths of the school though have some justifiable concerns about teaching and behaviour in some lessons. Students like coming to school and do not consider bullying or harassment to be an issue in what they consider to be a large though welcoming school.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Establish rigorous whole school academic monitoring and target setting with clearer tutor role and improved reporting practice

- Make sure that a number of teachers have the skills they need to engage students' interest, meet their different needs or manage behaviour of more challenging students
- Establish effective sixth form leadership and management
- Ensure marking and assessment shows students how they can improve
- Improve accommodation to meet the needs of drama, music, science, design and technology and the large sixth form

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure there is a daily act of collective worship

## THE SIXTH FORM AT CITY OF NORWICH SCHOOL

A large sixth form, joined by most students from the main school and many students from other local schools, which offers a wide range of academic GCE courses.

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective sixth form**, which meets the needs and aspirations of its students well with an appropriate range of academic courses. It is cost effective. Students achieve well as a result of their own determination to succeed and good teaching. Examination results are above average. The sixth form has doubled in size since the previous inspection and now has a much more open intake. Nevertheless the results have improved over the past two years. The sixth form is being managed satisfactorily by acting staff in the absence of the head of sixth form.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Teaching and learning are good overall with over a third which was very good or excellent, especially in drama and theatre studies, history, art, media studies, geography and psychology
- The curriculum is good and provides well for all students
- Extra-curricular enrichment and links with the community and other schools are excellent
- The sixth form induction programme is very good and the welcoming ethos promotes good attitudes and relationships
- Sixth form leadership is limited at present, but the current acting staff are moving in the right direction and sixth form provision is very well monitored and supported by the leadership team
- Inadequacies in accommodation also affect the sixth form particularly available study areas

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	<b>English: Good.</b> Good teaching and learning lead to above average standards and good achievement. <b>French: Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good with very good use of spoken French and authentic resources enabling students to achieve well.
Mathematics	<b>Mathematics: Good.</b> Good teaching results in good achievement, in the many courses on offer. Standards are average and improving.

Science	<p><b>Biology: Satisfactory.</b> Good teaching and learning enable students to make satisfactory progress and reach the national average. New subject leadership is making improvements.</p> <p><b>Chemistry: Good.</b> Well structured teaching enables students to make good progress. They enjoy chemistry and reach their targets.</p> <p><b>Physics: Satisfactory.</b> Well informed teaching enables students to make satisfactory progress. Students like physics though learning activities are not always well matched to the varying abilities of the students. Standard are below average.</p>
Information and communication technology	<p><b>ICT: Good.</b> Standards are above average and achievement is very good. Good teaching and learning are supported by very good leadership.</p>
Humanities	<p><b>Geography: Good.</b> Results are above national average. Both girls and boys achieve well because of their good response to the enthusiastic and well-informed teaching. The subject leader manages provision very well and ensures it fully meets students' needs.</p> <p><b>History: Very good.</b> Very good and challenging teaching enables students to achieve well and gain well above average standards. Very good leadership and effective teamwork has greatly improved provision.</p> <p><b>Sociology: Good.</b> Results have risen steadily and are above national averages in an increasingly popular AS and A level subject. Students enjoy the work they are given and are well taught.</p> <p><b>Psychology: Very good.</b> The very good teaching enthuses the students who achieve very well with standards well above the national average.</p>
Business	<p><b>Business studies: Good.</b> Good teaching and learning contributed to good achievement in the lessons observed. As this is a new subject, there are no examination results as yet.</p>
Visual and performing arts and media	<p><b>Drama and Theatre studies: Excellent.</b> Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, enthusiasm for their subject and high expectations enable students to learn very well. Standards are well above the national average.</p> <p><b>Art and design: Good.</b> Students are well taught and achieve well. Standards are above the national average.</p>

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

Also sampled were English literature, German, Spanish; human biology, environmental science, electronics; religious studies; music and media studies; PE; AVCE business, economics; and health and social care.

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The advice and guidance given to sixth formers are satisfactory. Extended assemblies and an off timetable day have been used to inform students about higher education and employment applications. However, some students are unhappy with the quality of individual guidance they have been offered about higher education. Monitoring of progress by form tutors is variable and sixth formers generally rely much more on their subject teachers to provide them with guidance. Sixth formers play a valuable role in caring for others particularly through the counselling service, which students from Year 12 have established.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Currently both leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory but no better. There is a lack of sixth form leadership because of long term absence. The acting head of sixth form is satisfactorily maintaining provision, well supported by a senior manager. However, this situation has made it more difficult to create a team of tutors who can give students effective support through rigorous monitoring and target setting, and provide guidance on university applications. Students have been involved in planning their own social and study areas but

there is a lack of care by some students over their own environment. The limits in access to sixth form study and social areas, slows the development of a strong sixth form ethos.

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

Students' views of the school and sixth form are very positive with regard to their chosen courses and the good and often very good quality of teaching in the subject areas. They are less positive about the sixth form leadership, being aware of the effect of long-term staff absence. They support the direction that the acting leadership of the sixth form wishes to go, particularly the greater involvement of sixth form students in the life of the whole school through such innovations as the house system, paired reading and involvement in main school tutor groups. Both Year 12 and Year 13 students are very happy with induction arrangements and feel that there is a welcoming ethos and very little cliquishness in the sixth form. A few Year 13 students were justifiably concerned about the lack of support they have received in making early UCAS applications.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall standards in the main school are well above national average. There is some fluctuation in the rate of progress students make in different subjects over the years, though by Year 11 most achieve well at GCSE. Sixth form standards are not quite as good as in previous years, but this largely reflects the wider range of students coming into an expanding sixth form. Those students achieve well in most subjects and standards are now rising.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are above national average and recent GCSE results are the highest in the school's history
- Although there is some variation in the rate of progress students make in Years 8-11, students achieve well when compared to all schools and schools with similar intakes
- Sixth form students achieve well in most subjects and very well in some including psychology, drama and theatre studies, English and sociology
- On occasion, achievement in some lessons is adversely affected by unsatisfactory student behaviour and some less effective classroom management

#### Commentary

1. Students come to the school in Year 8 with above average skills in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects are more variable depending on students' experience in the different middle schools. In most subjects, entry standards are not as good in other subjects, though broadly average. They are well-below average in design and technology.
2. Overall standards at the end of Year 9 are above national average and well above in some of the core subjects. The improvement in standards reflects the good progress students make in most of their subjects in their first two years. The table below shows that the students' GCSE achievement compares favourably against all schools. Compared with schools with similar intakes, students perform at least as well and when judged on their performance on entry to the school, they achieve well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.9 (36.9)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	37.7 (38.3)	35.4 (34.7)
science	36.9 (35.9)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 236 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In English and other subjects, students demonstrate above average literacy skills and often high standards of accuracy in written work. Students take advantage of the opportunities to in Years 8 and 9 to develop critical reading skills and understand writing techniques enabling students to write creatively and experiment with different forms of language.

4. By the end of Year 9, students have developed above average competence in mathematics. Higher attaining students for example, can calculate the result of proportional changes using multiplication methods while lower attaining students have secure enough skills to be able to convert fractions to decimals and have a basic understanding of improper fractions. In science, standards are above national average and most students achieve at well in terms of end of Year 9 test results. Even so, progress in some Year 9 lessons is inhibited by the inappropriate behaviour and less secure class management.
5. Standards in science have been consistently well above national average at the end of Year 9. These high standards are evident in most lessons reflecting good achievement though progress in some Year 9 lessons seen was hampered by the poor behaviour of a minority of students.
6. In ICT, standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national average although during the inspection, students work in lessons was variable. Progress in Years 8 and 9 was satisfactory rather than good because of limited curriculum time, less challenge for the higher attaining students and some unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons.
7. The humanities are generally an area of good student achievement particularly in history and geography where the strong and developing teaching and learning strategies are particularly effective. Students' achievement in religious education is appropriate, though as with many subjects, progress is mixed in a few lessons where teachers are developing their skills to cope effectively with more challenging students, particularly in Year 9.
8. The picture of good achievement in Years 8 and 9 is repeated in most other subjects including design and technology. The subject has improved considerably in recent years helped by the school's specialist status as a Technology College. Students have mixed and often limited opportunities to develop their design and technology knowledge and skills in middle schools though there is now effective liaison with those schools to improve standards on entry. Even so, standards tend to be well below national expectations on entry but students benefit from good and often very good provision that enables them to reach national average at the end of Year 9, particularly in their practical skills.
9. At GCSE are above national average and GCSE results in the last three years are the highest in the school's history. In 2004 with 64 per cent gained five or more grades A\*-C while almost all gained at least five grades A\*-G. National comparisons cannot yet be made but the indications are that these results will be at least as good as the two previous years and probably better.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	60 (67)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (95)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	39.5 (39.6)	34.7 (34.8)

*There were 226 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

10. Some statistical evidence suggests that students make faster progress in Years 8 and 9, but inspection evidence indicated little difference in Years 10 and 11. In a number of subjects, students improve at a faster rate. In the core subjects, students sustain the considerable improvements they made in their earlier years. In some of the other subjects such as history and design and technology, students build on the good foundation established in earlier years to make accelerated progress at GCSE and often achieve high standards. Even in a few subjects where progress in Years 8 and 9 is less strong, as in ICT, students retrieve much ground to achieve well above GCSE results.
11. In English, students continue to strengthen their skills at GCSE level. Higher attaining students write with authority and show sensitivity in their analysis of literature while average attainers use skills of inference and deduction in their explanations of literary text. Students are able to write at length and the focus on raising boys' achievement has succeeded in improving their participation in lessons and their results. In mathematics too, most students continue to make good progress and achieve well. In Year 11, higher attaining students can solve simultaneous equations where one equation is circular and the other is linear. The lower attaining students can draw straight-line graphs to represent real life situations and comment on their findings. Standards in science are well above the national average reflecting continuing good achievement.
12. Standards are above national average in most subjects by the end of Year 11 and in some such as ICT, drama and art among others, GCSE results are well above national average. Achievement is good or better in almost all subjects and is never less than satisfactory. The focus on boys' underachievement, in a school with a majority of boys, has clearly been effective, with little difference in progress and outcomes between the sexes in most subjects including design and technology, art, history and modern foreign languages. In physical education, girls are not as good as boys but the improved teaching has greatly narrowed the gender difference.
13. The standards attained by gifted and talented students are analysed by the school as a separate group and most reach levels in line with predictions. Overall, though not all teachers provide sufficient challenge in lessons, most gifted and talented students achieve well.
14. Students with special educational needs make good progress because of the additional support that they receive. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students in all years. They are making very good gains in reading and spelling skills. Almost all students improve their literacy skills over the first year at the school. In some cases, this improvement is substantial. The majority meet the targets in their individual education plans and improve their social as well as academic skills. Year 11 students are entered for a range of GCSE examinations including maths, English and science, and achieve accreditation which is, at least, in line with their ability. Students who are supported by the Inclusion Base make progress towards behavioural targets which are clearly understood by the students. The school has three visually impaired students who benefit from the close and effective support of the SEN co-ordinator. The school also provides for the education of a separate unit for the hearing impaired that is located on the school site. Both groups make as good progress as other students in the school. The few students for whom English is an additional language also achieve well.

## Sixth form

15. Results in the sixth form were well above average. However the expansion in recruitment led to a widening of intake so that the sixth form is now virtually open access for an institution that concentrates on Level 3 courses ('A' level and VCE). Overall, results in 2003 were higher than national results. Overall, there was a slight difference between the performance of boys and girls, with girls doing better. Standards rose further in 2004.

### ***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	94.4	(90.6)	85.5	(92.1)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	41.1	(36.8)	27.6	(33.8)
Average point score per student	263.1	(253.7)	258.2	(263.3)

*There were 177 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

16. Standards in the subjects which were a focus for the inspection were above average and students are achieving well, particularly at the higher grades. There were differences, between subjects most notably the higher performances in English, psychology and business education compared with other subjects. Students in 2003 reached standards that were generally at least as good as predicted by their earlier Year 11 results.
17. The sixth form is quite deliberately focused on A levels but, nevertheless, the attainment on entry to the sixth form is only average for sixth forms nationally. The subjects, agreed with the school, which were the focus of the inspection in the sixth form represented a cross-section of those being taught and were not simply the strongest. In these focus subjects students were achieving well and in some subjects, very well. As in the main school, this is as a result of the teaching they experience together with their own good attitudes to learning and the commitment they make to their work, particularly by Year 13. Generally, the standards seen were slightly above average, matching the overall point score. Standards were above average in popular subjects such as English, geography, history, psychology, modern foreign languages and business studies. They were also above average in some smaller subjects such as sociology and drama. They met expectations in biology and chemistry. They were below average in art, ICT, physics and mathematics
18. The school has made very good provision for students with another language at home. It monitors the progress of this group at regular intervals and is quick to identify those who fall behind their targets. Additional support is provided in the form of a mentor. There are very good links with outside agencies to ensure that the few students who arrive at the school with very little English are assessed quickly and have appropriate support. As they move through the school students make good progress.
19. Provision for students with special educational needs in the sixth form is very good. Students with special educational needs make good progress because of the additional support that they receive. They achieve as well as other students in Years 12 and 13. Learning support assistants give effective support, and as a result they have full curriculum access. The students' progress is monitored carefully, and special arrangements are made for them to meet the examination requirements.



## Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good overall but a few students, especially in Year 9, disrupt the learning in a few lessons. Attendance is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Majority of students behave well and have good attitudes to learning
- The behaviour of a minority of students, particularly in Year 9, disrupts the learning of others
- The school has a very good support for students with behavioural difficulties
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of most students is good
- Attendance is good and is supported by very good procedures for monitoring this

### Commentary

20. Students generally enjoy school and consequently they attend very regularly. The electronic registration system allows the school to effectively track students' attendance at lessons throughout the day. Students are well aware of the sanctions for lateness and are usually punctual to lessons. A few students drift in half way through registration in the morning, this is partly due to a lack of purposeful activities in some of these sessions.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.9
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

21. The school is a harmonious community with students from different ethnic groups working and socialising well together. During break times, areas of the school can be crowded but students are generally patient and behave well. Students do not think that bullying is a serious problem in the school and are confident that when it is reported to staff it is effectively dealt with.

22. The vast majority of students have good attitudes to learning; they work hard, find their lessons interesting, work well together and have very good relationships with their teachers. However, there are a small number of students, especially in Year 9 whose actions interfere with other students' learning. For example they are liable to call out, show no interest in the task and be rude to the teacher. The school is well aware of this and has introduced a range of strategies to help students manage their own behaviour and to limit the disruption to other students. The support the school provides includes the Key Stage 3 base room where very skilled staff work with students to improve their study skills and behaviour. The experience of these staff is beginning to be used to help other teachers who are having problems managing students' behaviour improve their skills. Teachers have the option of sending students to the remove room if they are disrupting lessons and teachers use this appropriately.

23. The school is very committed to meeting the needs of all its students and therefore does all it can to avoid excluding them. It has been very successful in this aim by providing

behavioural support in school and working with outside specialist agencies. It also works closely with other schools so that students can be given a fresh start in another school if they are in danger of being permanently excluded. Consequently exclusions are very low.

***Ethnic background of students***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1083	17	0
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	38		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	5		
Mixed – any other mixed background	5		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	7		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	7	1	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2		
Black or Black British – African	6		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2		
Chinese	4		
Any other ethnic group	6		
No ethnic group recorded	160	3	

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

24. The school makes good overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The quality of assemblies is generally satisfactory, but the requirement for a daily collective act of worship is not being met. Assemblies and daily registrations do not contribute enough to the spiritual development of students, but they do explore moral and social issues well, such as the importance of raising money for charities and the ability to learn from one's mistakes. Several subjects make a strong contribution to the spiritual development of students. In English, for example, students are given opportunities for silent reflection in response to poetry and they are captivated by the power of the language used. In art and music, similarly a sense of wonder is evoked in response to the work of artists and composers, and students are encouraged to respond at an emotional level as well as an intellectual one. Religious education and citizenship make a very good contribution to spiritual development, where empathy is encouraged and moral issues are frequently discussed in the context of the insights of religion, personal belief and values.

25. The provision for the moral development of students is good, though more developed through some subjects than others. Most subjects do give attention to its development

through their schemes of work. In history, for example, students explore the moral issues surrounding the slave trade and civil rights. Physical education explores the importance of rules for working together and playing games fairly. In geography students are made aware of the moral issues surrounding environmental damage and pollution. Religious education and citizenship make a very positive contribution to moral development through a thorough and often quite sophisticated treatment of sensitive ethical issues such as the notion of a just war, euthanasia, abortion and a range of similar topics.

26. There is a good social ethos throughout the school and students are encouraged to work together in class and on charitable projects. Activities such as charities week and the Year 8 camp enable students to work collaboratively and develop good relationships. Pockets of poor behaviour in some lessons, however, do have a negative impact on social development. Extra-curricular music has a strong social element and is well attended. Active citizenship is encouraged in some lessons and a sense of social responsibility is encouraged.
27. Cultural development is also good. Art, music, geography, modern foreign languages, citizenship and RE all make a very significant contribution to the cultural development of students, where other cultures are studied in some depth and are positively presented and celebrated. In art there is a lot of study of different cultures and geography enables comparisons of life in different parts of the world. In a lesson on the *5 Pillars of Islam* very good use of video material promoted a positive view of Moslem culture and belief at a time when many negative images are portrayed by the mass media. Students from ethnic minorities are well integrated into the school community and are fully included in lessons. Citizenship and religious education lessons celebrate and promote a positive attitude to the cultural diversity of contemporary Britain.

### **Sixth form**

28. Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are very good. Students are very positive about their courses and have very good relationships with their subject teachers. Many are keen to be more involved in the life of the school and are helping to establish a house system that promotes activities across all years in the school. Attendance is satisfactory in a sixth form where students are allowed to study off site in part because of the lack of study facilities for the large number of students.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is good. The school is inclusive in its efforts to provide for all students. The curriculum provides a wide range of courses and experiences to better meet all needs. Provision for special educational needs students is very good. There is an excellent range of extracurricular activities including support for gifted and talented students. The care system is supportive and protective though academic monitoring and assessment is still in its early stages. Links with parents are good and its excellent links with schools, colleges and the local

area reflect the school's work as a specialist Technology College and its commitment to developing its role in the community.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall and nearly a third of teaching was very good or better, particularly in the sixth form. There are many talented and experienced teachers though a few struggle to cope with the more challenging students. Marking and assessment are sound but until the school fully implements its new system, students are not always clear about how they can improve their work.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear purpose
- The teaching in the very good and excellent lessons was creative and imaginative
- Teaching in the sixth form provides very well for students' need and is much valued
- In some less effective though nonetheless satisfactory lessons, teachers were finding it difficult to manage and motivate the more difficult students
- Students with more severe learning or language needs are well supported and provision in lessons for gifted and talented students is improving though still patchy
- The new data management system is still being established throughout the school and is not yet as well used as it could be in setting student targets
- Assessment practice is satisfactory in informing students where they are but, in some subjects, much less good in telling them how they can improve

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 224 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13 (6%)	67 (25%)	80 (36%)	68 (30%)	7 (3%)	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.*

29. Teaching and learning was good in three quarters of lessons and very good in nearly a third. The proportion of clearly unsatisfactory teaching was low because most lessons were sufficiently well organised and informed to ensure sound learning. Even so, in the inspection a number of the satisfactory lessons would have been better if the learning activities were better matched to the students' needs and interests and behaviour management was more secure. The full range of teaching quality was evident in most subjects.

30. The school work on reviewing and improving teaching and learning has clearly had a beneficial effect on current practice in the different subjects. Lessons in general are well planned in terms of having clear learning objectives and varied activities. Some subjects such as ICT and geography in Years 10 -11 have detailed work and assessment schemes that enable effective learning and high standards. Few lessons lack planning though where this occurred as in the occasional design and technology lesson, the pace of learning was slower.

31. Most teachers are knowledgeable subject specialists who use their knowledge well to extend students understanding and enable them to achieve the above average standards. In most subjects, teachers display an enthusiasm for their subject that they are able to share with the students. This was clearly evident in a number of excellent

lessons where teachers combined their specialist knowledge with inventive and stimulating approaches to learning. Students in one English lesson were clearly inspired by the teacher's expressive poetry reading while in other subjects including drama, design and technology and citizenship, the students were fully extended by methods that were exciting and maximised their involvement in activities.

32. In the good and very good lessons, teachers are using a variety of appropriate strategies. They strike a good balance between teacher-led work and activities which involve students in independent research, group work, and open-ended discussion. The rapport between teacher and students is evident and is based on good relationships and a history of previously successful activities which engage all students
33. The main differences between the good and satisfactory teaching are that the pace of learning is slower and the students are not as engaged with the work. Often this is because the teacher talks too much with overlong periods where students were not practising new knowledge and developing understanding. At other times very knowledgeable teachers are less aware of the needs of students of different abilities and do not vary the methods used. In both the above situations, some students lose concentration and misbehave.
34. In a few classes some students are less prepared to learn. This may be partly the result of the students' previous experience of certain lessons but in a number of instances there are young people with particular social, emotional and behavioural concerns. Most teachers have developed effective behaviour management skills that enable good learning to take place. A number of other staff, including otherwise talented teachers, have yet to acquire these skills.
35. Some good practice in teaching gifted and talented students is evident in some lessons. In Year 8 drama and history lessons and in a Year 11 English lesson, teachers were seen to have planned effectively to challenge and extend the students whom the school had identified. For example, humanities teachers for Year 8 students have devised a project to enhance creative thinking skills through the use of the visual arts. In a number of other lessons seen during the inspection, including science, mathematics and geography, the identification of gifted and talented students did not necessarily lead to more challenging learning to meet their needs.
36. Separate teaching for special educational needs students is very good. A wide variety of strategies are used to meet the needs of students identified as needing additional help. Students from Years 8 and 9 are withdrawn from class for literacy lessons in reading, spelling and writing. Those lessons are very well-planned to include a range of activities. Lesson objectives are set clearly and simply, and work includes an effective blend of group, paired and individual programmes. Very good working routines are established, and homework is set which involves parental support. A good variety of resources are available to support the development of literacy skills. In the Inclusion Base, very good teaching employs a range of strategies to manage challenging and very diverse behaviour. Very good behaviour management systems are employed which have a positive effect on student behaviour within the base and in other lessons.
37. Students with special educational needs receive very effective learning support across the range of subjects. This enables students to access the whole curriculum in all years, and ensures that their progress is at least as good as other students. The quality of

teaching and support for hearing impaired students is very good. Communicators ensure that deaf students have access to mainstream lessons. Learning support assistants deliver literacy programmes to identified Year 8 students in the morning registration period. This is an effective use of their time and the one to one nature of the activity has a very positive impact on the students involved. The majority of subject teachers are aware of the wide range of learning needs in their classes and plan their work accordingly. They work well with learning support assistants to ensure that the needs of all the class are met. As indicated above, sometimes work is not appropriately targeted for special educational needs students and on occasion, this leads to some unsatisfactory behaviour.

38. Overall, assessment and use of the resulting data by key staff is satisfactory. In years 8 to 11 teachers are able to gauge the students' understanding and standard of work. The attainment details of each student are recorded to check on their progress. The central assessment management team provides departments with tracked, historical student attainment data, examination performance analyses and predictions of future attainment. Consequently this allows the teacher to identify and support individual learning needs within the class and place students in teaching sets where appropriate. Assessment of special educational needs students is strong. Those students' needs are carefully monitored, and information on progress and individual plans is given to departments regularly.
39. Full use of the school data management system has yet to be made. Although the school has high expectations for its students, the use of minimum target grades largely based on prior attainment can be seen to set less challenging goals. Even so, the tutorial system is increasingly making use of school data to set targets that are used well in discussions with students and in interviews with parents on the Progress Review Day and Parents Evening.
40. The school policy on marking is not rigidly adhered to by all departments although there is good practice in some areas. When marking students' work, only in the better lessons do teachers make comments which explain what students need to do to improve. In almost all subjects, teachers keep students informed about their current standard of work but in a number of subjects the students' understanding of what they have to do to get to higher National Curriculum levels and GCSE standards is unsatisfactory. This has been recognised by the school and ensuring students know how to improve is part of its ongoing development of a more effective monitoring and assessment system.

## **Sixth form**

41. In the inspection, nearly four out of five lessons were judged to be good or better and about half of these were very good or excellent. Teaching and learning in the sixth form reflects the strengths seen in the main school without some of the weaknesses exposed by the more challenging students. Teachers' specialist knowledge and high expectations maintain the often very good learning reflected in the above average proportion of higher grades students achieve at A level.
42. Effective learning is also made possible by the very positive relationships subject staff have with students. Students greatly value the learning support they receive as well as more general guidance that partially compensates for the currently uneven sixth form tutorial support.

43. During the inspection, about one in ten sixth form lessons were judged to be excellent including those in history, drama and theatre studies, art, psychology, media studies and geography. These lessons demonstrate considerable creative planning and high level teaching skills that enthuse the students and enable them to develop greater intellectual insights.
44. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the sixth form and most of the lessons were clearly well planned and varied reflecting the current whole school focus on developing better teaching and learning. In the satisfactory lessons some whole class teaching methods had not been adjusted to take enough account of the wider range of ability in the sixth form.
45. Assessment in the sixth form is generally satisfactory. In the better lessons the students' work is marked with clear, constructive comments to assist them in understanding what they need to do to improve. The students find this support and guidance helpful. However this is not consistent across all classes. Most students are aware of their target grades and marking and assessment is sufficiently regular for them to know how well they are doing. However, they are less sure as to the next steps to take in order to reach or exceed their target.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum range with a very wide course programme in the sixth form. Students benefit from excellent extracurricular and other enrichment opportunities. The curriculum is well supported by good staffing and resources but there are weaknesses in accommodation.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent curriculum enrichment opportunities are a feature of the school
- The very large sixth form enables the school to provide very wide range of largely academic courses
- Provision for students with special educational needs is very good
- Very good curriculum initiatives are being pursued to address the needs of all students in the 14-19 range
- Despite the improvements made as a result of the school's specialist status as a Technology College, aspects of accommodation are still unsatisfactory

### **Commentary**

43. Curriculum breadth is good in most subjects. The Key Stage 3 strategy, which is a national initiative to improve teaching and learning, is having a good impact on raising attainment in the core subjects. The curriculum has developed to provide a good range of courses for students moving into Year 10 where there is a good match to students' needs and where nearly all are able to study their choice of subjects. The traditional GCSE courses are now well augmented with a greater focus on work-related aspects at the school and through the links with colleges and schools. This flexible arrangement is in keeping with the school's inclusive philosophy thus enabling individual needs to be met.
44. There are effective evaluation and monitoring procedures to review the curriculum. The governors provide good support and challenge and the senior team meets early in the

new school year to assess the impact of the curriculum the previous year's results. Middle managers carry out a monitoring role through the curriculum management group.

45. The two-week timetable has enabled an effective, additional range of sixth form courses and the imaginative focus days complement students' personal and social development. The flexibility of the curriculum allows time for a number of twilight lessons where students are able to undertake additional courses. New developments to improve the 14-19 curriculum are taking shape with the forming of a partnership between three secondary schools and the local college, and close links are developing with the University of East Anglia.
46. There are arrangements with partner colleges that allow flexibility with individual curricular requirements. Students are able to study a combination of vocational and skills based courses to ensure that all students have equal access to suitable courses. The school provides well for students with special educational needs and for gifted and talented students through a range of additional activities.
47. Careers education and guidance is good. It is provided by the form tutors who are supported by the Connexions service. Students in Year 8 follow a course in decision making and are introduced to the Connexions service in the summer term. The Connexions team support and advise students about the Year 10 curriculum and will help the school in identifying students who would benefit from link courses with the colleges. Students benefit from work experience in Year 10 and from individual careers interviews in Year 11
48. There are good transition arrangements with the feeder schools. The Key Stage 3 coordinator visits all the schools and will meet with all new students before they start.
49. Students are offered many opportunities to take part in the excellent range of enrichment activities. In sport there is a full programme which takes place at break, lunchtimes and after school most days of the week. There are opportunities for students to participate in representative games or general recreation. All Year 8 take part in a residential visit early in the autumn term. They take part in a range of adventurous activities and as part of the personal development provision, this helps to develop relationships between students and staff.
50. Instrumental and vocal ensembles in music are well supported. Students perform at a very high level and give regular public performances. A concert tour to America is being planned. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is strong, with a large number of students being involved. Students successfully take part in national quizzes in mathematics and geography, local and foreign visits are organised, including exchanges with German students. The major production involving music and drama takes place regularly, achieving recognition in the wider community; theatre visits and master classes are organised and mathematics club and workshops offer opportunities to develop mathematical skills. Students from Year 9 and upwards are involved in the 'Listeners', and are trained to counsel and support younger students.
51. There is a good match of staff to the curriculum and resources are generally of a good quality. The school benefits from a large number of well qualified and talented specialist teachers. These are very well supported by very competent and dedicated technical, learning support and administrative staff. In this respect the school is now making effective use of workforce reform to improve the overall quality of school provision.



52. However, issues about accommodation are having an effect on the overall curriculum provision. Although there has been improvement in the accommodation for science, some of the laboratories remain unsuitable. These are too small for the size of classes which limits the practical nature of the science curriculum. The lunch hall is used for teaching music. It is impractical and teaching has to take place before the floor has been cleaned from the lunch break. The mobile classroom is inappropriate for the teaching of drama because it is too small for the size of classes and has no suitable equipment. There have been some improvements in design and technology accommodation. However, the available workshop space is too small for classes using them. The learning centre has limited access for whole class use in Year 8 and Year 9. Access to ICT is further reduced by the limited ICT accommodation elsewhere.

### **Sixth form**

53. The curriculum is wide ranging. The school offers a large number of A level subjects together with some Advanced Vocational (VCE) courses. Links with partner schools and colleges enable an even wider range of options to suit most students.

54. Focus guidance days give the opportunity for students to have careers and guidance tutorials with the Connexions service and for religious education teaching. The Connexions service is available on one day each week for sixth form careers guidance. The school arranges higher education seminars when visitors from local and Oxbridge universities talk to students.

55. Staffing and resources are good. There is a good match of staff with appropriate qualifications. Accommodation is limited and as a result, during home study periods, students are encouraged to develop independent learning skills.

56. There is a wide range of opportunity to suit all interests organised by staff and outside agencies such as the BSM pre-driving course, and the computer maintenance course. Students are able to develop leadership skills through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, leading sections in music ensembles and are encouraged to initiate and organise their own activities such as the sixth form vocal group and the 'Listeners'. The latter provides a valuable service by providing a listening ear to younger students and continuing support. Student counsellors have received appropriate training including support from external agencies such as 'Childline'. Other activities include a variety of workshops and clubs, to gain further qualifications such as the baby-sitting certificate.

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

The school ensures the care, welfare and health and safety of its students well. It provides good pastoral support, advice and guidance, but monitoring of students' academic progress is inconsistent. Students' views are sought effectively and taken into account.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction arrangements are very effective
- The school uses a range of strategies to take good care of its students
- Students' academic progress is unevenly monitored
- The school listens to the views of students
- There are effective procedures for ensuring the health and safety of all

### **Commentary**

57. The settling in process in Year 8 is managed very well and students quickly feel at ease. All students are visited prior to joining the school and staff are well-informed about the needs of new students. During the popular residential experience early in the autumn term students are taken away in house groups and this helps them to feel part of the school. Students joining the school later are easily integrated because of the care teachers take to settle them in.
58. Staff are caring and students recognise that there are a number of people they can talk to from within the school and outside. School support systems work well. Teachers and Sixth Formers act as mentors for some students. For others, local industrialists provide valuable guidance and encourage them to persevere at school. Teachers work effectively with outside agencies such as Norwich Excellence Centre to provide support for students with problems. Careers guidance is well organised and supported by the Progress File. The recently introduced off timetable days for careers work have been effective in guiding and informing students. Good support and guidance are offered when option choices are made and parents are kept informed through subject information evenings.
59. The school has strong links with the careers service (Connexions) that provides support for the work of the school in careers education and guidance.
60. The new key stage managers identify underachieving students and provide a link between academic and pastoral concerns. However form tutors are still the key to successful monitoring of academic progress and personal development. The school has introduced systems to enable this to take place, for example students are interviewed at least twice each term by form tutors. However the quality of monitoring is inconsistent. The skills of form tutors and the quality of the learning targets vary too much. The form tutor programme for registration time is still in its infancy and the time is not always effectively used.
61. Students are involved well in the school. They recognise that they have a voice in the school council, which is consulted on initiatives such as the new uniform. This elected council has been effective in introducing changes such as the new house system and the refurbishment of toilets and is also responsible for choosing a charity to be supported in the annual charity week. In addition there are good procedures for collecting students' views on teaching and learning as part of the subject reviews.
62. There are well-established ways of ensuring the safety of all. Staff know the child protection system and training is also given to students who counsel others. Procedures for handling medicines are clear and accident records are followed up.

### **Sixth form**

63. The advice and guidance given to Sixth Formers are satisfactory. Extended assemblies and focus days have been used to inform students about higher education and employment applications. However students are unhappy with the quality of individual guidance they have been offered about higher education. The absence of the head of sixth form for extended periods has meant that monitoring of progress by form tutors is variable and sixth formers generally rely much more on their subject teachers to provide them with guidance. Sixth formers play a valuable role in caring for others particularly through the 'listening' service which students from Year 12 have established.

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

The Partnership with parents is good. In its role as both a specialist Technology College and a major post 16 education provider, the school has developed excellent links with other schools and colleges as well as the local community.

### **Main Strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides very good support for ICT in other schools and the local community
- Schools work very well together to meet the needs of students in the area
- The information to parents about students' progress is limited and uneven in the annual reports
- Outstanding links with the local community and other schools and colleges enhance students' experiences, as does the excellent enrichment opportunities on offer
- Excellent links with the community and other schools contributes to very good induction and to the quality of sixth form provision

### **Commentary**

64. The school values parents' views and tries to work in partnership with them. It seeks to find ways to improve communication. To enable parents to contact relevant members of staff more easily, it has appointed two pastoral support administrators who deal quickly and effectively with parental concerns.

65. Information about students' progress is satisfactory overall but there is a wide variation in the quality of the annual reports. Some teachers give good information about students' progress and what they can do to improve while others are very bland and do not include targets. These are supplemented with yearly subject teacher interviews. Progress review days are useful in enabling parents to talk to tutors about their children's progress. Parents of students with special educational needs are kept well informed of their child's progress and they are invited to annual reviews. Occasional courses for parents are organised for example on numeracy but the number of parents who attend is very small.

66. The school's specialist technology status has been used effectively to develop opportunities for students within the school and to support its partner schools. This has included planning the curriculum for GCSE courses, running training for teachers and providing technical support. In addition the school works closely with middle schools to provide summer schools for gifted and talented students before they move to secondary school. By working closely with other secondary schools the provision for gifted and talented students has been extended. A project to make a can crushing machine resulted from close collaboration between two secondary schools. Other students from six secondary schools are working on a research project in partnership with a university.

67. The school is continuing to develop a very wide range of excellent links with individuals and organizations in the community. This has resulted in students taking part in many activities involving community representatives. For example, an out-of-school class on baby-sitting is led by a member of the local Red Cross, and includes contributions from the Fire Service and a nurse. Local companies provide mentors for underachieving Year 11 students, and a recent "Guidance Day" included a careers fair at which more than 30 local organisations were represented. High levels of involvement in activities are evident and a group of Year 10 students have started a research project with Cambridge University on how to further raise student involvement in extracurricular and community activities.

68. The school ICT provision is used well for outreach activities which are well appreciated by the local community, including a family learning day focussing on the development of IT skills, and a project which succeeded in raising the skills levels and employability of a group of single mothers on a local estate. Last year ICT successfully put on a "family learning day" at the weekend for students and parents. The day focussed on web searching (a treasure hunt) and taking and manipulating digital photos. This year's event will give families a chance to use digital video, filming and editing their own movie.

### **Sixth form**

69. The sixth form is cohesive and enjoys a positive working atmosphere as a result of very good induction arrangements. Here the excellent community links and cooperation with other schools pays off so that the many external students settle well and feel part of the sixth form community. Consequently, few students leave their courses prematurely. The joint appointment by local schools of a 14-19 co-ordinator in anticipation of future changes in qualifications and pathways, is another illustration of close collaborative work.

70. The excellent links with the local and wider community highlighted above, also benefit sixth form students. In addition to the many whole school links, Year 12 Design and Technology students took part in a weekend workshop held by a well-known furniture designer, and maths students have attended special lectures at Cambridge University. Sixth form students also contribute well to the wider school community by supporting younger students in after-school activities and acting as mentors at after-school clubs in local primary schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has moved the school forwards with determination. Leadership by other key staff at senior and middle management levels is particularly good in driving forward school improvement. Management systems are good although a number are still being developed. That the sixth form leadership and management are satisfactory in spite of a lack of head of sixth form is a result of the commitment and hard work of other staff. Governance is very good, governors are very committed, well informed and share the headteacher's vision.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has succeeded in changing the culture of the school to one that serves its community more effectively
- Other key staff share the headteacher's vision and work hard in driving this forward
- Governors play an ever increasing role in strategic development of the school
- The lack of leadership of the sixth form has weakened the support and guidance systems
- Self evaluation is very good, and helps the school to identify weaknesses and take effective action
- Whole school academic monitoring and target setting are not securely established
- Staff review and development is good despite some training opportunities being constrained by the need for careful budgeting.

### **Commentary**

71. The headteacher has shown determination and imagination in changing the school to better reflect the needs of all its students. He has been adept in seizing opportunities

from local and national initiatives to further his vision. Gaining the Investors in People Award has enabled all who work in the school to feel valued and contribute to the headteacher's vision. Through the excellent partnerships with other schools and colleges, an ever widening choice of courses is on offer for students. Additionally the school itself provides an exceptional range of extra curricular activities.

72. Strategic planning is very good, because the school's self evaluation processes are very effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Each subject is rigorously reviewed every two years, and progress towards planned improvements in each subject is monitored. The school's Development Plan looks to the short and long term, so that current and future developments can be harnessed effectively to support school improvement. There are very good strategies to address key concerns and much effective planning and coordination in aspects as diverse as meeting the needs of the gifted and talented to developing more effective student assessment practice. The school is currently exploring ways of implementing the requirements of workforce reform, a year early.
73. The new leadership group are committed and hard working. They work well as a team. Their new roles have ensured greater clarity, but are still developing. A key role is in driving forward aspects of the school's development plan, for which they are responsible. They provide effective support for subject leaders. The leadership of subject leaders is good overall, with English, mathematics, history, design and technology, ICT, art, music, and drama being very good. Subject leaders show determination in raising achievement for all.
74. The school management is good although different systems are still in the process of being developed. The very good practice in special educational needs is outlined in more detail below. The school also has well developed systems relating to the care of the students and the development of schools links. The school has developed a comprehensive student data system that underpins more rigorous assessment and target setting but practice is still uneven across the school. The role of form tutors in academic monitoring is not fully placed nor is form time used as well as it could be for this purpose.
75. The overall school management benefits from very strong curriculum leadership in the majority of subjects. With the development of new school systems, many curriculum areas are improving their procedures. Special educational needs provision is particularly strong. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of inclusion in the school, and is very well supported in that by the head teacher, other senior managers and governors. There is a strong sense of commitment to running an inclusive school in which individuals matter. The learning support team is large with 21 members, but it has a strong sense of identity and their work is carefully monitored and supported. The co-ordinator analyses data to evaluate effectiveness of provision.
76. Financial constraints have limited the use the school makes of externally provided training for the continuing personal development (CPD) of teachers and support staff. Nonetheless, CPD is well planned and managed and closely linked to the school's own reviews of teaching and other provision and priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The school is strongly committed to the development of teachers and other staff reflecting its accredited status as an Investor in People. There is a very good

programme for newly qualified teachers run with the support of the local education authority. The strong middle managers reflect the school's readiness to develop staff in line with its commitment to wider participation in the leadership of the school.

77. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, because of their close involvement. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions. The governors' handbook provides very useful information for new and experienced governors. As well as setting out the yearly calendar, the handbook includes the governors' development plan, identifying relevant priorities for the current year. Governors are linked to subjects and this enables governors to be kept up to date with developments in their subject. Governors are able to use their good knowledge and understanding of the school to contribute to strategic development.

78. Financial planning and management are good. Day to day financial management is effectively managed by competent and dedicated administrative staff. A well written policy ensures that secure procedures are in place. The creation of a new finance team is helping to ensure that the budget is carefully monitored. The school ensures that decisions are based on fully exploring the principles of best value. The school makes good use of benchmarking data. Support staffing costs are high because the school is already implementing some of the workforce reform requirements which ensure that teachers are better supported and the school is more effectively run. The apparent surplus is due to recent changes to post 16 funding, and results from post 16 income being received at a different point in the budget.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,068,661	Balance from previous year	229,297
Total expenditure	5,072,363	Balance carried forward to the next	225,595
Expenditure per student	3732		

**Sixth form**

79. At present a temporary team of staff are overseeing the management of the sixth form, due to the long term absence of the head of sixth form. This has led to weaknesses in the guidance and support given to students, despite the efforts of committed acting staff who are carrying out a good holding operation. The absence of the head of sixth form has not diminished the vision for improvement which includes taking up and acting upon ideas provided by the students themselves. The sixth form is envisaged as playing a much greater role in the life of the school than had hitherto been the case. These developments include a house system, participation of sixth formers reading help and supporting lower school tutor groups. All concerned accept however that these initiatives are in the very early stages of development.

80. Despite these positive aspects, the uneven quality of pastoral tutoring and use of tutor time; the lack of care some students display in their social area; the slowness in establishing more rigorous academic monitoring and target setting and some initial problems concerning early university (UCAS) application, all indicate a lack of an established head of sixth form who has the time and personal presence to provide clear direction. That the leadership and management of sixth form provision are satisfactory

is down to the hard working acting staff and senior managers focusing on the most important aspects of students' progress. Important too are the many sixth form subject leaders who support student learning well and maintain the good sixth form standards. It also needs stressing that the sixth form, big though it is, is still a part of the whole school and the major thrust in recent years for more rigorous review and improvement of management, teaching and learning have also impacted positively on the sixth form.

81. As indicated above, governors are very involved in all aspects of the school and take an active interest in the sixth form. Financial management of the sixth form is good and shares the same effective systems and procedures as the main school. The very large sixth form attracts considerable funding that enables a wide range of provision that is cost effective.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Work related learning**

Provision for work related learning is very good.

82. Work-related learning is very well managed. The Year 10 and 11 options offer opportunities to follow level one vocational course at two local colleges on one day each week and good links are maintained to ensure progress. Their programmes of study are carefully managed. The school has also carried out an audit of work relevant learning across the subjects in the school and opportunities and examples have been identified across each curriculum area. There are good links with business facilitated by the Norfolk Education Business Exchange and work experience for all Year 10 students is well prepared for, debriefed and managed. Vocational subjects incorporate relevant work experience into their programmes.

### **Visually impaired students**

Provision for visually impaired students is very good.

83. There are sixteen students in the unit, three of whom have statements of special educational needs. The students are all fully integrated in to mainstream lessons for all their programmes. Achievement is at least as good as that of other students. Learning support assistants give very effective support to ensure that students can access the full curriculum. Throughout the report there is reference to the provision of special educational needs students in general and those almost entirely positive comments apply equally to the visually impaired students.

### **Community Links**

Provision for community links is excellent.

84. The school's specialist status as a Technology College, its large and growing post 16 education provision and its very strong commitment to the local community are all significant in explaining the school's considerable involvement. The extent of those links and their positive impact in terms of students' educational enrichment as well as benefit to the community is evaluated in the main report, mainly under curriculum and school links.

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

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

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in English is good.

	Years 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests and GCSE examinations are well above national average
- Good teaching, teachers' subject knowledge and clear learning objectives contribute to students' positive attitudes to learning
- Very good leadership is guiding the department successfully during a period of change
- Information gained from assessment and monitoring is not used as fully as it could be because targets are too broad and not broken down into achievable steps

#### Commentary

##### Examination results

85. Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above national and above those achieved by students in similar schools. The standards achieved in GCSE English examinations were well above the national average, and above average in English literature. The most recent results in English declined a little though there was an increase in the number of boys achieving the highest grade. However, results in literature improved. In both sets of results girls do better than boys, but boys outperform boys nationally.

##### Standards and achievement

86. Standards are well above national average. Students enter school above average and achievement through the school is good. Work in Years 8 and 9 is well planned to develop critical reading skills and understand writing techniques. This has improved opportunities for students to write creatively and experiment with different forms of language. Higher attaining students show precision in their choice of vocabulary for diary entries, reports and a prime minister's address linked to a school siege. Average attainers show good attention to detail in recounting *Little Red Riding Hood* from different viewpoints. Lower attaining students identify words that create powerful imagery in *Tyger*.

87. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining students write with authority and show sensitivity in their analysis of literature. Average attainers use skills of inference and deduction to explain how Dickens creates atmosphere in *Great Expectations*, but the work of lower attaining students is descriptive rather than analytical. There are good opportunities for



students to write at length and well prepared materials help students prepare coursework. However, the range of work is similar for all students, with few opportunities for original responses to narrative writing and literature. The focus on raising boys' achievement has succeeded in improving their participation in lessons and in their results. However, the potential shown in discussions is limited by unfinished or poorly presented work. In many lessons, paired and group work play an important part in preparation for written work, but teachers do not do enough to involve girls and develop their confidence in answering.

### **Teaching and learning**

88. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11. In several lessons students were held spellbound by teachers' expressive reading of poetry. In the best lessons students work hard to meet teachers' high expectations. Work is very well planned with interesting activities that capture students' imagination. Skilful teaching breaks lessons into manageable chunks that help maintain average and lower attaining students' concentration and interest. Open ended questions are used very well to help students think critically before reaching conclusions. In a small proportion of lessons teaching is less effective, or learning unsatisfactory, because teachers spend too long talking and students are inactive, or work is not matched to the different needs of groups within the class. Students allow their attention to drift and low level disruption can occur.

### **Leadership and management**

89. Leadership is very good. There is a very good ethos in the department and morale is high in spite of instability caused by illness and staffing change. New staff feel valued and teachers are encouraged to develop their expertise. The very clear vision is based on detailed analysis of data. Work is now well planned to meet the requirements of the national strategy but these new initiatives have not had full impact on results. Management is good. The department has identified the variable quality of marking and the need for greater consistency to share good practice so that high expectations and challenge are made available to all students.
90. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. High standards have been maintained, the gap between the performance of boys and girls has been narrowed, and monitoring is used to identify strengths and areas for development. The department places a high priority on reading, resources have been improved and the school magazine re-launched. Learning centre provision is limited by the small size of the resource centre, and opportunities to use ICT in lessons are restricted by the lack of computers in the English suite.

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

91. Provision for teaching language and literacy across the curriculum is good. Students enter school with above average literacy skills and high standards of accuracy in written work are a strong feature of many subjects.
92. Students' work is valued through high quality displays in the English suite and elsewhere around the school. Very good opportunities are planned for students to research, read aloud and present their findings in many subjects and the best departments correct spelling and grammar. For example, in history younger students are given exercises to help them improve spelling and other common mistakes, and there is more writing in different forms than usually found in the subject.

93. Schemes of work in geography also include good opportunities for extended writing. In Year 8, geographical terms are used accurately in postcards. Older students build research and note taking skills into high quality accounts of changes in a river valley from source to mouth. There are good opportunities for discussion and role play and debate in English, drama, religious education and citizenship. There is an insistence on the use of specialist vocabulary in art, mathematics, science and music.

94. However, not all teachers use a wide enough range of questions to help less confident students express their views at length, and girls are too often allowed to be passive listeners. The use of templates to support writing in ICT is helpful for average attaining students but constrains higher attaining students and lower attaining students find them too hard.

### Modern foreign languages

All students study French or German in Year 8. More able linguists may study both languages. There is a lesser time allocation for the second language. French and German were inspected.

Provision in modern foreign languages is good.

	Years 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations, especially with the most able
- Structured learning, very carefully planned, enables students to make good progress
- There are good teacher-student relationships
- Activities and materials are carefully related to students' experience
- Strategies for behaviour management in low ability groups, especially in Years 8 and 9, are not always successful
- Students mostly make good progress and become more involved in their learning as they move through the school

### Commentary

#### Examination results

95. Results of Year 9 teacher assessments have improved in recent years in comparison to those reported nationally due to increased focus on teaching strategies in Years 8 and 9. GCSE results for French at grades A\*-C have risen and German has also made progress apart from a slight dip in 2003.

### Standards and achievement

96. Standards are generally in line with national averages in Years 8 and 9 and improving in Years 10 and 11. In Years 8 and 9, however, a significant number of students are below national averages because of low teacher expectations and unimaginative methodology. The school is aware of this and working to improve the weaker teaching. Low expectations also feature in classes where poor behaviour occurs. All classes make progress over time to reach the improved standards seen in Years 10 and 11 where consistent pace and challenge and increased use of French or German lead to high student participation. Results are above the national standards at GCSE when compared to all schools and those with similar intakes.
97. Achievement is good. Students in Year 8 enter with varied abilities and levels of language experience and achieve well in relation to the relatively low standards with which they begin. Because of the inclusive approach of the school, students with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve as well as others relative to their abilities. However, gifted and talented students, although making good progress, are not always sufficiently extended in some lessons. Boys' and girls' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is similar although in some groups girls keep a lower profile and do not fully develop speaking skills. In groups where consistent pace and challenge are present, achievement is similar for all.
98. Teaching and learning are good. All students are taught by specialist teachers. In the best lessons, pace, encouragement and challenge with short and long-term targets help students advance their learning. The better teaching is well structured, evident in a Year 11 lesson where building up sentences with extra vocabulary helped students better understand French grammar. Teachers also mark and correct work carefully even if some students do not sufficiently redraft their work to gain the benefit of such marking. Learning is further assisted by good teacher-student relationships so that students feel more able to approach the teacher as they move through the school. Weaker teaching is characterised by less competence and confidence in sustaining lesson interest and pace and managing the behaviour of the more challenging students in earlier years. However, students increasingly respond to the teachers' encouragement and understanding and become more involved in their lessons as they move through the school. There is increased collaboration between department members about improving teaching strategies.

### **Leadership and management**

99. Leadership is very good. It has established clear priorities in line with the school development plan such as further work on formative assessment and target setting. The leadership has sought to ensure that results at the end of Year 9 and GCSE continue their upward trend. Work is closely related to exam board GCSE specifications. Analysis of previous results is used to inform development.
100. Management is very good. It provides the same positive encouragement and realistic challenge with which teaching and learning are approached. The department has analysed areas for improvement such as marking, assessment and target setting. Departmental documentation sets clear standards and gives precise information. In particular, the Paris trip handbook is a model for any MFL department on how to manage a trip.

101. Improvement since the last inspection is good. As work on teaching and learning has become more focused, standards at the end of each level have risen.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is good.

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The gifted and talented students are well provided for in Years 10 and 11 when they study for an AS level module early
- In the weaker lessons disruptive behaviour and general inattention of a minority of students affects both their learning and that of others
- The very good leadership with a strong vision to improvement is successfully moving the department forward
- Assessment data is used very well to track student performance, inform planning and monitor needs within the department

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

100. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average. In 2004 the results improved further. The GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average. In 2004, they were much higher. When compared to similar schools across Years 8 to 11, the students perform at least as well when judged on their performance on entry to the school.

### **Standards and achievement**

101. Students enter Year 8 mostly above average but leave Year 11 clearly above average. This represents good achievement due mainly to the overall good teaching the students receive. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining students can calculate the result of proportional changes using multiplication methods. The lower attaining students can convert fractions to decimals and have a basic understanding of improper fractions. In Year 11, higher attaining students can solve simultaneous equations where one equation is circular and the other is linear. The lower attaining students can draw straight-line graphs to represent real life situations and comment on their findings.

102. Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good understanding of mathematics. The adoption of the three-part lesson ensures a good structure and brisk

pace in most lessons. The students respond well to this and make good gains in their learning. Teachers share lesson objectives with the students, though only in the better lessons are the tasks and time allocated made known to them. Where this happens, students understand the relevance of their learning and what they should achieve. In the better lessons good use is also made of collaborative learning. In one Year 8 lesson on data handling, the students discussed in pairs what they had achieved and what they still had to do. This they relayed to their peers, assisting achievement for all. ICT is used well by teachers as a teaching resource to assist students' learning.

103. In some lessons, however, less effective classroom practice does not effectively engage interest or manage the behaviour of a number of the more challenging students. In some lessons more challenge could be built into lessons to help individual higher attaining students to achieve their potential though the option for gifted and talented students of taking an AS module early is good. Homework is used to extend students' learning, but the consistency and presentation varies across lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

104. The very good leadership has resulted in a united teaching team with a positive ethos. The department carries out rigorous self-review and is fully self-evaluating; consequently standards are rising.
105. Management is good. Good, regular assessment of students' learning takes place, the outcomes of which are tracked and monitored to inform planning. Helpful diagnostic comments are evident in some teachers' marking and this assists students' understanding; though this is not consistent across all lessons. Students' self-assessment of their learning via target sheets assists their understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, this is inconsistent across lessons. Monitoring of teaching and students' work does take place; however, this is not sufficiently regular to assist those teachers most in need of support.
106. Good links have been established with the community and these have involved in-service training with feeder schools and GCSE master classes with partner high schools. Extra curricular activities include revision days, a maths club and involvement in the UK Maths Challenge. With these developments, progress since the last inspection has been good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

107. The strategy for teaching mathematics as a basic skill in subjects is satisfactory. The mathematics department has carried out an audit of departmental practice and this has led to the development of numeracy policies within departments. However, there is a lack of cross-referencing between mathematics and other departments in terms of when topics are taught and commonality of numerical approaches used to teach them. This does not assist students' development of numerical skills in other subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is good.

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Above average	Above average

Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is very good. Standards are well above average in Year 9 tests and GCSE results are significantly above national and school averages
- Very good self-evaluation leads to improvement in teaching and learning and is a contributor to good leadership and management
- In well-taught lower school classes and upper GCSE sets behaviour can be very good; in many Year 9 classes and some lower GCSE sets it is unsatisfactory
- Marking is variable and there is a need to find effective ways to show students how to improve
- Accommodation and resources have improved since the previous inspection, although they have not kept up with the expansion of sixth form provision in science

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

108. In 2003, Year 9 test results were well above the national average and have been so over the previous four years. They are higher than at the time of the previous inspection. They are well above average and indicate good achievement for the higher attaining students. Boys and girls do equally well. In GCSE in 2003, results were significantly above average for both boys and girls. The results were also significantly higher than in other subjects taken by the students. Results held steady in 2004. Overall standards are above average and achievement is good. Students performed better than expected compared to their earlier standards in the 2003 Year 9 test and GCSE results. The Year 10 examinations, which count (25%) towards GCSE results, indicate very good achievement in the top sets.

#### **Standards and achievement**

109. The students' progress seen in lessons was more variable, although the standard of their completed work was often above national average. Students achieve well in Years 8 and 9 though in some Year 9 classes observed, progress was slowed because behaviour was not always adequately managed and this reduced standards. In Years 10-11, most students achieve well. Particularly high standards were seen in investigatory coursework, where the approach to marking and student support was rigorous and the standard well above average. In some lower sets, knowledge and understanding were below average though even here the good teacher management led to satisfactory achievement. Standards in numeracy and literacy were above average.

#### **Teaching and learning**

110. Teaching and learning were good overall and included much very good practice, especially in the GCSE years. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of science were very good and the teachers are coming to grips with changes both in the intake and in teaching methodology. For example most teachers were clear in setting learning objectives for each lesson. In some classes, otherwise strong teachers put more emphasis on their explanation of the topic to the whole class, often enhanced by the use of ICT, and not enough emphasis on what the students themselves needed to do to learn.

111. In some lessons there is insufficient matching of work to student needs, including more challenge for the higher attaining and more support for lower attaining students, especially in the mixed ability classes. There remains much inconsistency in marking; in some books little was done and there was little use of clear targets in language that students can understand.

### **Leadership and management**

112. The department is well led and managed. Schemes of work are well developed and assessment is thorough. Even so, assessment while giving students a very good idea of progress in the GCSE years, mostly tells them how well they have done but does not give them enough idea of how to improve. Very clear-sighted self-evaluation monitors achievement and indicates where teaching and learning can be improved. Team building is good, with a particularly strong contribution to induction of new staff by technicians. The school has identified the importance of “using school systems to challenge difficult behaviour”. This remains a vital aim if previous high standards are to be maintained. Accommodation has been improved since the previous inspection by some refurbishment and the provision of 3 demountable laboratories, but shortage of good-sized laboratory space still limits the nature of teaching and learning.

113. Since 1998, there has been progress in achievement, in curriculum, including the development of investigation, and in resources, including ICT. Improvement therefore has been good.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is good.

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The verbal and written support for students raises achievement
- All students have the opportunity to gain an ICT qualification
- Underachieving students are identified and supported well
- The skills of teachers benefit the wider community
- Work is not sufficiently targeted at the ability of individual students
- ICT is not well enough embedded in teaching and learning across the school

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

114. All students take an ICT examination and, in 2003, results were well above the national average. 2004 the results were very similar.

### **Standards and achievement**

115. Overall standards in Years 8-9 are average, and in Years 10 - 11 are well above average. The achievement of students in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory while in Years 10 and 11, achievement is very good.
116. Standards of work seen in lessons in Year 9 are below average and students' ICT skills are not well developed. Year 10 work suggests that by the end of Year 9, standards are average. The current Year 8 has better ICT skills than the current Year 9. Students arrive in Year 8 with varied competence in ICT and in Years 8 and 9 they currently receive only three quarters of the government's recommended time for the subject. There are plans to increase the time for the subject next year. The examples of GCSE coursework seen by inspectors confirmed that by Year 11 standards are well above course expectations.
117. In Years 8 and 9 most students achieve satisfactorily, but there is some underachievement because of the lack of challenge for more able students and those who come to the school with more advanced ICT skills. There is also underachievement in some lessons in Years 8 and 9 through unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour that some staff have difficulty in managing effectively.
118. In Years 10 and 11 students achieve very well due to the very good guidance that students receive in written and verbal form. There is a very good focus on identifying and focussing on students who are performing below their predicted target grades, with catch up classes provided after school and on Saturdays.

### **Teaching and learning**

119. In Years 8-9 teaching and learning are good and in Years 10 -11 teaching and learning are also good. In Years 8-9, teaching and learning observed was never less than satisfactory and was sometimes good or very good. Effective marking helped students achieve well. In years 10-11 teaching again ranged from satisfactory to very good and assessment with feedback being very effective in enabling students to improve their work and achieve well.
120. Where teaching was most effective good routines were followed so that students entered the room, logged on to their computers, turned their monitors off and turned their attention to the teacher. Lessons began with an attention-grabbing teacher input such as a video clip, which prepared students well for their individual or group work. During independent work teachers circulated and supported the learning of individuals well.
121. Less successful lessons were characterised by a less rigorous enforcement of behaviour leading to either a noisy environment where low level disruption was allow to grow. Consequently the rate of learning was seriously slowed. In all lessons observed the learning of individual students was supported by the teacher, and where available, the learning support assistant circulated and monitored individuals well. Even so, because every student was expected to do the same task, the different needs of the least able and the most able in the mixed classes were not sufficiently addressed.
122. The key strength that leads to the very good achievement in Years 10 -11 is the support for examination success. Students are very clear about what they have to do to gain good marks in their coursework as they write to templates to answer a series of



questions. While doing this they receive very good verbal feedback from teachers and after they have drafted their work they get very good written feedback on how to improve.

### **Leadership and management**

123. The leadership of the subject area of ICT (as opposed to ICT throughout the school) is very good and the management of ICT is good. There is a clear vision and there has been very good improvement in recent years with most students leaving school with one of the higher GCSE grades. CLAIT qualifications have been provided as an alternative for some students so that everyone has the opportunity to gain a worthwhile qualification.
124. The accommodation is cramped and therefore the lay out of ICT rooms is a barrier to better teaching and learning and makes behaviour management more difficult. The team of teachers is well qualified and this expertise is shared with other teachers in the school, other schools and the wider community.
125. Overall, the improvement in ICT provision since the last inspection has been very good.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

126. ICT across the curriculum is not as well developed as it should be. There is a clear strategy that has two phases. The first phase is to increase teacher use of ICT in lessons while the second phase is to increase student use. The school is clearly still in phase one.
127. The number of computers is above the national average for secondary schools with a ratio of better than one to four students. Nonetheless, teachers had problems gaining access to computers where demand for the ICT suites was heavy. The school has invested heavily in digital projectors and interactive whiteboards. During the inspection, projectors were used well by teachers but interactive whiteboards were inactive whiteboards as their potential was not exploited to the full.
128. In geography, ICT is used well. Students do web research and create presentations and leaflets to display their findings. They research and write coursework using word processing software.
129. In history, students use laptops within lessons to find information and to present their arguments. In mathematics, students use graphical calculators and laptops in lessons. However during the inspection teachers were reluctant to use these laptops because they had some justifiable concerns about the reliability of the wireless network. In art, students in Year 10 use digital cameras and create animations in PowerPoint. In music, students in Years 10-11 use sequencing software to create their own compositions.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is good.

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
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Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good subject leadership has enabled improvements to be made in teaching.
- Teachers do not use assessment consistently to set students targets for learning.
- Curriculum changes are well thought out and carefully implemented.
- Students attain well because teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and exam requirements.

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

130. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average. However boys' results were significantly below their performance in other subjects. The results for 2004 show both an improvement overall and fewer boys receiving low grades.

#### **Standards and achievement**

131. Standards of work are above average. Students in Year 9 can describe the lives of people in a range of environments and explain why they differ. They recognise the impact of human activity on the environment and the changes this brings about. By the end of Year 11 students can present and analyse fieldwork data clearly. The most able students are able to question their findings and offer explanations based on a very good understanding of geographical theory.

132. Achievement is good. Students arrive in Year 8 from a range of middle schools with differing depths of geographical knowledge. They progress well because the teaching material is very well organised and challenging. This is particularly noticeable in Year 8 where the new teaching methods have had a greater focus. In Years 10 and 11, boys in particular improve because of the use of well-defined tasks and active learning. Students with special education needs generally progress well because of individual help they are given.

#### **Teaching and learning**

133. Overall from Years 8 to 11 teaching and learning are good. The best teaching is marked by meticulous planning with closely targeted, carefully managed tasks. Some very good, well thought out modules of work have been produced for Years 8 and 9. These modules require students to think analytically and this has considerably improved the quality of learning.
134. In the best lessons the work of the learning support assistants is well organised so that students with special needs can play an active part in the lesson. Students enjoy active lessons where they are made to think and to reason out their answers. Gifted and talented students are supported well through work with Norwich Excellence Centre.

135. Year 9 has a number of students whose behaviour is challenging. They are generally managed successfully because teachers use a variety of teaching methods and good behaviour management strategies. Where teaching is not so well planned and outcomes are not clear, the pace of work is less. Learning is not always satisfactory because tasks are not so well thought out and there is less challenge.

136. Assessment is used inconsistently across the department. There is some good formative marking, but often marking is superficial and contains little specific guidance on how students can improve their work. The department is aware of this and is working to share good practice.

### **Leadership and management**

142. The subject is very well led. It is providing a clear vision of the future of the department and has brought about changes in teaching methods. Management is also very good. Teachers are well organised and work efficiently as a team. This has led to good improvement since the last inspection.

### **History**

Provision in history is **very good**.

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very effective leadership and management are significantly developing the subject.
- Students achieve well and results are consistently above average
- Teachers have high levels of expertise and are committed to student progress.
- Good relationships amongst teachers and students promote very good learning.
- The subject is made challenging, with emphasis on an enquiry approach and independent thinking.
- Students are very well supported by marking and assessment.
- ICT needs to be more consistently employed across the subject area.
- Students in Years 10 and 11 would benefit from more experiences outside the school.

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

143. The attainment of students at the end of Year 9 in 2004 was well above average. In line with national trends, girls were performing consistently better than boys. These results were supported by evidence collected during the inspection.

144. Results in GCSE examinations have been consistently above average. In 2004 there was a substantial increase in the number of higher grades achieved, making overall results well above average. There was also in this year a significant reduction in the previous gap which had seen girls gaining more top grades than boys.

### **Standards and achievement**

145. The standards of work seen in Years 8 and 9 were above national average. Students show secure knowledge and understanding of evidence taken from source materials which bring alive the topics being studied. They are generally confident in their literacy and thinking skills, and their responses are consistently enhanced by consistent presentation of work and sound terminology.

146. The standards observed in years 10 and 11 were mainly above national average. Girls were more consistent and imaginative than boys in their approach, with a higher degree of concentration. All students benefited from well planned use of sources and the consequent development of structured pieces of writing.

147. Students enter the subject with above average levels of attainment. They make good progress and achieve well during Years 8 and 9, in line with their abilities and the expectations of their teachers. The study skills and techniques established ensure that this progress continues and leads on to the results achieved at the end of Year 11.

### **Teaching and learning**

148. Teaching and learning are very good. The talented specialist teachers are very committed to making their subject both interesting and challenging. Lessons are expertly planned. An enquiry approach and independent thinking are reinforced by a lively balance of activities and information.

149. Overall, very good learning and behaviour are the result of well directed teaching and purposeful use of the time available. In a Year 9 lesson on the slave trade, this very effective teaching enabled students to develop very clear understanding of its origins and of the comparative situations for all those involved. Year 10 students were similarly engaged by the very good teaching that advanced their work on Roman medicine. Assessment, both formal and informal, supports learning very well. Attention is paid throughout to the specific needs of each student, as seen in the recent emphasis on raising the performance of boys.

150. There is presently insufficient use of ICT across the subject, though there are very good examples taking place. There are missed opportunities for study experiences outside the school during Years 10 and 11.

### **Leadership and management**

151. Leadership and management are very good, and at times inspirational in working to develop the subject. Schemes of work and subject policies, including

assessment, have been rewritten to a very high standard. There are new vision and higher ambitions for the subject, reflected in classroom strategies and the level of challenge presented. Consequently, improvement since the last inspection has been very good. This is to be seen throughout curriculum, planning and assessment procedures adopted. The improved standards at the end of Year 11 demonstrate how the subject has been moving forward.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average overall
- Students' work reflects good achievement in knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education
- The poor behaviour of a significant minority of students in Years 8 and 9 and the lower sets in Years 10 and 11 causes significant disruption to lessons with a direct impact on achievement
- Strategies for the management of the most challenging behaviour are insufficiently developed
- Teaching and learning are good with a good match of specialist teachers to the demands of the subject in the school
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped, so that prior attainment is not sufficiently informing planning and differentiation
- The subject is well led and managed with priorities being correctly identified and acted upon.

## Commentary

### Examination results

152. Examination results were high in 2004 and have improved since 2003. Almost all students achieved A\* to C grades in the full course and two-thirds did so on the short course. These are above average results and they compare very favourably with those of the school as a whole. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls in the full course, but in the short course more girls achieve A\*-C grades than boys.

### Standards and achievement

153. Standards seen during the inspection were average for Years 8 and 9 and above average for Years 10 and 11 where most students achieve well. Work generally displays commitment and positive attitudes by the majority of students. They are able to

analyse evidence, beliefs and moral positions and construct their own soundly reasoned and well supported arguments. For example, students made good use of Biblical references to help them define and develop their understanding of Christian attitudes towards conflict. In a lesson on euthanasia, students were beginning to explore the notion of rights and they demonstrated a very good understanding of the issues and key moral questions.

154. Students achieve appropriately in Years 8 and 9 and well in Years 10 and 11. By Year 11 students have achieved an above average level of knowledge, skills and understanding in religious education. In Years 8 and 9 poor behaviour influences achievement. During the inspection there were a small, but significant, number of lessons where the behaviour of students was poor and even very poor. This is difficult to manage, disrupts teaching and impacts on achievement. In Years 10 and 11 the focus of the GCSE qualification has a positive effect on attitudes and achievement. In the short course GCSE achievement is good and in the full course it is very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

155. Teaching is good overall, though better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 8 and 9. Schemes of work have been well constructed and lessons are well prepared with challenging and engaging activities. Teachers have very secure knowledge of their subject and there is a good match of specialists to the rich variety of courses on offer. Most teaching displays secure class management skills though some teachers have yet to develop the most effective ways of dealing with a small minority of students who are uncooperative and disrupt the learning of others.
156. Topics and activities are well chosen, evoking high levels of engagement and challenge. For example, in a lesson on the significance of birth, excellent use was made of role play, enabling students to respond imaginatively and perceptively and the teacher drew out the emotions, hopes and fears of parents very effectively. Resources are attractively presented, including the use of good quality colour photographs and video, which also portray different cultures very positively. Even so, the shortage of rooms permanently designated for the subject hampers teachers' ability to organise furniture and student groupings.

### **Leadership and management**

157. The subject is well led and managed. Priorities have been appropriately identified and the new leadership has a clear plan of action for the subject. Very good schemes of work have been constructed for all ages, which contribute to the popularity and success of the subject. Resources are well used in lessons, but resources for the department as a whole are underdeveloped, as is the use of assessment to inform planning, differentiation and target setting. Record keeping, student tracking, together with an accurate view of attainment on entry all need improving. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation are embryonic. Overall, however, leadership and management are good. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very well led team of caring and hard working teaching and technical support staff
- The quality of teaching and assessment is mostly good or better
- Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good
- A fully integrated, problem-solving approach is yet to be established in all aspects of the subject
- Although the accommodation has improved significantly, several of the teaching rooms are cramped given the class sizes

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

158. At the time of the previous inspection, well under a half of the Year 11 students entered full GCSE in design and technology and only a third of them reached the target Grade C; that was well below the national average. By 2004, every Year 11 student entered GCSE and two-thirds passed at grade C or better, Grade C, with a third of them reaching the top grades of A\* and A. That is rather better than the national picture and shows very great improvement since the time of the previous inspection.

#### **Standards and achievement**

159. Most of the young people who enter Year 8 have had little experience of design and technology so their standards of attainment in the subject area are, on average, significantly below national levels. The department is building up good links with the middle schools in order to audit and to address this. Year 8 and 9 students generally have positive attitudes and work hard. By the end of Year 9 most have made good progress and reach standards broadly in line with national average. Greatest progress is made in acquiring more making skills though students are less secure in their knowledge of material properties or the initial design process.

160. In Years 10-11 students specialise in one of the GCSE courses and continue to make good progress and reach above national average standards. Progress is very good in terms of practical making skills that include fabrics, foodstuffs, graphics or resistant materials such as wood or metal, depending on the chosen course. Again, other aspects of the subject such as problem solving, design and background scientific knowledge, are less strong. However, most students achieve well with little difference between the sexes. Special educational needs students also achieve well, particularly when there is additional support such as that for the visually and aurally impaired. Other special educational needs students have little additional support and their good progress is a result of the additional care and support provided by the teacher.

## Teaching and learning

161. Teaching and learning are good. In over three-quarters of the lessons seen in inspection week, the students learned well because of teaching that was good, even very good or excellent. The teachers know their skills areas very well indeed, though not all are at ease with the design elements of the subject. Particular teaching strengths are the effective use of homework as a resource, and the thoroughness and individual helpfulness of marking.
162. Some lessons are not as focused as they could be and teachers do not consistently plan lessons with clear and specific learning objectives. At times this leads a common learning activity with the teacher working hard to keep lower attaining students involved and making progress. Higher attaining students, including the gifted and talented, are insufficiently challenged on occasion.
163. There are also some difficulties with the timetable, such as one class with three different teachers and periods when there are more classes than rooms available.
164. A major improvement since the time of the previous inspection has been the design, building and equipping of a high standard food studies / catering block. Overall, however, accommodation is unsatisfactory. Many classes, particularly in Years 8 and 9, are large for the small rooms in the old block, where uneven floors and less than ideal workshop layout discourages some activities for safety reasons. There are good levels of resourcing, but insufficient access to ICT which therefore limits its application in the subject. Staffing levels are satisfactory with effective teaching and technical support staff

## Leadership and management

165. There is very good leadership and the team, has a clear plan for further subject improvement. Management is good and is reflected in the effectiveness of delegated responsibilities and in the ways the team monitor and discuss subject development. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

	Years 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2003 were very high
- Standards of work seen in Year 11 are well above average



- Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they use to provide very effective guidance and support
- Teachers create a positive ethos which encourages students in Years 10 and 11 to take risks
- Students' behaviour and attitudes are good, because of teacher's high expectations
- Students do not have enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

166. The 2003 GCSE examination results were very high, with all boys achieving an A\* to C grade. Over the last three years results have been very high or well above average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection 2003.

### **Standards and achievement**

167. Students develop well above average painting and drawing skills by Year 11. In their exploration of Henry Moore's drawings, students developed sculptural effects using contour lines, wax resist and water colour. Students enjoy experimenting and extending their skills. One student interpreted aboriginal art and explored painting onto concrete blocks, which she intended to use for a sculpture. Since Year 9 students have developed confidence and expertise. They utilise a wide range of media and techniques. This is good achievement. Students' sketchbooks show how ideas are developed, and connections made with the work of other artists and cultures. Girls explain connections more effectively, and analyse of artist's work in more depth. Overall, students' analytic skills are above average, and show good achievement from their more simplistic analysis in Year 9. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as others.
168. Based on current progress and last year's work, standards at the end of Year 9 are above national average. At the time of the inspection early in the year, students' self portraits showed understanding of how to use tone, though a third had yet to use tone sensitively in their drawings. Technical skills are well developed and used confidently in a variety of media.

### **Teaching and learning**

169. Teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour, and this results in students concentrating well in lessons. They establish good relationships, and this enables students to explore unfamiliar materials with confidence. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and structure learning carefully. Lessons have a very clear focus, and teachers move students forward step by step. This helps students in Years 8 and 9 to develop their skills, but lessens opportunities for independent working. In Years 10 and 11, teachers provide very effective one to one guidance and support, which enables all students to extend their knowledge of techniques and artists.
170. Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for students to discuss their own work. This lessens their ability to articulate their ideas and think reflectively. Students do not always know how to improve, though a new approach in Year 9 is having a positive impact. In one class, students can identify the level their work is at, and what to do to gain the next level.

## Leadership and management

171. Very good leadership constantly strives to raise standards and achievement. Subject reviews are effective and acted upon. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been rigorously tackled. Management is good. Schemes of work for Years 8 and 9 provide a good range of media, including 3D and ICT. This is well linked to knowledge and understanding of other artists and cultures. The GCSE scheme of work ensures coverage of the examination criteria. There are not enough computers for students to regularly use them in their work.
172. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. All the weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed, except the use of computers.

## Drama

Provision in drama is very good.

	Years 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative and expert teaching enables students to achieve well
- The well planned curriculum captures the enthusiasm of the students
- Productions have been praised and seek to involve all students

## Commentary

### Examination results

173. Results in 2003 GCSE examinations were well above expected levels and over half the students gained the higher grades A\*-B.

### Standards and achievement

174. In what was a more limited subject inspection, standards were above in Years 7-9 and well above at GCSE reflecting good achievement.

### Teaching and learning

175. Teaching and learning are very good. In the lessons observed there is good achievement across the ability range because teachers focused on technique and gave positive guidance on improving performance through self evaluation. Year 9 students worked very well in groups in an improvisation on the Mission Impossible theme. Their imaginative use of different levels, space, mime and freeze frame is the result of close collaboration. With the help of well targeted questions they are able to make perceptive comments about each routine. Year 11 students focused on sound and lighting

requirements for Blue Remembered Hills. As a result of a very well sequenced discussion led by the teacher, they settle quickly to write their own ideas. The visual prompt of sweet wrappers to represent lighting gels was very popular and enabled the class to experiment with subtle changes in atmosphere. Writing and literacy skills are well incorporated into lessons and this is evident in the quality and presentation of work in older students' books. Students with special educational needs are very well supported by peers and teachers. Gifted and talented students are encouraged to use their technical and creative skills in lesson and to support productions.

### **Leadership and management**

176. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The curriculum is well planned to develop younger students' enthusiasm for the subject. Links between the curriculum for 14 to 17 year olds have been improved with the result that more students are choosing to study the subject in the sixth form. A strength of the department is the high quality of productions. All are encouraged to take part. Drama continues to be a strength of the school.

### **Music**

Provision in music is good.

	<b>Years 8 and 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results and take-up at GCSE are above average
- There is a wide range of well supported extra curricular opportunities and instrumental tuition
- Good teaching results in positive student attitudes
- The poor accommodation makes teaching and learning more difficult
- There are good resources including ICT provision
- ICT is not being used at Key Stage 3 to support development of composition skills

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

177. Overall standards are above average. By the end of Year 9, boys perform as well as girls and better than boys nationally. GCSE results in 2003 were above average A\*-C and similar in 2004. A significant improvement in boys' performance contributes to the above average results. Those results are particularly noteworthy because of the

larger number of students taking music compared with most schools and the range of ability of those students.

### **Standards and achievement**

178. Standards of work seen are above average in Years 8-9. Standards of performance are strong. In Year 9 demonstrate understanding of appropriate musical language and can apply this in their own performances and compositions. In Year 8 students are able to create compositions using graphic scores. They demonstrate understanding of the musical elements and can read and play from simple notation. Standards of work seen at GCSE level are above average, with some students producing well above average work. In composition students are able to attain according to their ability often using ICT to notate their work.
179. Achievement is good and very good where teaching is good or better. All groups of students achieve well in Years 8-9 because tasks set are appropriately challenging and are stepped to suit individual needs. At GCSE students are challenged to progress at a fast pace have above average standards. Opportunities were sometimes missed however to reinforce knowledge and processes sufficiently to support the slower learners.

### **Teaching and learning**

180. Teaching is good. All the teachers have good subject knowledge and are able practical musicians providing good role models for their students. Relationships are good resulting in a calm atmosphere that supports learning. Well established classroom routines in Years 8-9, ensure that students remain focused in practical lessons even when unsupervised. Schemes of work for Years 8-9 engage students' interest and enthusiasm and the internally produced work books incorporate carefully structured tasks with plenty of extension opportunities for the more able and experienced musicians.
181. Assessment procedures are built into these books including opportunities for students to appraise their own work and assess their progress. At GCSE level students feel well supported. They are given clear guidance as to how they can improve and develop their work in order to achieve a higher mark. Assessment is therefore good.
182. Learning is good. Where learning is good or better, students are able to perform and compose, are able to identify how they can improve and develop their performances and can understand and use appropriate technical language to describe the music they are studying. Students demonstrate independent learning skills and this is particularly well developed at GCSE level. They also work well together and support each other. Despite consistently good learning, opportunities are currently being missed to use the good provision of ICT to support the development of the younger students' composition skills.

### **Leadership and management**

183. Leadership is very good because standards have been maintained and a wide range of opportunities for music-making offered, despite the continued poor accommodation. Management is good. There is good teamwork in the department of well qualified and enthusiastic teachers who support each other and share good

practice. All departmental materials and resources are well organised and displayed, creating a positive atmosphere for learning.

184. The large team of instrumental teachers is well managed and support the work of the department and contribute significantly to the high standards that are achieved. There is a large take up for these lessons which are subsidised by the school. Instrumentalists in turn are expected to support the wide range of ensemble, some of which are led by the instrumental teachers. The extra-curricular music provides further opportunity and challenge for the school's many talented musicians. The teachers have high expectations and insist on technical accuracy and a high level of musicianship and as a result excellent standards of performance are achieved that enhance the reputation of the school within the community. A concert tour to America is planned.

185. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The department has successfully sustained high standards despite the fact that the poor accommodation, highlighted in the previous two reports has still not been addressed. This impacts on teaching and learning across the age range. The wider opportunities for the very many talented young musicians to develop are excellent and once the plans to improve the accommodation have been put into practice, provision in music has the potential to be very good.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is satisfactory.

	Years 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The commitment of teachers and the extra-curricular provision is helping improve the achievement of students
- Limited curriculum time at Key Stage 3 slows students' rate of progress
- Not all lessons are organised to take account of the different needs of students
- Students do not always know what they need to do to improve
- Good leadership is helping create a climate for improvement

### Commentary

### Examination results

186. Although results in 2003 were well below average, in 2004 these were in line with national averages and are now average for the core physical education as well as GCSE. By the end of Year 9 there is now no noticeable difference between boys and girls' attainment. This is because of a focus on girls' performance, and through the developing assessment system which is now more reliable as a measure of attainment.

### **Standards and achievement**

187. In basketball Year 8 boys and girls are able to dribble the ball using good technique and are beginning to shoot with increased accuracy. In gymnastics they are able to create body shapes for rolling and for flight and demonstrate good tension. They are developing their knowledge of major muscle groups and understand how to carry out a warm up. By Year 9 students have improved their gymnastic technique and are able to use a range of linking movements to join balances and rolls into sequences. In football students control and pass with reasonable accuracy. Unfortunately, the amount of curriculum time available in Year 8 and Year 9 falls short of the recommended time and is hindering achievement.

188. In Year 10 basketball students are able to fake and drive, carry out a lay-up shot and understand the principles of breaking down defence. They work cooperatively and are eager to develop skills.

189. Year 11 students are beginning to develop skills and techniques for planning individual training plans and understand the training principles of progression and overload.

### **Teaching and learning**

190. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory with some strengths. Well qualified teachers plan lessons with sufficient activities to maintain the interest of most students. Teachers are aware of different ability groups, and in some lessons will plan so that students learn at an appropriate level. However not all lessons are as well planned. The better lessons are well planned to take account of different students' learning styles and those teachers also use different language to help with students' understanding.

191. Learning is helped because of clear objectives outlined and teachers give demonstrations of skills and techniques. Responsibility for leading warm up activities is helping students to become independent learners. Marking of GCSE work is helpful with theoretical knowledge but assessment of practical abilities so students know what to do to improve is not developed.

### **Leadership and management**

192. Leadership is good because there is a clear vision for developing the department which is shared by all staff. Management is sound with strong monitoring and review of teaching and a shared team commitment to the extra curricular programme. The commitment of teachers to this programme is helping student achievement. Leadership is resourceful in providing equipment so as to extend the range of activities. There is a detailed action plan for improvement. Time management is not effective in all lessons.

193. There has been good improvement since the last report because of focused leadership and improvement in the quality of teaching.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Not inspected

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy many opportunities to participate as active citizens within the school community
- Lessons are planned carefully to ensure that National Curriculum requirements for citizenship are met
- Teaching and learning are good, and teachers show a detailed understanding of themes and topics related to the subject
- In a minority of lessons an inappropriate choice of activities and ineffective classroom management did not enable students to achieve sufficiently

### Commentary

#### Examination results

194. There are none at present in the subject.

#### Standards and achievement

195. Citizenship is taught within the context of religious education and citizenship courses in Years 8 and 9, and religious education, citizenship, beliefs and values in Years 10 and 11. Citizenship topics, such as rights and responsibilities including the electoral system and the importance of voting, are clearly outlined in documents relating to these courses: teachers plan their lessons carefully to ensure that students gain a good understanding of the subject and its implications for their future role in society.

196. Students also have good opportunities to learn about citizenship in other subjects. In an ICT lesson in Year 9, for example, students discussed the financial and social implications of computer related crimes such as hacking into a hospital's medical database. Students are also encouraged to develop skills of active citizenship through, for example, charity fund-raising, where they debate and vote on which charities to support, and choose and help to organize the activities they undertake. By the end of Year 11, students reach an above average standard of attainment, and above average skills of enquiry and knowledge about becoming informed citizens.

197. Students know what citizenship is and what being a good citizen means, and achievement overall is good. Most students demonstrate a good grasp of concepts such as responsibility, social justice and diversity. Higher attaining students can produce detailed analyses of complex issues, such as, in an assignment completed by

Year 10 students, priorities for saving lives in disaster situations, illustrating their responses with convincing examples. However, other examples of work seen rely more on description than analysis, and do not show the same levels of knowledge, understanding and skills.

### **Teaching and learning**

198. Overall, teaching and learning in citizenship are good. The best lessons not only achieved the aim of developing students' knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens, and the skills of enquiry and communication, but also enabled them to develop their skills of participation and responsible action. For example, in an excellent Year 8 lesson on rites of passage, students portrayed the reactions of parents to the birth of a child, then took on specific roles in planning an event to celebrate the event. Similarly, in a Year 10 lesson on religion and social responsibility, all the students participated actively in discussions on how to reach decisions in a variety of situations, including the threat of a terrorist outrage.

199. However, not all lessons were equally successful in this respect. The aim of one Year 9 lesson, to develop the theme of social responsibility, was not achieved because the activities planned were not matched to the students' interests and abilities, and a large minority of the class hindered learning through their poor behaviour.

### **Leadership and management**

200. Leadership and management are good. A clear vision of the role of the Religious Education and Citizenship department in meeting National Curriculum requirements has been developed, as well as the contribution made to citizenship by other areas in the school. Members of staff are committed to achieving the Dept's objectives, and detailed and comprehensive schemes of work, policies and procedures demonstrate clearly how these goals are to be met. However a priority must be to facilitate greater consistency in teaching by ensuring, for example, that all teachers adhere fully to school policies with regard to behaviour management. Citizenship was not inspected at the last inspection.



## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, fifteen subjects were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

### *Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	National	School	National	School	National
Art and design	10	0.0	50.2	100.0	98.6	72.0	87.5
Biology	39	35.9	39.2	89.7	96.4	71.3	78.6
Business studies VCE	31	43.5	14.6	88.7	65.0	71.9	60.1
Chemistry	24	58.3	49.0	91.7	97.6	83.3	84.9
Drama	10	80.0	40.1	100.0	99.5	102.0	83.6
Economics	6	83.3	52.0	100.0	98.9	103.3	88.3
English literature	44	63.6	46.5	100.0	99.5	99.1	86.5
French	14	64.3	51.5	92.9	98.8	88.6	87.6
Design and technology	4	0.0	35.0	100.0	97.8	50.0	77.9
General studies	21	47.6	31.0	90.5	94.7	77.1	73.1
Geography	27	44.4	44.5	100.0	98.7	87.4	84.0
German	7	85.7	47.9	85.7	98.4	100.0	84.8
Health and social care VCE	7	14.3	14.5	100.0	67.7	64.3	63.5
History	28	50.0	44.96	100.0	99.0	88.6	84.6
Information technology	39	15.4	24.6	82.1	95.6	55.9	69.5
Mathematics	37	45.9	55.6	83.8	96.7	76.2	88.8
Media Studies	19	42.1	37.8	100.0	99.4	88.4	82.1
Music	10	70.0	38.9	100.0	98.8	96.0	81.1
Physics	28	35.7	44.6	85.7	96.7	72.1	81.7

Psychology	58	55.2	42.7	100.0	97.4	91.4	81.1
Religious studies	9	0.0	46.7	88.9	98.8	60.0	85.6
Sociology	12	58.3	44.3	100.0	98.2	93.6	83.6
Spanish	2	50.0	50.2	100.0	98.3	90.0	86.9
Sports/PE studies	10	10.0	30.9	98.0	98.0	76.0	75.2

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

201. English literature and French were focus subjects in this area. Lessons were sampled in English language and literature, German and Spanish.

202. One Year 12 English Language and Literature AS level lesson was sampled. The course has just started in Year 12. The teaching was good and used a variety of strategies to develop students' awareness of the narrative structure. Students responded well to the lesson. Students' work showed that they are beginning to use appropriate terminology when comparing transcripts and they are looking at the changing use of language over time. Good techniques were observed for examining formal and informal language. The course guide provides good support to students on this course.

203. In a Year 12 Spanish lesson, good teaching and learning were observed. Standards in Spanish have improved. They are above average and achievement is good.

### English

Provision in English is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in 2003 were well above national average
- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and examination requirements

- Teachers provide good background material to the course
- Methods and styles of teaching do not sufficiently recognise individual learning needs

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

204. Results in the 2003 A level examinations were well above average. 2004 results were similar.

### **Standards and achievement**

205. The standard of work seen during the inspection, from the current Years 12 and 13, was above average. Achievement in Years 12 and 13 is good. Students have average standards when they enter the course, and leave with standards which are at least above average.

206. The speaking and listening skills of students at all levels are good. Year 12 students discuss readily in pairs or groups and then make valuable contributions to class discussions. They are less confident to answer questions in the whole class situation, and a number of students do not take part in these sessions. Students read confidently in class, but are also encouraged to study their texts independently and prepare material for class presentations. Students are also encouraged to read widely, and there is evidence that they are doing this. Students make well-organised and detailed notes in class. They show good analysis of language and support their views with textual references.

207. By Year 13, students are increasingly adept at comparing very different texts, setting literature in the context of the time in which it was written and are able to summarise key issues succinctly within essays.

### **Teaching and learning**

208. Teaching and learning are both good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and provide supportive background information. The course guide gives particularly helpful guidance on study skills, terminology and wider reading. The best teaching uses a range of strategies to encourage students to actively study the text, and discuss it with others. A role play exercise between Prospero and Caliban was used with Year 12 students to particularly good effect in their study of *The Tempest*, and promoted verbal responses and understanding which were of a high quality. Skilful questioning was used with Year 13 to develop students' thinking on the character of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

209. Teaching was satisfactory when students were passive and questioning did not engage a response because students were not confident with the subject matter. Students' assessed work is thoroughly marked. It is linked to the examination assessment objectives, and gives good guidance to students on what they need to do to improve. However, this is not explicitly linked to AS or A level grades. Although they are aware of the links between marking and the assessment objectives, students are less clear about their target grades and the progress they are making towards achieving them.

210. Good use is made of the learning resource centre. The provision of support materials is good and teachers refer students to the centre to do particular research.

Students have positive attitudes to their studies. Working relationships between students and staff are good. Students feel well-supported by staff, recognising their very good subject knowledge and they benefit from the carefully prepared background materials.

### **Leadership and management**

211. The fairly new leadership of the subject in the sixth form is good and has identified priorities for development. A new course has been introduced, and this has increased the number of students studying English at A level. The department has begun to address the issue of high drop-out rates from the A2 course. The school's analysis of A level examination results is at a developmental stage and tends to be done rather too late in the autumn term and rather superficially to have an impact on standards within the department. Teachers of the sixth form meet to evaluate their work as often as the schedule permits, but this is too infrequent. Departmental policies and schemes of work are not fully developed in the context of the sixth form. Improvement since the last inspection is good as standards have improved.

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

212. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are good and enable students to meet the reading and writing elements of their sixth form courses. Teachers give suitable emphasis to subject specific vocabulary. A number of departments pay particular attention to the development of literacy skills. In Sociology, templates are used to develop note-taking, glossaries are provided and key words are displayed. In psychology, the quality of writing is a specific focus of lessons.

## **French**

Provision in French is good.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent use is made of French and of authentic resources in all lessons

- Subject knowledge of teachers is strong
- Students achieve well in relation to prior attainment
- Some students are finding it a challenge to bridge the gap between GCSE and AS level

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

213. Results for 2003 were above those nationally for schools of this type. The most recent results are similar with better results at the highest grade in 2003 in French. Girls performed slightly less well than boys at the highest level in French. The most recent results show the trend continuing at A Level in French.

### **Standards and achievement**

214. Standards are above average. They are improving because of focused teaching with authentic resources and increasing use of the target language as students move through the course. All skills are well covered. Standards are rising because the organisation of lessons allows student confidence to be gradually built up and because of excellent teacher-student relationships. The more general learning of the GCSE stage is replaced by tasks requiring detail and thereby adding depth to their knowledge and understanding of French.

215. Students achieve well, relative to the good standards with which they start the course. Teachers enable good student learning by excellent subject knowledge and manipulation of the target language which increases student confidence in responding. Positive teacher-student relationships further that confidence and lead to high participation rates in many classes. In a very good Year 13 French lesson students responded enthusiastically to the teacher's request for a little bit more detail each time. Students' knowledge of grammar and acquisition of vocabulary throughout the course increase in line with examination board expectations. The careful planning of work and an emphasis on how to tackle the elements of the examination have been the response to any dips in performance. Further work is needed on strategies for handling the increased use of the French at the start of the AS course and on confidence-building in this area.

### **Teaching and learning**

216. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, teachers use positive comment closely related to in-depth analysis of materials. Focused questioning and carefully timed activities bring out the best in students. Students feel they can turn to the teacher for support and guidance with their work. Teachers prepare students by increasing use of tasks related directly to the exam they will sit.

### **Leadership and management**

217. Leadership is good. It provides a clear idea of which areas need to develop to maintain and improve results. These include monitoring of work, target setting and lesson observation in line with whole school priorities. Recruitment into the sixth Form is now a priority and is encouraging top sets in Year 11 to think about language study. At the same time, by increasing use of the French and deepening the learning experience

in Year 11, he is increasing the likelihood of success and retention at the end of the AS course.

218. Management is good. The good understanding of the varied and complementary skills of his department leads to effective staff deployment. Clear vision in this area is accompanied by a consultative approach to the running of the department and the creation of a friendly, accessible working area for staff and students.

219. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Organisation is more effective and both staff and student-friendly. All teachers manage students well so that progress in all lessons is good or better.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is good.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide good support for students which assists their achievement well
  - In some of the more conventional lessons there are missed opportunities to involve students more actively
  - Good assessment and monitoring of achievement assist the students' understanding of their progress
  - The very good leadership is leading to improving standards

### **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

220. In 2003, the results at A level were below average. In 2004 the results were higher, though as yet there are no figures for national comparisons.

### **Standards and achievement**

221. Overall standards observed during the inspection are above average and consequently students are achieving well. In Year 12 at AS level, students are able to use orders of polynomials to predict outcomes when applying the four rules and consequently are able to multiply polynomials. In Year 13, students can integrate to determine the area between a curve and the x-axis as a means of evaluating definite integrals. This they can extend to finding volumes by integration.

## **Teaching and learning**

222. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers' good knowledge and ability to clearly explain new concepts enable students to improve their understanding and achieve well. The students make effective use of past work when introduced to a new topic.
223. In the better lessons students freely participate in discussions, they respond well to questions and volunteer suggestions articulately. The majority of lessons proceed at a brisk pace, are planned well and allow students to build on each stage of new learning before progressing to the next. Homework is set regularly; it is used effectively to consolidate and extend new work that is introduced in the lesson.
224. However, some opportunities are missed for students to develop their study skills, carry out research and prepare for topics in advance of their lessons. The notes and calculations made in class by some students lack structure, and do not always lend themselves to future revision and learning.
225. In the better lessons the marking of students' work contains good helpful comments that show the students where they have made mistakes, and what they need to do to improve. However, only in the better lessons are individual higher attaining students challenged specifically to achieve their potential.

## **Leadership and management**

226. The good teaching and achievement is the result of the subject having a very good quality of leadership with a clear understanding of what is needed for students to succeed. This is leading to improving standards. There is a good match of teaching staff to the curriculum. This combined with the wide range of topics on offer provides students with very good opportunities to study new areas of the subject ensuring that interest and motivation is maintained and extended. There are good methods of assessing attainment and monitoring achievement so that students can see how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. On entry to Year 12 students undertake a skills test and for those attaining below 50% a Sixth Form Workshop is available to support these students well. Schemes of work are in place at a basic level; however, they do not fully support teachers to meet the needs of the course, as the re-development of the schemes is still ongoing. Progress since the last inspection has been good in sustaining standards.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

227. The strategy for teaching mathematics as a basic skill in subjects is satisfactory. The mathematics department has carried out an audit of departmental practice and this has led to the development of numeracy policies within departments. However, there is a lack of cross-referencing between mathematics and other departments in terms of when topics are taught and commonality of numerical approaches used to teach them. This does not assist students' development of numerical skills in other subjects.

## **SCIENCE**

Focus subjects were biology, chemistry and physics. Lessons were sampled in electronics, environmental science and human biology. In a Year 12 electronics lesson on capacitance, very good teaching led to very good learning and achievement. Students' prior knowledge, articulacy and attitudes to work were excellent. In a Year 13 human biology lesson, very good teaching used a range of strategies to promote learning about control of ventilation.

Achievement was very good. In a Year 12 environmental science lesson, the teacher made a good presentation to the students about animal dentition and achievement was good although the students were not called upon to take an active part in the lesson.

## **Biology**

Provision in biology is satisfactory.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good staff expertise contributes to more challenging teaching
- Some very good examples of teaching that suit the new larger, and more open intake
- Changes in subject leadership are improving the planning and teaching of the subject
- Some students do not work as hard as they should

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

228. In 2003 results in A level biology were in line with national average. Biology is a popular subject and was comparable with national averages at A/B, A/E and point score. There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

#### **Standards and achievement**

229. Standards seen during the inspection were above national average but there are some gaps in GCSE recall for example in flower structure and reproductive cell division. Notes are well presented and show evidence of increasingly well-organised work. Students are well taught but their immaturity and lack of application makes their progress and achievement satisfactory rather than good.

#### **Teaching and learning**

230. Teaching and learning are good overall. There are examples of very good practice. These include examples of active and independent learning such as the ability to make presentations about mammalian blood systems. Some teachers were very good at day-to-day assessment such as the use of sequencing and annotating techniques to check on learning as it happens. Some teachers made good use of ICT to give clear explanations of difficult concepts such as meiosis.

231. Students have been inducted well, even though from a large number of schools, but there are defects in attitudes, especially with respect to homework, which remain even in Year 13. The major strength of teaching is the often very good specialist



knowledge of the teacher. The content of teaching is often challenging though in the less good lessons, that teaching is now always effective in conveying understanding to the different students in the class. Assessment is thorough but tends to be by answering examination questions rather than by day-to-day activities which permit more flexible matching of work to need.

## Leadership and management

232. Leadership and management are good. There has been recent change in departmental leadership and already there have been good steps taken develop effective learning schemes that take account of the rather wider ability range of AS and A2 students. There is still some way to go to iron out inconsistencies in teaching practice and so better meet the needs of all students, as well as encouraging them to work with greater independence.

233. Overall staffing is very good; there is a very good range of staff expertise including new recruits and teachers from the cooperating school. Technical support is very good. This has been a period of great expansion in numbers taking the subject and curriculum offer has been good, with a wide range of biological science courses offered. Monitoring of practice within the department is less developed though the school leadership group review of post 16 provision in science is insightful and shows how to improve teaching and learning.

234. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, because of the use of good demountables for much biology teaching, but it is limited by some small laboratories and some without services such as gas.

235. Biology was not mentioned in any substantial way in the previous inspection. Since that time, numbers have increased while the attainment on entry has decreased. Achievement has been maintained.

## Chemistry

Provision for chemistry is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average because there is open access to sixth form courses. The majority of students make good progress during their sixth form course
- A very well qualified team provide well paced lessons clearly linked to the demands of examination
- Very supportive relationships in teaching groups enable an open exchange between students and teachers

- Students are very positive about the subject and work hard to succeed
- Leadership provides a clear vision focused on improving achievement
- Assessment tracks student performance well but needs to focus more on individual learning needs
- Small laboratories restrict the way in which lessons can be organised. Students are unable to do as much practical work as they and their teachers would like

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

236. Results in the 2003 a level examinations were average. 2004 results show an improvement, with students overall achieving results better than those predicted

### **Standards and achievement**

237. The course attracts students with a wide range of abilities from a variety of schools. Attainment on entry is broadly average. Students learn and recall facts very well, but some students find problem solving more difficult. In the Year 12 group seen, students showed an excellent attitude to their work and had clearly made very good progress in their practical skills in the few weeks since starting the course.

## **Teaching and learning**

238. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are keen on teaching the subject. Lessons are carefully planned and timed so that the pace is brisk. Students learn well because teachers are good at explaining ideas and make examination requirements very clear. Students are well supported by staff if they have any difficulties and enjoy their learning. Frequent testing enables students to know how they are performing against predicted examination targets. However, they are less clear about how to improve if they are underperforming.

239. As group sizes grow, some small laboratories restrict the way in which the subject can be taught. This can lead to too much teacher talk which does not meet individual needs.

## **Leadership and management**

240. There is a clear vision for the department and the team is well managed so that good practice is shared. Staffing difficulties have been well managed to minimise effects on student achievement. Currently the department is very well staffed.

241. Resources other than accommodation are good. ICT is used to support learning via the school intranet and in the classrooms. Since the last inspection examination policies have changed and entry to the sixth form is more inclusive. As a result attainment has become average, but students achieve well. Although numbers studying the subject have increased and the use of IT has improved, accommodation is still posing problems. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **Physics**

Provision for physics is satisfactory.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Average

Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to help students relate their learning to the demands of examinations
- Some lessons are too teacher led so that students do not have enough opportunity to explore their own understanding
- Students have a positive attitude to physics and are prepared to work hard
- Although frequent assessment tracks student performance against predicted grades well, assessment data is less well used for planning.
- Some accommodation is small and restricts activities in lessons.

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

242. In the 2003 examinations, results were below the national average. Lower attaining students progressed less well than other students on the whole.

#### **Standards and achievement**

243. The course caters for students from a number of schools. The school's inclusion policy means that students joining the course have a wider than average range of scientific and mathematical understanding. In the lessons seen, standards were broadly average though in one Year 13 lesson seen, a quarter of the students found rearranging mathematical formulae difficult and needed a lot of support. Overall, students make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately.

#### **Teaching and learning**

244. Overall teaching is satisfactory. An appropriate range of subject matter is taught by a well qualified staff. Students are given good guidance on examination requirements which they value. Many lessons seen were too teacher led and activities were not sufficiently well matched to the needs of all students. This was particularly true when ideas were introduced mathematically rather than through experience. However, students find staff accessible to help them overcome these difficulties.

245. Students are positive about physics and find the module outlines they are given very helpful for revision. They are aware of the restrictions some of the small laboratories cause but they would like a more practical approach to the subject and a broadening of the curriculum through visits to relevant local work places.

#### **Leadership and management**

246. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with teams teaching in parallel to monitor their work. Resources, excluding accommodation, are satisfactory. Rising

numbers in Year 12 groups makes the organisation of practical work in small laboratories particularly difficult. Assessment and data analysis is less well used than it should be to help plan a curriculum that matches the learning needs of individual students more closely. Frequent assessment does allow students to track their performance against predicted targets but does not consistently show them how to improve.

247. Since the last inspection numbers studying physics have grown. The level of entry to the course is now much broader due to inclusion policies, explaining the difference in examination results. The department is now very well equipped for ICT and new courses in electronics have been developed. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is good.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very well led team brings very good knowledge of the subject and its applications to sixth-form work in this curriculum area
- teaching techniques do not always provide enough opportunities for active learning

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

248. In recent years, there has been a clear improvement in A Level pass rates with significant numbers of students gaining top grades. Standards are above national average which, given the modest GCSE levels students on entry, reflect very good achievement. Students choosing to study ICT up to AS level also achieve very well, with above average results.

### **Standards and achievement**

249. Throughout their work with computers in the Sixth Form, the students reach high standards of skill and work-related knowledge in their practical projects although rather fewer have fully researched real life contexts for systems analysis and problem solving. As a result, some students are less able to apply their otherwise good knowledge and skills to actual business and other contexts.

250. The teachers accept that, in the past, there has been a tendency to concentrate on coursework at the expense of theory. They are now putting in place a range of

strategies to help the students develop greater theoretical understanding of the subject and students are mostly rising to the greater intellectual challenge.

### **Teaching and learning**

251. The quality of teaching is good overall. Particularly strong is the teachers' grasp of the subject and their ability to illustrate applications in business and industry and enable students to develop effective approaches to problem solving. These teaching strengths enable students to learn well though the teachers as a team have yet to develop successful strategies to develop students' independent research skills and their capacity to work collaboratively. In common with a number of other subjects, the teachers are still developing the best ways of using assessment data to further support student progress.

### **Leadership and management**

252. Leadership is very good and management is good. Teachers benefit from a very clear vision of future development and curriculum, resources and course assessment are all well managed. Work in this area of the sixth form curriculum shows great breadth, with two major general courses and a vocational one, and student numbers are growing fast. In both these regards, there has been good progress since the previous inspection.

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

253. There is no explicit effort to map and monitor sixth form students' use of and progress in ICT in their different subjects and courses. Given that most students enter sixth form with an ICT qualification, particularly those from City of Norwich itself, the school assumption, to some extent justified, is that students are self-sufficient in their use of computers. Students do make considerable use of ICT both in class work and independent research, in such diverse subject areas as design and technology, media studies, psychology, art and music.

## **HUMANITIES**

Geography, history, sociology and psychology were the focus subjects in this area. A lesson in religious education was sampled. This Year 13 A level lesson was very well taught by a teacher that succeeded in stimulating a high level philosophical discussion about religious experience that helped students' develop their powers of reasoning and argument.

## Geography

Provision in geography is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are well prepared because teachers have a very good knowledge of the syllabus and the examination requirements
- Teaching is well structured to meet student needs
- Assessment data is not used as effectively as it could be to set learning targets
- Fieldwork and extra-curricular opportunities are used well to stretch students

### Commentary

#### Examination results

254. Results in 2003 were above the national average and 2004 results show an improvement. Boys' results were better than the girls' results.

#### Standards and achievement

255. Standards of work seen were above average. Students work well independently and have good research skills. These are well demonstrated in the fieldwork reports from the visit to Yorkshire where students collected and analysed data to test hypotheses. They use ICT effectively to present findings.

256. Students achieve well. Students enter the Sixth Form with a wide range of geographical knowledge and skills and by the end of Year 13 there is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. During the course they develop good skills of observation and analysis. For example Year 12 students could identify rock types, place these accurately on a diagram of intrusive igneous features and explain why particular igneous and metamorphic rocks occur in different areas. By Year 13 some students are confident enough in their understanding to raise challenging questions such as why are there different types of rain in different parts of depressions and to suggest answers.

#### Teaching and learning

257. Teaching and learning are good. Students respond well to the enthusiastic and well-informed teaching. Teachers take good account of the prior knowledge of students and plan lessons are well to meet students' needs. Teaching is characterised by good, clear explanations, which enable students to grasp ideas quickly. For example in a Year 12 lesson on urban spheres of influence, a very clear explanation, well illustrated with examples, meant that students could confidently start on a practical task. This was followed by open-ended probing questions to test students' understanding and to get them to justify their answers. A high level discussion on the factors affecting spheres of influence followed. Teachers have high expectations of students and they constantly

challenge them in class to develop their arguments. Written assessments are well planned so that students are not overloaded at any one time. However better use could be made of assessment data early in the course so that students could have better idea of their progress and work towards clearly identified learning targets.

### **Leadership and management**

258. Leadership is very good. It provides a clear vision of what is expected of A level geographers and a very good role model for other teachers. Opportunities are seized to raise the profile of geography and to introduce students to practising geographers for example in the annual Environmental Question Time when planners and climatologists make a valuable contribution. The subject is very well managed. New students all with different geographical knowledge are very well settled at beginning of Year 12. Work is allocated to Sixth Form teachers very well so that responsibility for different syllabus areas is clearly defined. Very good management is further illustrated in the fieldwork which is well organised and documented so that the teachers can use the field centre experience in the classroom. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

### **History**

Provision for history is very good.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results in public examinations are consistently very good
- Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and expertise
- Written work is very well organised and supported by significant source materials
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning and research
- Students are challenged in written and lesson activities
- Few opportunities are provided for extending subject awareness beyond the school

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

259. Standards achieved in history are consistently well above average. Results in the 2004 AS and A level GCE examinations sustained the level of success of previous years. The higher grades gained were evidence of considerable student progress.

#### **Standards and achievement**

260. Standards observed during the inspection were well above average, with attainment in both Years 12 and 13 secured by well founded knowledge and appropriate study techniques. Students enter the sixth form with above average standards and complete their courses with well above average standards. This reflects

good student achievement. Students' progress consistently benefits from the high expectations and level of challenge which are established to develop their learning and their subject competence. Individually, and as groups, students are highly motivated and committed to producing their best work.

## Teaching and learning

261. Teaching and learning are very good. All teachers are experienced and enthusiastic in promoting and leading their AS and A level courses. Their examination expertise is a major advantage at each stage of Years 12 and 13. Consequently, students are very well prepared for assignments and for the final examinations. Written work is very well organised and builds into an impressive body of evidence, interpretations and review. Well chosen source materials and frameworks complement notes and essays on all topics. Students enjoy the learning environment created, and they value the opportunities for debate and the making of presentations. Despite these considerable strengths. There is very little use of ICT for research in lessons which benefit learning and too little advantage taken of lecture and visit events outside the school.

262. Within lessons, there are notable instances of enquiring thinking, with very effective utilisation of previous and general knowledge. In Year 12, students considering Peel and Anglo-Irish issues showed a keen understanding in developing a range of opinions on political and institutional matters. Students in Year 13 were confident in balancing information when making interpretations linking Disraeli's social reforms to the notion of Tory democracy. All students show a good awareness in the use of evidence in comparative studies, and also of historical study skills. They value the consistency and quality of assessment of their recent work and progress. Feedback on achievement is skilfully provided by marking and by the questioning and answers which are a central feature of all lessons.

## Leadership and management

263. Leadership and management are very good. There has been a careful consideration of the schemes of work, and demanding nineteenth century periods and personalities remain a key focus. More effective teamwork amongst the teachers has extended classroom strategies and motivated students, and so further raised standards. These developments offer clear evidence of very good improvement since the last inspection.

## Sociology

Provision in sociology is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Not inspected



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Above average results at AS and A Level reflect improvement over recent years
- There is very good subject leadership and good management of students' learning
- Inadequate funding for textbooks limits the range of teaching styles
- Students enjoy the course which has become increasingly popular

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

264. A rising trend in performance in external examinations with increasing numbers taking the subject has led to results above national averages. High attaining students achieve well above average A/B grades. Boys' achievement lags behind that of girls who do very well.

### **Standards and achievement**

265. High standards seen include well kept files for the majority of students and good discussion raised by the confident involvement of gifted and talented students. Students are able to plan answers to essay questions and deal well with the evaluation of sources. Students have above average attainment when they begin the course in Year 12, and some have studied the subject at GCSE already. They all achieve well, though girls generally make better progress and they represent a large proportion of most classes.

### **Teaching and learning**

266. Teaching and learning are good, with very good features. Strengths include very good teaching to the examination requirements, and very good teacher expertise and enthusiasm which has increased the popularity of the subject. The opportunities for high achievement for all students are limited by the need to provide content, through note taking or photocopied sheets because of severely limited financial resources available to the subject.

267. Students enjoy studying the subject and are confident in their teachers, but not in their own capacity for independent learning. Video resources are also limited, but attending conferences are a good way to widen the range of learning opportunities, and help staff to keep abreast of thinking.

### **Leadership and management**

268. Leadership and management are very good particularly in the planning and organisation of learning schemes. This helps students' achievement by taking them from topics like the family and education, where they already have good background information, to examining a wide range of sociological theories and methods of interpreting the world. In Year 13 their development as citizens is enhanced by the study of politics within A Level Sociology.

## **Psychology**

Provision in psychology is very good.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
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Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Not inspected

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above the national average
- All students achieve very well
- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent
- Leadership and management are very good

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

269. Results at AS and A2 levels are well above the national average. In 2004, three quarters of students achieved A and B grades and all of them achieved A to E grades. This is particularly impressive in view of the large numbers who take the subject (90 students at both AS and A2). Most students at AS and A2 exceeded their predicted grades. Fewer boys study psychology than girls: the grades they gained exceeded their predicted grades more than girls.

#### **Standards and achievement**

270. Students with an increasingly wide range of ability take the subject. They all make very good progress and achieve very well. They quickly gain understanding of, and can explain key psychological concepts such as *two-tailed hypothesis* and *internalisation*. They are encouraged to contribute their own ideas. In a Year 12 class about planning their own psychological investigation, only the eighth lesson since the start of the course, a group of three girls proposed to the class that it needed to take account of the issue of the deceit of participants by investigators. They had achieved this insight about ethics in psychology entirely unaided, as a result of their own support for each other's learning and the carefully structured teaching. Students say they value their psychology lessons. Their commitment to learning is very evident in class.

#### **Teaching and learning**

271. Teaching and learning are very good and on occasion, excellent. Lessons are very well planned and enthusiastically delivered, so that highly complex ideas are understood by all. From the start of Year 12, teachers focus on students' use of the English language. This enables students to organise their thinking, to acquire the skills of critical analysis and to express their understanding in ways which are clear to others. The practice in examination technique which students are regularly given and the highly effective marking of their work, through which they learn how well they have done and what they must do to improve, are significant factors in the very good achievement.

#### **Leadership and management**

272. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Subject leadership has very clear vision of the value of psychology to students, and inspires students of all levels of ability to learn about issues which they see are very relevant to them. The syllabus encourages practical investigation, so that students have opportunities to experience the application of psychological ideas in real life situations. Teachers provide very good role models as learners. Student performance is rigorously analysed. This contributes significantly to individual progress and the overall standards in the subject.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

There was no focus subject in this area. Two Year 12 lessons were sampled in different strands of design and technology. Both were effectively taught by well informed teachers. One lesson on product design enabled students to develop their production plans using flow diagrams. The other lesson in food combined an effective range of practical and theoretical work using ICT for dietary analysis that engaged students and developed their understanding of minerals in foodstuffs.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and theatre studies were the focus subjects in this area and lessons in music and media studies were sampled. Music is an increasingly popular subject at 'A' level with above average numbers at both levels. Standards of performance in a wide variety of instruments and musical genres are very high as a result of excellent support from the expert instrumental tuition provided. Performers also benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular ensembles and choirs that offer opportunities to experience a high standard of music making. Teaching and learning seen were good but opportunities were sometimes missed to involve students in wider discussions and to illustrate factual information with musical illustration to reinforce their knowledge. In the Year 12 Media Studies lesson, teaching and learning were excellent. The teacher had excellent subject knowledge. Very well focused questions developed students' confidence in answering and sharpened their observation skills of the Peter Weir film *Witness*. They had acquired very good understanding of generic signifiers in noir thriller films in a short period of time.

### Art and Design

Provision in art is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their very good knowledge of art and the examination criteria to give very effective support and guidance
- Results in the 2003 A Level were low
- Students concentrate very hard in lessons because of the very high expectations
- Teachers structure and direct learning in lessons, and this leads to some students being rather teacher reliant
- Standards in Year 13 are above average
- Relationships are very good, teachers and students mutually respect and trust each other and this allows students to experiment
- When students are given opportunities to talk about art, they make more complex connections between their work and the work of other artists

## Commentary

### Examination results

273. Results in the 2003 Advanced GCE examinations were low. Over the last three years results have fluctuated from being average to just below in 2004. Girls have performed better than boys, though fewer boys follow the course in Years 12 and 13.

### Standards and achievement

274. Current standards in Year 13 are above average. Students' technical skills are well developed, and they show maturity in their analysis of artists' work. This is good achievement since Year 11. One student's sketchbook from the summer holiday showed a rich collection of sketches and annotations from which he was studying the question, *Is graffiti art or vandalism?* One student had created a series of paintings of her room. These showed confident use of colour. Her initial work explored a wide range of artists and habitats, and was beautifully presented. Achievement by Year 12 students is good. Students' mark making is becoming more subtle. Their chalk and wash skull drawings showed increasing sensitivity within the lesson.

### Teaching and learning

275. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers start lessons with very useful overviews of progress with the course units. This helps students make good use of time. Students are encouraged to record targets for tasks in lessons and independent study. This is particularly helpful for boys whose independent learning skills are less secure. During lessons teachers provide intense one to one guidance, making suggestions for new directions. Often this results in students tackling new learning, such as one girl trying a new painting style. Sometimes students rely too much on the teacher's input, or are not given the opportunity to articulate their own ideas. When students are given opportunities to talk about art they achieve highly. An ICT based presentation on *Munch* given by a Year 13 student was outstanding. The teacher used skilful questioning, which resulted in the student making ever more complex connections. Achievement was very high. Students do not always have a detailed understanding of how to improve, even though students have contributed to the assessment sheet.

### Leadership and management

276. Leadership and management are very good. Schemes of work are very well structured. Very good use is made of the limited number of computers. The team of teachers work well together, they are determined to raise standards at subsidiary and advanced level, and have put in place a number of effective strategies. Teachers make very good use of enrichment opportunities such as gallery visits to enhance students' learning. After a period of variable examination outcomes, current provision reflects good progress since the last inspection.

### Drama and theatre studies

Provision in drama and theatre studies is excellent.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Excellent

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are consistently well above national average
- Teachers have high expectations and communicate their passion for the subject to students and this creates very good relationships
- Students' very positive responses make a significant contribution to their achievement
- The possibility exists to develop stronger links within the performing arts curriculum area

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

277. Results in A level examinations in 2003 were well above national average with nearly all students gaining the highest grades A or B. The most recent results are not as high, but AS results are the best ever. Female students outnumber male students and do better in examinations. Attainment on entry is above average overall, however a number of students join from other schools, and not all have studied drama at GCSE. Retention on the course is high, and numbers have doubled in the current Year 12.

#### **Standards and achievement**

278. The standard of work seen is above national average, with some students reaching the highest standards. The pace of learning is rapid and achievement is very good because teachers sequence learning to develop students' understanding of the social and cultural background that underpins the theory of different types of theatre. Year 12 students move away from language and use the body as a physical tool to increase their understanding of Artaud's 'theatre of cruelty'. Trust and very good relations in the group are evident as students collaborate to sculpt extreme panic. They shape a highly effective sequence of movements to represent cruelty and reflect on how shared feelings trap an audience into the experience.

#### **Teaching and learning**

279. Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers share their excellent subject knowledge and understanding of the examination requirements enthusiastically with students. The use of very effective questioning enables students to think for themselves, develop their own ideas and deepen their understanding of characters' feelings and motives. As a result, in one Year 13 class, dramatic tension was sustained to a powerful climax in an improvised scene between *Hedda Gabler* and *Loveberg*. In a parallel group 'hot seating' was used effectively to help students articulate two sides of the power struggle between duckling and Harry in *Our Country's Good*. There is prompt and constructive evaluation of students' ideas, both in discussions and marking. Students value the high quality of teachers' support.

#### **Leadership and management**

280. Very good leadership and management have strengthened provision further with the introduction of a syllabus that links examination work in Years 10 and 11 with the GCE AS and A level course. Careful use of assessment information and analysis of results is used to prepare students for examinations. Students enjoy taking part in a wide range of theatre and workshop visits, and the high quality of school productions is

recognised by parents and the local community. Although links exist between drama, music and dance, changes within the performing arts curriculum area open up the possibility for these to be developed further.

281. However, a barrier to fulfilling the vision shared by curriculum managers is the poor state of the accommodation. Although the inadequacies were pointed out in the previous report, they have not been resolved. It is a tribute to the commitment of the staff that improvement since the last inspection is good and high standards have been maintained.

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

There was no focus subject in this area. An A level PE lesson was observed. Knowledgeable teaching with good preparation was contributing to students' achievements. Students demonstrated good prior learning through assessments carried out in the psychology of sport lesson. In the lesson, standards were above average. However, students have limited opportunity to engage in thought provoking discussion.

## **BUSINESS**

The focus of the inspection was on AS/ A2 Business Studies, but AVCE Business and AS/A2 Economics were also sampled. In the AVCE Business lesson the characteristics and different emphasis of various motivational theories of management. In the Economics lesson observed sound and accurate teaching introduced students to the changing characteristics of the UK economy and good links were made to the requirements of the examination.

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is good.

	<b>Year 13</b>
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Not inspected

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well in the subject due to effective teaching
- Constructive guidance and feedback are given on students' work, enabling them to make good progress
- Relationships between the teacher and students are productive
- Students would benefit from greater use of ICT to support learning and more opportunities for students to see the subject first hand in its real world context

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

282. This is a newly introduced subject and there are no A2 results.

## **Standards and achievement**

283. Standards observed during the inspection were average. Most students begin Year 12 with no previous experience of learning in the subject and some have taken GCSE business and economics. As this is a new subject with the most experienced students being only one year into the course it is very difficult to make judgements on standards but work seen and results from the AS examination suggest that standards are in line with national expectations.
284. Observation of students in lessons and discussion with students indicates that their achievement is good. This is a result of good teaching and a good focus on assessment. In Year 13 students were producing a range of coursework investigations on business topics of personal interest such as how a leading high street store could reduce food waste, how a strawberry farm could become more efficient and how a 'not for profit' railway could replace the loss of finance following the loss of the area's special status from the European Union. These projects showed good understanding of the relevant business theories.

## **Teaching and learning**

285. Teaching and learning are good. The focus on examination requirements leads to good preparation for the examination, while frequent links to the real world of business and the economy enable students to make sense of theory. Good relationships create a productive environment for learning, and students have a high regard for staff. The expertise and experience of teachers are highly valued and students are very positive about their teaching. Concern for the progress of individuals is greatly appreciated by them; and good marking, assessment and feedback informs students very well on their progress and how to improve their work.
286. In one lesson students worked independently on research projects while they met with the teacher for one to one tutorials. These were very well focussed and helped students to make very good progress. The lesson was less successful than it might have been because students were unable to access computers in order to work on their assignments and attempts to book a computer room had been unsuccessful.
287. Where teaching was most successful activities were varied and strategies were adopted to ensure that everyone was involved, for instance through group presentations. Where teaching was less good whole class discussion need not necessarily engage all students at times. Teachers did make efforts to involve all students through questioning.

## **Leadership and management**

288. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Student monitoring is well managed and course responsibilities are allocated clearly. Leadership provides a good role model helps sustain the very positive attitude students have to the subject. During the inspection a Young Enterprise meeting was taking place and this provides business learning opportunities for students many of whom are not studying it formally. Teaching in the subject is physically spread out which limits the development of an effective learning resource base.
289. The subject is under resourced, with sixth form students having to purchase their own text books. The use of ICT for learning is not great enough, and there are insufficient opportunities to participate in appropriate visits to see business in action

such as the successful visit to a soup factory. Despite these concerns, business studies is a successful element of the sixth form.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

There were no focus subjects in this area. A Year 13 lesson in health and social care saw standards that were above average. Very good teaching and learning contributed to very good achievement.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

290. A small number of students follow a general studies course and in 2003 results were above average. Girls outperformed boys. No lesson was observed. Some imaginative text was produced to illustrate 'thought for the week' and this contributed to discussions during tutor periods. Other issues in personal, social, health and religious education were covered in a series of day conferences that were not available during inspection week.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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