

INSPECTION REPORT

FINHAM PARK

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103738

Headteacher: Paul Logan

Lead inspector: Robin Coulthard

Dates of inspection: 8th – 12th November 2004

Inspection number: 268807

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

© Crown copyright 2005

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 19
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1503
School address:	Green Lane Coventry West Midlands
Postcode:	CV3 6EA
Telephone number:	024 7641 8135
Fax number:	024 7684 0803
E-mail address	headteacher@finhampark.co.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sylvia Peak
Date of previous inspection:	8 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Finham Park is a large and popular community school with a large sixth form. Students enter Year 7 with standards that are above average as indicated by their results in national tests at the end of Year 6. The students' backgrounds are above average socially and economically. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is very small. Very few students join or leave the school other than at the beginning of a school year. About a quarter of the school population is from other than White British backgrounds. Of these students, nearly sixty per cent are of Asian Indian origin. Fourteen per cent of students are from homes where the principal language is not English. Very few students are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs is well below average. The principal needs are dyslexia and autism. Twenty four students have statements of special educational need.

The school is part of the South West Coventry Federation of Schools, which enables sixth form students to select options from a broader range of subjects than is usual. The school became a specialist mathematics and computing college in 2003. It is a Training School and a Leading Edge school, and is involved in the Enterprise Pathfinder initiative. Other awards are Artsmark Gold (2002), Core School for Creative Partnerships (2004), Sportsmark (2003), Investors in People (re-awarded 2004).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities	
			Main school	Sixth form
11746	Robin Coulthard	Lead inspector		
9053	Viv Phillips	Lay inspector		
32403	Keith Nicholson	Team inspector		English literature Media studies
31238	Gordon Clubb	Team inspector	Mathematics	Mathematics
30433	Chris Corp	Team inspector	Science	Chemistry
24453	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector		Physics
32785	Wyn Allt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Information and communication technology
32367	Jo Pike	Team inspector	Art and design	Art and design
11258	Ivor Rushforth	Team inspector	Design and technology	
32340	Peter McKay	Team inspector	Geography	Geography
18663	Phil Burchell	Team inspector	History	History
32208	Derek Aitken	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	
30297	Gary Spruce	Team inspector	Music	Music
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education	Physical education
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	
22042	John Challands	Team inspector	English	
2652	Robin Lomas	Team inspector	Special educational needs Vocational education	Psychology
34089	Robin Gaff	Team inspector		French

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw
Pastens Road
Limpsfield Chart
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0RE

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	21
OTHER SPECIFIED AREAS	23
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	59

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Finham Park is a good school that provides good value for money. Standards have remained well above average and have risen above the national trend over the past five years. Students' achievement is good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Teaching is good overall, and very good in the sixth form. Attitudes are generally good, but marred by the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of students. In the sixth form, attitudes are very good. The head provides very good, reflective and innovative leadership. Leadership and management are good overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Results in the main school that are well above average and rising, and above average for similar schools
- An effective sixth form, with very good teaching
- Effective teaching overall although some does not encourage enough initiative and independence in learning; satisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9, where the management of some students' behaviour is mishandled
- Very good leadership by the headteacher, who is particularly keen to research and introduce the most appropriate educational practice available
- Some poor accommodation that disadvantages the learning and welfare of students

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards are higher. The curriculum is more varied. The school is a leading provider of courses in the South West Coventry Federation of Schools and has developed very beneficial links with other schools. A number of awards have been gained including mathematics and computing college status. Most issues raised by the last inspection have been resolved. Religious education in Years 10 and 11 remains inadequate.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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' achievement is good. They join the school with above-average standards. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science for both girls and boys. A larger proportion of students gained the higher grades in English and mathematics than in science. Current standards in Year 9 are well above average in English, mathematics, science and history, and above average in all other subjects except music, where standards are below average. In 2003, GCSE results were significantly above average in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Current standards in Year 11 are above average overall and well above in several subjects. Although results in the sixth form fell only very slightly between 2002 and 2003, examination performance was above average in 2002 and average in 2003. Current standards are above average and **students are achieving very well.**

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attitudes are good and students generally want to do well. Students respond very well to teaching when it is very good. In some lessons that are less stimulating, a small minority can be disruptive. Behaviour is satisfactory. The very short lunch break, when experienced early, reduces some students' concentration during the afternoon in Years 8 and 10. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory. Attitudes in the sixth form are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching observed was satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are strongly and successfully focused on examination requirements. In Years 7 to 9, students' behaviour was not always well managed because the Behaviour for Learning system was inconsistently applied. Some teaching is unnecessarily dominated by the teacher and students do not practise enough the skills of working independently. Teaching in the sixth form is very good. It was good or better in all of the focus subjects. Overall, students learn and achieve well. Assessment is satisfactory.

The curriculum is good with some very good features, providing a wide variety of courses in the main school and the sixth form. Gifted and talented students achieve very well. A good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sport, drama and dance, is provided, but the timings of the school day impose some limitations on the uptake. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits some activities. Students are well looked after and supported, but some toilet provision is poor. Links with parents are good; links with the community and other schools are very good, and excellent at sixth form level.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Many of the governors are new. Under committed leadership, they make a satisfactory contribution to the running of the school. Not all statutory obligations are met for religious education and collective worship. The head exercises very good leadership. He has thoroughly analysed the school's current position and plans for development are very good. The school is outward-looking and keen to learn from the best practice elsewhere. The school is developing well as a specialist college and makes a significant contribution to the joint initiatives of the South West Coventry Federation of Schools. The leadership of senior staff is good in the main school. Leadership is very effective in the sixth form. Management of subjects is good.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are appreciative of the school. They consider that their children make good progress and are expected to work hard. They are comfortable about approaching the school with concerns. Students enjoy being at the school. They consider that they are well taught, and that their work is assessed helpfully. Parents and students feel that communication and consultation with them could be improved. This view is influenced by the recent change in the school day, which they think has reduced the quality of school life. Inspectors agree with the positive points made, and understand both the criticism, and the reasons for the changes. Inspectors feel, however, that the leadership provides very good opportunities for constructive communication.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Widen the range of teaching methods to develop students' skills in learning independently
- Apply procedures for managing behaviour more effectively
- Improve toilet provision

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Provide religious education for all students in Years 10 and 11

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

Finham Park School has a good sixth form that is cost-effective. Standards are above average in almost all subjects. A-level results were average in 2003. Current standards are above average. Students achieve very well because of very good teaching from well-qualified staff and very good guidance. Accommodation is unsatisfactory for learning and social purposes. However, the school has made improvements since the last inspection and has firm plans for further developments as funds permit.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students have very good attitudes to learning and respond very well to the very good teaching
- Results dropped between 2001 and 2003, but current standards are above average
- They receive very good support and guidance
- Links with other schools and colleges in the Federation are excellent and lead to a wider curriculum
- The leadership team provides very effective direction for the work of the sixth form
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Good in English literature with supportive assessment and very good use of discussion. Good in French with accurate use of sophisticated language.
Mathematics	Good in mathematics. The range of courses is well adapted to students' needs. Good teaching motivates students.
Science	Satisfactory in chemistry. Relationships are good. The good new course has yet to impact on standards. Good in physics. Students learn well as a result of well-planned lessons given by experienced teachers.
Information and communication technology	Very good in ICT. Lesson planning is focused on examination requirements and independent learning is a strength.
Humanities	Very good in geography. Very good teaching and students' good motivation result in very good achievement. Very good in history. Teaching and learning are very good. Recent curriculum innovation has had a good impact. Very good in psychology. High quality teaching and the very positive attitudes of students result in very good achievement.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	There was no focus subject in this area.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art. High teacher expectations and well-structured work result in very good achievement. Very good in media studies. A strong practical emphasis appeals to students and encourages initiative and independence. Good in music. Students respond very well to good teaching and a good range of activities.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good in physical education. Good teaching and learning are supported by very good extra-curricular enrichment.
Business	There was no focus subject in this area.

Health and social care	There was no focus subject in this area.
General education	There was no focus subject in this area.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Advice, guidance and support are very good. Induction into the sixth form is very good and high quality partnership arrangements support students' achievements. Students' work is monitored well and feedback is satisfactory. They receive very good preparation for a university education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership is very good and management is good. Senior managers bring to their roles a good balance of experience and new ideas. Aspirations are high and there is a keen awareness of strengths and areas for more development to meet the needs of students. Finances are managed well and the sixth form is cost-effective.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very satisfied with the range of courses, and appreciate the quality of teaching within the school and its Federation partners which enables them to achieve very well. They find the school friendly and appreciate being treated as young adults by their teachers. They are unhappy about the quality of accommodation because it restricts their opportunities to achieve more fully in some subjects and does not provide adequate social facilities for them.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Results in national examinations are well above the national average. Standards in Year 9 are above average overall. Students' achievement is good overall. Occasionally, a few students misbehave and this impairs the learning in some lessons in Years 7 to 9. Standards of work are currently above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests in Year 9 in 2003 were well above average
- GCSE were well above those of all schools and of similar schools
- Current standards in Years 9 and 11 are above average and students are achieving well
- Gifted and talented students are achieving very well
- Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students
- Standards in music are not high enough in Years 7 to 9 and students' achievement is unsatisfactory

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	37 (37)	33 (33)
mathematics	39 (39)	35 (35)
science	36 (35)	34 (33)

There were 233 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average as they had been the previous year. In English and mathematics, the proportion of students gaining levels 6 and 7 remained high. Results in science were a slight improvement on the previous year, but with a lower proportion of students gaining levels 6 and 7. Results in mathematics remain the strongest, and results in science are comparatively the weakest, as is the case nationally. The school significantly exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils gaining level 5 or above in English, but did not achieve the challenging targets it had set in mathematics and science.
2. In comparison with schools whose students gained similar results at the end of Year 6, results were well above average overall, having risen from above average the previous year. Results in English and mathematics were well above average. Results in science were average, and had risen from well below average the previous year. The attainment of girls and boys is similar in mathematics and science. As is the case nationally, girls perform better than boys in English. The school's results have risen above the national trend over the past five years.
3. Current standards in Year 9 in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Standards overall in Year 9 are above average, and well above average in history. In the remaining subjects, standards are above average, except in music where standards are below average. Students achieve well in Year 9. Higher-attaining and gifted and talented students achieve very well because work is well planned to meet their needs. Achievement is satisfactory in modern foreign languages, and unsatisfactory in music, where unsatisfactory accommodation limits what can be achieved. In some subjects, achievement is adversely affected by the uncooperative behaviour of a minority of students, usually boys. Students with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards meeting the targets in their individual education plans.

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	78 (74)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	43 (42)	35 (35)

There were 232 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

National comparisons are not yet available for GCSE results in 2004.

- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C in 2003 was well above the national average, as was the proportion gaining five or more passes at A* to G. Girls performed better than boys, as they have done over the last five years. Improvement in performance has been above the national trend over five years. The school comfortably exceeded the targets it had set itself for the percentage of students gaining five or more passes at A* to C. Results in their best eight subjects have been well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, these results were above average, which is an improvement from below average in 2002. Results were significantly above average in almost all individual subjects.
- Standards seen in Year 11 were above average overall. Standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science, art and design, design and technology, history and in the GCSE groups for physical education and religious education. Standards were above average in other subjects, except for modern foreign languages, where standards were average. Standards were above average in non-examination physical education and below average in non-examination ICT. No evidence was available for students' standards in religious education.

Sixth form

Results in the sixth form fell between 2001 and 2003. Current standards are above average and students are achieving very well.

Main strengths

- Results in 2001 were well above average. In 2002, they were above average, and in 2003, they were average
- Current standards are above average overall, and well above average in art and design, media studies and psychology

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	93 (95)	89 (93)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	52 (44)	33 (35)
Average point score per student	266 (267)	258 (263)

There were 152 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- A-level results in 2002 were lower than in 2001 and fell from well above average to above average. Between 2001 and 2003, results dropped from well above average to average. As the above table shows, in 2003, the average point score per students was only one point lower than it had been the previous year. The 2003 result was very close to, that is, less than one point below, the above-average cut off point. Girls' results in 2003 were above average, 288 points compared with an average for

girls of 268. The average point score for boys was below average, at 240, compared with a national average of 246. Results were well above average in English language and English literature, ICT, media studies, psychology and religious education. Results were above average in biology, design and technology, mathematics and sports studies. Results in business studies and geography were below average, having fallen since the previous year from well above and average respectively.

7. Current standards in those subjects inspected in detail are above average overall. As a result of very good teaching, standards are well above average in psychology, art and design and media studies. Standards are average in chemistry and above average in the remainder.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attendance and attitudes are good, which helps students to do well. Their punctuality and behaviour are satisfactory. Personal qualities mature well in response to good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Improvement has been satisfactory, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students of all ages and backgrounds respond very well to high quality teaching and encouragement
- Poor behaviour of a minority of students, usually boys, occasionally disrupts lessons, though not where teaching captures their attention quickly and holds their interest with well chosen activities
- Most students are keen to do well and willing to put in the effort to be successful, even in some lessons where the teaching is unexciting
- Relationships are good and built on high levels of trust and mutual respect
- Some students' concentration in the afternoons in Years 8 and 10 is impaired by the short lunchtime break preceding a long afternoon session

Commentary

8. In the best lessons, students are very well motivated by stimulating activities that are matched well to their knowledge of the subject, with just the right level of challenge to keep them absorbed in what they are doing. All students rise to the occasion and display very good attitudes when expectations are high and lesson content is exciting. In a Year 9 lesson with mesmerising accounts of the impact of war, for example, it was possible to hear a pin drop because all students were spellbound. However, in a few lessons, particularly where introductions were unexciting, some do not show their usual willingness to learn. On occasion, individual boys behaved badly and their interruptions spoiled lessons for others.
9. Students are generally happy to be at the school because "it's for my benefit and it's good fun" "as quite a lot of students come out with good grades". However, some say they particularly appreciate lessons where a more active style of learning is required. "Some of the lessons where all we do is write could be more fun". Most students enjoy school because of the chance to be with their friends, so are keen to come in everyday. Attendance has improved with sharper attention to absence patterns and identification of truancy, so absence levels are now lower than in the last reporting year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

10. Exclusion rates are relatively low given the size of the school and its willingness to work with all students, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The exclusion process is used appropriately.

*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	1118	53	0
White – Irish	5	1	0
White – any other White background	18	4	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	12	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	19	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	220	7	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	23	5	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	18	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	8	1	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	10	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	23	1	0

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

11. Students generally get on well with each other and with teachers, so instances of bullying and racism are rare. When they occur, the school acts promptly, with far more praise from parents and students for sorting out conflict swiftly than criticism of what went wrong or took too long. Good relationships develop among students from all background circumstances. In better assemblies and tutor periods, time is used well to nurture students' personal qualities by sharing different experiences and viewpoints thoughtfully. With notable exceptions, however, a sense of occasion and opportunities for meaningful reflection are missing from assemblies and tutor periods.
12. Positive encouragement by good-humoured staff boosts students' confidence to have a go, and prompts pride in personal achievement and genuine respect. Students appreciate praise for doing well and subtle approaches, such as a glance, to coax them to listen and behave well, rather than sanctions. "I think teachers should give you more credit for the things you do well as strongly as they punish you when you've done something wrong". Students feel that some staff have not achieved a fair balance between rewarding students for getting things right and using sanctions for comparatively minor shortcomings. "With the consequence system the school has become a less enjoyable place to learn". The new timings of the school day have improved lunch time behaviour, cut down litter and enabled the school canteen to establish a less frenetic routine than previously. At the same time, however, the introduction of a half-hour lunch break limits chances for students to socialise, or discuss work and worries with staff. "I think I would be better behaved if we had more time at

lunch”. Some students consider that their learning suffers. “I’m not getting along with the new school day because it isn’t broken up well enough and when it reaches last lesson I’m tired”.

Sixth Form

Attitudes and behaviour are very good and students’ attendance is good, which is a firm foundation for what they achieve. Their punctuality, though satisfactory, is more inconsistent. Students are mature, with well-developed personal qualities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are very keen to do well in the subjects they choose to study so work very hard, particularly in the best taught lessons
- Students have very good opportunities to develop personal qualities such as independence through active involvement in school life, although not all lessons reinforce these skills successfully

Commentary

13. Students are very keen and committed to success in the courses they have chosen. They do what is asked of them in lessons, although at times this is directed too much by teachers, without room for students to think for themselves and use initiative with their work. In the best lessons, in subjects such as history and psychology, where students are expected to be active, pose searching questions and work out solutions to problems, their enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity are clear. Opportunities have opened up for them to use initiative decisively through the relatively new house system and revamped school council because the school has high expectations of their contribution and leadership. It gave whole-hearted support to those who wanted to establish and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, which is now flourishing. Students thrive on chances to become involved in school life and extra-curricular activities such as the peer-mentoring workshop at a partner school on which they reported with striking enthusiasm.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the sixth form. The school provides a broad curriculum with good opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment at all stages. Students work in a safe environment. Arrangements for their welfare are satisfactory. They receive good guidance and support and this is very good in the sixth form. Links with parents are good. Links with other schools are very good and excellent in the sixth form.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 11. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is satisfactory, with some good and very good practice. The quality of assessing students’ work in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 11, although some incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are mishandled, particularly in Years 7 to 9
- Teaching is very well focused on gaining high examination results
- Some teaching is too dominated by the teacher and, as a result, students do not develop skills in independent learning enough
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in mainstream classes and withdrawal groups
- Assessment is inconsistently used to raise standards

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 165 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (1%)	35 (21%)	71 (44%)	48 (29%)	7 (4%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

14. Teaching is effective in Years 7 to 11. It is good in most subjects and very good in ICT and history. Teaching is satisfactory in modern foreign languages and music. Teaching focuses well on examination requirements. Good planning provides students with clear lesson objectives. Work is generally focused well on students' needs, providing appropriately challenging work for all students. Good setting arrangements enable work to be very carefully targeted. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a good range of appropriate resources to stimulate learning.
15. Teachers have a clear and successful focus on examination requirements and have high expectations of students' response. Some lessons challenge students to think for themselves. A good example occurred where Year 10 students worked in groups in personal, social and health education to devise, construct and test a bridge using mundane ingredients, included spaghetti and Sellotape. This produced effective collaboration, ingenuity, a good pace of work and considerable enjoyment. Some lessons, however, allow students too few opportunities to organise themselves and work independently. Learning is often heavily teacher-directed. This does not encourage students to develop their critical thinking skills enough, and challenge ideas they hear, and so develop independent learning and self-organisation. While learning towards short-term objectives is good, as indicated by examination performance, in Years 7 to 11, developing the skills required for purposeful learning, research and self-motivation in the sixth form are not made a priority early enough.
16. Students learn well and almost all have responsible attitudes to learning. They generally concentrate well and collaborate well with each other and the teachers. They respond well to questioning and participate willingly in discussion. However, in some lessons, mostly in Years 7 to 9, an undercurrent of disaffection is detectable, involving a few students. However, the effect is to impair the learning of the majority. The school has recognised this and introduced Behaviour for Learning, a system for remedying unsatisfactory behaviour. At present, the system is implemented inconsistently and is sometimes counterproductive. In a Year 9 science lesson, a student's name was placed on the board. When he re-offended, he was reminded that his name was on the board. The teacher did not proceed to the next stage and the boy continued to be a distraction.
17. Students with special educational needs are well taught, and very well taught in physical education and ICT. Teachers are very committed to ensuring that these students have the same opportunities as everyone else. Teachers know the students and their needs well, but at present targets refer to literacy and numeracy, and are not related specifically enough to the different subjects of the curriculum. Teaching in withdrawal groups is good. In the learning support unit, the staff work hard and sensitively to boost students' self-esteem, contributing significantly to their personal development.
18. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons.
19. The quality of assessment of students' work and the constructive use of data to improve learning are satisfactory. Assessment practice varies considerably between subjects, as does its impact on raising standards. In English and history, students know what National Curriculum or GCSE level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. Assessment is least effective in modern foreign languages, where it is not used to respond to individual needs or to indicate areas for improvement, and in music where it lacks consistency. Students report that they find the variety of systems confusing. Senior managers acknowledge this as an area for further development.

Sixth form

Teaching is very good in the sixth form. Students' work is assessed well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subjects
- Lessons are very well planned because teachers have a very thorough knowledge of examination requirements
- Students have very good attitudes to learning
- Assessment is good and leads to some good target setting

Commentary

20. Teaching was very good or excellent in forty per cent of lessons observed in the sixth form during the inspection. In no subject inspected was the quality of teaching and learning less than good. This constitutes very good teaching overall. Teachers know their students' academic needs well and plan for them accordingly. Relationships are good and a supportive ethos lends confidence to students' learning. In addition, students are keen to learn.
21. Teachers plan lessons very well. Time is well used and effective deadlines help to achieve a good pace of working. Resources are carefully chosen for relevance and interest, which stimulates students' learning well. The school's specialist status has already led to an expansion in the use of ICT as a teaching aid and means of research. Examples of good practice were seen across the curriculum. Some opportunities are missed at present, however, for using computers, for example in art and design and physical education.
22. In some of the focus subjects, such as geography and history, students work well independently and have developed good research skills. In some other subjects, such as English and art and design, independent learning skills and self-evaluation are not as well developed and not sufficiently encouraged. Sometimes, in lecture-style lessons, students were inclined to become passive because teachers did not check the extent of students' learning and understanding thoroughly enough. Overall, students take less responsibility for their learning than is ideally the case.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (10%)	16 (30%)	26 (50%)	5 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

23. The quality of assessing students' work is good. The small group sizes in the sixth form result in an increased awareness of the level at which the individual students are working. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are thoroughly acquainted with examination requirements. Teachers assess students' work thoroughly and have time to share this information with the students. One-to-one assistance is a common feature. Assessment in Years 12 and 13 is generally good and in some subject areas, such as in English, it is very good because it leads to target setting that focuses students' minds closely on what they must do to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. New initiatives are providing good opportunities for Year 7 students. Specialist college status has boosted ICT provision in Years 7 to 9. There is good enrichment for gifted and talented students in these years. Statutory requirements are not met for religious education and ICT in Years 10 and 11. The substandard accommodation has an impact on achievement in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide-ranging curriculum meets the needs of students well
- New innovations are having a positive impact on the quality of learning, especially in Year 7
- Statutory requirements are not met for a daily act of collective worship, nor for religious education and ICT in Years 10 and 11
- Unsatisfactory accommodation restricts achievement in some subjects, most seriously in physical education and music

Commentary

24. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. The recent conferment of specialist status has enhanced students' ICT skills and improved their learning in a number of other subjects such as geography and graphics. The new 'Opening Minds' project in Year 7 is helping students make very effective cross-curricular connections in their learning in history and religious education. Curriculum programmes are comprehensive and well-structured in virtually all subjects to enable skills and techniques to be reinforced and developed. The curriculum in history is particularly good.
25. A good new initiative is enabling higher-attaining students in modern languages in Year 9 to follow an accelerated GCSE course. In Years 10 and 11 similar opportunities are provided for the most able as they have the option of three separate sciences and statistics within mathematics. Although the increase in vocational courses has been modest there are now very successful courses in engineering and hair and beauty, drawing on the expertise of partner institutions. A GCSE course in dance has been introduced, and drama is available as an after-school option. There is an imaginative programme for citizenship, enabling students to tackle relevant issues in a sensitive way.
26. The few areas of weakness identified at the last inspection have not been solved. These relate to the act of corporate worship, provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the monitoring of ICT in Years 10 and 11. Plans are in hand to remedy the last two issues.
27. Considerable progress has been made in developing a programme for gifted and talented students in Years 7 to 9. They are well catered for across the curriculum and in specially organised events, such as a recent mathematics day. In addition, outside providers, such as the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, make a major input into their development.
28. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Since most have to take place after school due to the short lunch time, this limits the choice for the most enthusiastic participants. Nonetheless, many students enjoy their involvement in music and drama productions. The short lunch time also limits the time available for booster classes in academic subjects.
29. Assemblies are well organised and students benefit well from the opportunity to consider social and moral issues. In tutor periods, the citizenship programme provides some good opportunities for reflection. However, the school is not meeting the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship for all its students.
30. All subject areas in the school have suitably qualified teachers with good subject knowledge. There has been some staff instability but the school has worked hard to minimise the effects by replacing these teachers with well-qualified subject specialists.
31. The teachers are well supported by the associate staff. The school has appointed clerical staff to take over some of the administrative tasks, enabling the teachers to focus more closely on their teaching and learning. The school is in the process of appointing further clerical and administrative staff to oversee some management aspects of whole-school issues including the linking of ICT support to teaching.
32. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. In science too few laboratories are available. Deficiencies in the accommodation restrict students' achievement in art and design, music and physical education.

Sixth form

The curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of the students well. Students have access to a very wide range of academic courses. The development of provision for vocational courses has been slower. Useful, new enrichment courses in Year 12 are proving popular. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The students' common room is inadequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality, relevant and interesting academic courses result in very good achievement

- Excellent use is made of partnerships within the South West Coventry Federation of Schools to offer students a very flexible choice of courses
- The present limited range of vocational courses does not fully meet the needs of all students
- Good opportunities for enrichment now exist for Year 12 students
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory

Commentary

33. Students enter the sixth form in the expectation that most of them will move on to an academic course at university. The school offers a wide range of GCE courses which provide a very effective bridge between GCSE studies and higher education. The school together with its partners in the Federation is able to offer maximum flexibility of choice to students.
34. Curricular programmes in the 13 subjects which were the focus of the inspection are at least good and enable students to achieve very well. There is a wide offer of modern courses within English, mathematics and ICT, well-suited to students' needs. Schemes of work are often imaginative, such as in history and psychology. In the latter, students' achievement is promoted by very good opportunities to engage in practical investigation and interactive work to explore concepts more fully. Retention rates within the sixth form on the very popular academic courses are very good and students of subjects which are less in demand, such as German, can follow appropriate courses in a partner school. The number of vocational courses has increased slightly since the previous inspection but does not fully meet the needs of the ever-growing student body. This has been recognised and is becoming more of a priority for the new leadership team in planning for the future. Religious education is incorporated into the personal and social education programme, but not in sufficient detail to meet the needs of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
35. Induction and guidance programmes, supported by the on-site Connexions service, tutors and the new learning mentors are very good. Students themselves have opportunities to exert a positive influence on the life of the school through the school council and in working with junior years, for example, through peer mentoring with Year 8 students.
36. Sixth form students have access to the full range of extra-curricular activities available in the main school. In addition, the school has introduced a new range of enrichment courses for Year 12 students, including the European Computer Driving Licence Scheme, which are well-received by students.
37. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Some does not provide a stimulating environment for learning. Social facilities are inadequate.
38. The subjects offered in the sixth form have teams of well-qualified teachers with good subject knowledge. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good overall and very good in mathematics, ICT and psychology. The teachers are well supported by the effective associate staff especially in organisational matters within the South West Coventry Federation of Schools.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of all students is good, apart from poor toilet provision. Students feel monitored and supported well throughout their time in the school. The school provides very good opportunities for students' views to be heard and for them to be involved where feasible in decision-making in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective support, guidance and security ensure that students work in a safe environment
- New students are welcomed into the school very well and students settle into Year 7 very quickly
- Students receive very effective support and guidance when choosing courses and careers
- Good opportunities are provided for students to experience and contribute towards democracy and influence change, through the school council and year councils

- Some students do not feel adequately involved in decision-making because they receive insufficient feedback

Commentary

39. Most students behave responsibly and work in a healthy and secure environment because procedures for health and safety are effective. Equipment is checked each year, and a register kept. Arrangements for first aid and child protection are up to date and effective. Procedures are well known by staff, who are reminded of these at the start of each year. Students are well supervised outside lessons.
40. Care systems are very well managed and structured and the year system and the more recently constructed house system work in harmony to give support and opportunities for enrichment. Students are well known to staff and students appreciate the individual support they receive. Students can turn to a variety of sources of guidance, such as tutors, heads of year, heads of house and house staff, teacher assistants, support staff, the Connexions advisers and senior staff. Sixth form students take part in a programme to mentor and further support younger students; this is very well organised and sixth form students are trained well. The effectiveness of the use of tutor group time for administration, teaching citizenship and ensuring students' welfare varies, but it is satisfactory overall.

41. Induction arrangements are good and benefit from very strong links between the school and the main partner primary schools, which result in Year 7 students settling in happily, with particularly positive views of the school. "I like the fact that it's a big school with lots of room to play in at break and it is well organised".
42. Students' personal development and achievements are monitored and target setting days are arranged for form tutors, students and their parents to give joint consideration to track students' progress. These form an effective means of assessment. A systematic programme from Year 7 to Year 13 delivers very good careers advice. In Years 7 to 9, careers teaching is within the PSHE programme. This is well supported by visitors from the community and the world of work. In Years 10 and 11, very good support is provided by the Connexions service. Work experience is well organised, which helps students to make appropriate decisions, and improves their experience of work-related learning.
43. Senior students lead school council meetings. Students discuss issues significant to them and propose improvements. The school takes their proposals seriously and acts on them where possible. The ways in which the school consults students is imaginative and wide-ranging, although updates on progress are not shared clearly enough to ensure that all students feel involved in the outcomes. The school takes very careful steps to understand students' views through focused discussion with different year groups and members of the school council. They explore the advantages and disadvantages of doing things differently, for example through visits by school council members to other schools to investigate others' experiences of how to improve the conditions for learning. Although some students are unhappy with the way recent changes have been implemented, for example over the changes to the school day, the school's willingness to respond to their grievances is genuine. Few students recognise how well the school involved their representatives in the decision-making process. As a result, some feel that, "They need to listen to our views instead of telling us how things are going to be run". Students discuss matters of concern to them, such as the cleanliness and provision of toilet facilities, and the school through elected school and year councils.

Sixth form

The school makes very good provision for guiding students as they join, move through and leave the sixth form. Students have very good enrichment opportunities and responsibilities. Guidance on further study and career opportunities is very good. Students are very positive about their experience in the sixth form and the school considers their views very carefully.

Main strengths

- All prospective students are very well informed about what is offered in the sixth form because very good information for transition is available
- Students have very good opportunities to lead and take responsibility
- The school provides well-informed advice on what to study in the sixth form and beyond

Commentary

44. All students receive very good support and guidance in the sixth form. Well-informed, impartial advice on careers is available from the Connexions service. Students receive help with UCAS applications and have very good pastoral support, mentoring and help with target setting to assist their studies. Gifted and talented students receive particularly helpful advice and visits are organised for students to visit universities to help them with their choices.
45. Students are encouraged to have high expectations and generally feel well supported by sixth form tutors, subject teachers and the head of sixth form. They are responsible for setting personal targets and helped to achieve high results through individual support. Some good opportunities in tutorials and lessons are provided for them to express their views but this is inconsistent. Links with other schools are excellent. Links with other institutions, including universities and colleges, are very good.
46. Students are expected to lead the school. They have whole-school responsibilities, including leadership within the house system, and they have membership of the sixth form committee. In these roles, sixth formers contribute ideas as well as voicing and seeking opinions. They feel they are

listened to but are frustrated by the lack of space in social areas where they meet. The sixth form makes a very good contribution to the rest of the school as can be seen in the excellent peer mentoring system which benefits and supports younger students in various ways.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good and foster a productive partnership to ensure that students of all backgrounds do well at school. Links with the community, including wider educational programmes based on the school's specialist status, are very good. Links with other schools are very good and excellent at sixth form level. Improvement in this area of the school's work has been good.

Main strengths

- The school is outward-looking and makes particularly good use of links with partner schools and organisations to enrich opportunities for its students and sixth form students
- Arrangements to work with other schools to extend provision at sixth form level are outstanding
- The school works effectively to involve parents constructively in how well their children are doing and in helping to raise aspirations for future learning and training

Commentary

47. The school's reputation for academic success has not stifled innovation but led it to search for better ways of equipping all its students with skills they will need in their adult lives and a lifelong enthusiasm for learning. As a result, it has worked strenuously to build productive partnerships with schools locally and further afield to investigate how to ensure that all students, not just the gifted and talented, aim high and do as well as they can. The school is very willing to work with other organisations, including its area teaching and learning partners, to explore imaginative ways of improving students' learning, such as how to change the culture so achievement matters to everyone and low-level disruption is reduced.
48. A strong drive to do even better for students and sixth form students has resulted in active involvement with partner schools in projects such as the 'Opening Minds' programme. This is designed to help students think and learn more effectively and develop key competencies that will help them to solve problems and cope better as they go through life. Students and sixth form students benefit greatly from visits to partner schools, Warwick University, local employers and other institutions to participate in wider, thought-provoking experiences, including stimulating special workshops. The school's vibrant links with primary schools help to smooth the path from primary to secondary education, building very well on curriculum links in mathematics made possible by the school's specialist status. The school is the largest school-based provider of adult education in the city, which ensures that there is a very strong sense of a lively community of learners and of learning as a pleasure throughout life.
49. The tradition of the South West Coventry Federation of Schools that enables sixth forms to share resources and offer a curriculum that meets diverse needs is very well established. The school is at the hub of this and works very energetically with partner schools to facilitate a high quality experience for students of all backgrounds and capabilities. Working relationships among the schools are impressive, with a rare commitment to doing the best for all the area's sixth formers not just those who are 'home-grown'.
50. The school's partnership with parents is an active one, with high attendance at parents' meetings and events such as the Awards Evening because of shared commitment to success. Opportunities to talk to staff, including the head teacher, are good although parents do not always take full advantage of them, for instance, the Friday afternoon consultations. A warm welcome for all visitors, including parents and very colourful and informative newsletters, involve people well in school life. Parents generally think the school does a good job for their children. They have a few understandable concerns about communication and consultation because they are not clear enough about the reasons for recent changes to the school day and how to help their children do better. Reports are fairly clear

and give parents a good idea of how well their child is doing in each subject. However, they lack detail of what to do to improve because too many 'targets' urge students to 'try harder' but fail to specify exact steps to take to reach precise goals.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership. He makes very effective use of local and national initiatives to improve the school. Leadership by other key staff is effective. Management systems are good, although a number are still being developed. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher shows determination in driving forward his vision for the school
- The school improvement plan is concise, and shows very effective strategic thinking in linking together the many initiatives to create 'a learning school'
- The school is outward looking, and is keen to learn from others The school has developed effective self-evaluation procedures
- The current organisation of the school day has some negative effects on some students
- The effectiveness of the Behaviour for Learning system is reduced by a lack of consistency in its implementation
- Financial management is good and the principles of best value are effectively followed

Commentary

51. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school, based on his perceptive evaluation of its needs. He shows determination in working towards his vision of establishing a strong learning culture, where students accept considerable responsibility for their own learning. He has made very effective use of initiatives to improve the school, such as specialist school status. Collaboration with other schools and colleges is contributing well in further enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. The good management of the different initiatives ensures that developments are well-paced and clearly focused on improving provision and raising standards.
52. Members of the leadership team have appropriate roles and responsibilities, and work well together. They are committed to the headteacher's vision and work hard. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well, and monitor improvements keenly.
53. The school has developed very effective self-evaluation procedures. The Year Group Focus system is very thorough, using a mixture of lesson observation, looking at students' work, and interviewing staff and students. Analysis of student data provides teachers with very useful information. Subject leaders do not always make the best use of the data. Evaluation within subject departments using the Ofsted Framework is not consistently rigorous enough.
54. Leadership of subjects is good overall, with excellent leadership in history, and very good leadership in science, art, ICT, geography, and work-related learning. The main strength in leadership is commitment to the headteacher's vision, with a strong focus on raising standards through improving teaching and learning. Monitoring is not fully established to ensure consistency in implementing new policies, such as Behaviour for Learning. The variation in how staff use the new behaviour policy is limiting the effectiveness of the system.
55. The leadership and management of provision for special educational needs are good. The school is strongly committed to providing well for all of its students. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The co-ordinator provides very good information about individual needs and very good guidance. This enables teachers to plan successfully to meet the students' individual needs. The co-ordinator and the manager of the learning support unit and pastoral staff work effectively to include students with emotional and behaviour difficulties in mainstream classes.
56. The chair of the governing body is well informed and has a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She is very supportive of the headteacher and has made a significant contribution to the strategic planning of the school during the last two years. However, many of the governing body are new and their knowledge and expertise are still developing. All serve on an appropriate range of sub-committees but at the moment their contribution is variable. Although most have a good understanding of their role, they are not yet involved enough to make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school. Some statutory

requirements relating to religious education, collective worship and ICT are not being fulfilled. Overall, governors make a satisfactory contribution to running the school.

57. The headteacher’s vision permeates the school. For example, the school carries out exceptional consultation, so that the views of students are known and taken seriously. Other developments, such as the new house system and the school council, are proving successful in giving students broader experiences of learning than the school curriculum. The heads of year and tutor system provide further good support.
58. The recent change in the school day has improved behaviour at lunch time, reduced the amount of litter around the site and evened out the pressure on the limited dining facilities. This innovative solution has not been received favourably by all students and has disadvantages which the management is keen to tackle. The very good channels of communications throughout the school are enabling the leadership team to evaluate the impact of the changes in an effort to minimise the difficulties which the limited accommodation imposes on the school and its routines.
59. The induction of new teachers is good, and newly qualified teachers receive effective support. The school is rightly proud of its work with trainee teachers. Professional development is carefully planned and of very good quality. All staff benefit from the variety of activities on offer in the twilight training sessions. Performance management is in place, but at present it is not linked closely enough to the school’s priorities for development. The school has made good progress with implementing the workforce reforms, and has effective plans in place for the next steps.

Financial information

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	6423322
Total expenditure	5996714
Expenditure per student	3953

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	151364
Balance carried forward to the next	136708

60. The school finances are well managed. Budget planning is very thorough and well structured. At the start of each year, governors and the headteacher receive very full and reliable information based on a standstill in income. Using this, thorough budgetary plans are drawn up and approved by the whole governing body. Once agreed, the budget is well controlled through the finance committee of the governing body and the school’s able finance team. When funds are surplus to the initial plans, they are moved between budget headings, ensuring that the best use is made of all funding. This process is well monitored by the governors, headteacher, business manager and the LEA. Spending is carefully linked to the priorities of the school development plan. Good management has ensured that the recommendations of the auditor have been fully implemented. The school ensures best value well by making good use of Coventry City Council approved contractors. When, as in the case of the catering contract, the school has opted out of the local scheme, the practices of best value were fully met. Parents have been consulted in accordance with the LEA scheme. Very clear structures are implemented to control special grants. Committees deal scrupulously with the wide range of grants that the school receives. Each committee has to provide regular action plans which are closely monitored and updated.

Sixth form

Leadership of the sixth form is very good, and management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Present initiatives to improve the sixth form are appropriate and carefully researched
- Well organised links with federation schools benefit provision

Commentary

61. Current leadership has a very clear vision of developing the sixth form even further, to cater better for the changing intake of students. The leadership team has complementary qualities of experience and a desire to innovate. The team is committed to raising standards. Following a thorough review of provision, appropriate priorities for improvement have been adopted, and include the need to share successful practice across less successful departments, as well as the need to make better use of student data. The links with the other schools and colleges in the Federation are excellent, and allow students to be offered a wide range of courses. Good administrative systems underpin the very good guidance and support given to students. Finances are managed well, and as a result, the sixth form is cost effective.
62. Leadership of all the subject departments is good, with very good leadership in ICT, and art. Leadership in history is excellent. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the sixth form, and know current priorities for improvement. Governors have not ensured that the school meets its statutory requirement for providing religious education.

OTHER SPECIFIED AREAS

Work-related learning (WRL)

63. Provision for work-related learning is very good. WRL at the school is very effective as student achievement over the wide range of courses makes it much more likely that they will be able to get and keep a job. The gains since September in student knowledge and skills in WRL are very obvious. For example, Year 11 girls who attend a hair and beauty course at a local college one day per week gave very clear descriptions of the technical issues of nail and hair treatment, health and safety and customer care which they will encounter when working in salons. In areas such as attendance and effort, the students have responded very well to the high expectations which staff have of them. In an ASDAN key skills lesson on interview techniques, Year 10 boys grew manifestly in confidence. The teaching was very effective because the teacher and teaching assistant used humour and role play so that students drew their own conclusions about what is appropriate behaviour and reflected on their own strengths and weaknesses. The lesson significantly enhanced their personal development as their self-esteem rose and their anxiety in dealing face to face with strangers in positions of power reduced.
64. The leadership has secured a shared commitment to WRL in the school. Teachers have identified the aspects of subject schemes of work which support WRL. The co-ordination of the support from tutors, the very effective team of support staff and the provision made in subjects, such as art and design and ICT, are very good. The very good careers programme identifies from Year 9 onwards students who may need sensitive support and individualised programmes of WRL. The school has negotiated a wide range of positive training opportunities, including apprenticeships, through links and partnerships with local businesses and the local Federation of schools. The complex arrangements needed to operate the rich variety of courses and the very good programme of work experience are very well managed, and their effectiveness is rigorously monitored and evaluated in terms of the achievement made by the students.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results are consistently well above average
- Thorough assessment of students' work is making a significant contribution to the high standards
- The disruptive behaviour of a minority of boys in several lessons is restricting their progress and the progress of other students
- Many opportunities to enhance students' learning through the use of ICT in lessons and for research are missed

Commentary

Examination results

65. A rising trend in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE English results has been maintained since the last inspection. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average, with a high proportion of students reaching levels 6 and 7. GCSE results in English language and literature were well above the national average for grades A* to C, with a high proportion of students reaching A* and A grades. Girls perform significantly better than boys and this was particularly the case in the 2004 results.

Standards and achievement

66. Standards in lessons and over time reflect test and examination results. Students enter the school with above-average standards. Standards in Years 9 and 11 are well above average, and this represents good achievement. The achievement of higher-attaining students is very good. The achievement of a significant minority of boys is restricted by their uncooperative and immature behaviour in some lessons. Standards of speaking and listening are very good across the whole range of ability. The majority of students are confident speakers who are very responsive in oral work. By the end of Year 9, students reach good standards in reading and interpreting literary and non-literary texts. Towards the end of Year 11, appreciation and understanding of a writer's style is evident in their response to a range of genres, as students explore the use of language and complex issues. Work of a very high standard was produced when Year 11 students analysed 'The Crucible'. Students described in detail how the author developed character and used staging techniques for dramatic effect. Lower-attaining students use background information very well but there is little analysis of their knowledge of texts. Writing skills are good overall, with higher-attaining students reaching very good standards. Their work is well crafted, with a good range of sentence structures and a sophisticated vocabulary. This leads to some very good narrative writing. Students analyse and review a range of texts perceptively. In all years the achievement of students with special educational needs is good. Achievement is good

because of the quality of teaching and because students are increasingly aware of what is required of them to improve in all areas of their work in English.

Teaching and learning

67. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all year groups and good or very good in most lessons. In the good and very good lessons, planning is very thorough and a wide range of teaching strategies and resources is used very effectively. Students are often given responsibility for their own learning and respond well to this. Teachers' awareness of students' prior attainment is very good and they have appropriately challenging expectations. Marking that usually indicates specifically how students can improve is a significant factor in the good progress made by most students. Students' knowledge of examination requirements is also good. Opportunities, however, for providing a range of tasks that ensure appropriate learning by students of all levels of attainment are being missed in some lessons. Relationships between teachers and students are usually very good, and this results in a brisk pace of learning. Teachers set clear objectives for lessons, which usually begin with pacy starter activities which successfully engage students' interest. Overall, reviews at the end of lessons provide too little opportunity for students to demonstrate which aspects of their work they have mastered well and where further consolidation of learning is needed. Some good opportunities are provided for the use of ICT, but this is an area requiring further development. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, students underachieved because a significant minority of boys were immature and behaved badly. They disrupted the lessons and teachers' management of their behaviour had too little impact.

Leadership and management

68. The relatively-new leadership provides a clear vision for improving provision, by continually working to improve teaching and enabling students to take more responsibility for their own learning. Day-to-day management of the department is very effective. Effective monitoring ensures that teachers fulfil their responsibilities and sustain the often good and very good teaching. Assessment data is beginning to be used effectively to guide teaching and learning and to ensure that students are achieving well. Resources for the department are now satisfactory and there is an appropriate number of text books. Students in Years 7 to 9 are now familiar with the requirements of the examination syllabus. The school's system for managing the behaviour of some students is not yet applied consistently enough to eradicate the disruptive behaviour of some boys.

Literacy across the curriculum

69. Literacy skills are above average and are developed well across the curriculum. The school has invested a great deal of time and expertise in developing literacy skills across all subjects. A very good policy contains clear guidelines for staff, and the initiative has been very well led over the last three years. Staff have been involved in a good range of training, with a clear focus on the importance of literacy and on the ways to develop the relevant skills across subject areas. Students' speaking skills are well above average although the listening skills of some boys are below average. Many departments promote literacy well. In history and religious education, for example, teachers stress correct spelling and give students many opportunities to write extended pieces for different purposes, providing appropriate writing guidance. They consistently introduce key words reinforcing their meaning and correct usage. Very good opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills are provided. Question-and-answer sessions are well structured. Group- and paired-discussion are regularly used. This is not consistently the case in art, design technology and physical education. Good arrangements to improve the literacy skills of the lowest-attaining students and materials from the National Literacy Strategy are implemented with individual students in Year 7.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is satisfactory.

Students study one foreign language, either French or German in Years 7 to 9. All students study a language in Year 11. Languages are now optional in Year 10.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher-attaining students in Year 9 achieve well
- Examples of good teaching practice are not fully shared to ensure that all students, especially boys, learn consistently
- Assessment procedures are not robust enough to support students' learning

Commentary

Examination results

70. The results of teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 in 2003, were very high at both level 5 and level 6. In 2004, results were broadly similar. Inspection evidence indicated that these assessments were too high. Results in the GCSE French examinations in 2003 were above average but declined to average in 2004. Results in German were average in both years.

Standards and achievement

71. Higher-attaining students achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Most of the Year 9 students in this category, who are working on a new accelerated GCSE programme, are on course to achieve level 6 by the end of the year. Both boys and girls have a good command of present and past tenses and are beginning to meet standards in written work consistent with a grade C at GCSE. In German, their learning is assisted by the use of some good peer assessment techniques. Outside the top sets, students' progress is more modest with girls doing far better than boys. Independent learning skills are weaker as students have insufficient access to ICT and there is not enough emphasis on extended oral work. Standards in Year 10 are relatively higher than in Year 11 as GCSE is now an optional course. Again some peer assessment and helpful marking in German are helping students attain higher standards in writing. Overall in Year 11, higher-attaining students make steady progress. Other students achieve less well as lesson planning is not adapted fully to meet their needs and they lack confidence in oral work. The present sequence of coursework tasks is not tailored to ensure the systematic development of skills.

Teaching and learning

72. In the best lessons, a good range of activities is provided, purposefully structured to enable students to acquire and practise new language. Teaching is well paced and the work is modified to ensure all students can contribute effectively. Students respond well to more demanding teaching which engages them and helps them become more confident. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not use French or German enough and expectations are lower. 'Active learning' strategies are not structured to advance students' learning and are often viewed by boys as an amusing diversion. Marking is inconsistent in quality and generally does not provide enough advice to students. The new target-setting scheme is flawed, as it is not based on present performance.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership has resolved several of the curricular weaknesses detailed in the previous report. Setting arrangements have improved, as has the balance between French and German. Higher-attaining students in Year 9 are now effectively challenged and textbook resources are better. The uneven distribution of some lessons in the teaching week restricts lesson planning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have positive attitudes and work hard in response to the teachers' high expectations, encouragement and support
- Students are not always provided with practical learning experiences
- Standards and results at the end of year 11 are well above average because of the good teaching and teachers' good subject knowledge
- Marking and other feedback to students does not give them enough information on how to progress to the next level or grade
- The higher-attaining students have the opportunity to take the GCSE statistics examination and do very well

Commentary

Examination results

74. Results in the Year 9 tests, in 2004, were well above the national average and the average of similar schools. Boys' and girls' performance is broadly similar. GCSE results in 2004 were well above the national average. Girls performed better than boys. Results have consistently been well above national averages over the last four years. The higher-attaining students are additionally challenged by being entered for the statistics examination. In 2004, 74 students were entered for the examination and 72 of them gained grades A* to C.

Standards and achievement

75. Students' standards on entry are above average. Students achieve well in all areas of mathematics, with major strengths in handling data and algebra. In lessons, students recall facts and apply skills confidently. Good question-and-answer sessions at the start of lessons sharpen students' mental mathematics. Good investigational skills were seen in well-presented coursework. Teaching in all sets ensures students of different abilities do well, with no evidence of differences in the achievement of boys and girls. In response to the supportive teaching, students behave very well, concentrate and work hard. By the end of Year 9, students recognise and use the general equation for a straight line including those with negative gradients. They recognise from equations whether or not lines are parallel. By the end of Year 11, students use the trigonometric ratios to solve problems involving right-angled triangles.

Teaching and learning

76. The experience and expertise of the teachers are significant strengths that ensure rigour in the teaching and thorough preparation of students for examinations. In the best lessons, teachers' explanations, based on their good subject knowledge, capture students' interest and imagination. In a well-prepared lesson, for example, students learnt to draw lines of best fit on a scatter graph connecting foot size with height and to extrapolate from the graph the height of a mythical giant. Other strengths of teaching include the lively starter activities that involve students writing on individual whiteboards, and planned discussions between pairs of students that help them to understand ideas. Students are taught the skills of the subject well. However, some opportunities are missed for using practical experiences as the basis of learning. Students' work is marked diligently, but students receive too little specific information about what they need to do to progress from one grade or level to the next.

Leadership and management

77. The leadership of mathematics is strong, ensuring that the committed and mutually supportive team of teachers works purposefully to improve the opportunities offered to the students. Classrooms provide an attractive environment for learning and are located in suited accommodation that encourages close collaboration between teachers. Innovations, such as the introduction of the interactive whiteboards and the provision for ICT provide very good opportunities for further development of the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Students have very good mathematical skills, which they can apply and consolidate in other subjects. For example in religious education, students use graphs to create a visual representation of the number of followers in each world faith. In science, students perform data analysis, manipulate formulae and construct best fit graphs. GCSE physical education gets students to use graphs to consider the effect of exercise on heart rate. In ICT, the reinforcement of numeracy is written into the schemes of work. In Years 7 to 9, students are called on to practise their sequencing and to refine sequences in order to write sub-routines. Students have sufficient calculation and graphical skills for the needs of the subjects. These needs are being mapped across the curriculum in order to ensure progression and continuity. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attainment of students at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE is well above the national average
- The teaching and learning are good leading to good achievement in lessons
- The achievement of the higher-attaining students at GCSE is very good
- The attitudes of some lower-attaining students, especially boys, are unsatisfactory and this affects their achievement
- Some teachers use a limited range of teaching styles

Commentary

Examination results

79. Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well above the national average and have been rising since the last inspection. The standards at GCSE were well above the national average in 2004 and have risen significantly over the past few years. Higher-attaining students do particularly well at GCSE and many gain the highest grades. Boys' and girls' results are similar.

Standards and achievement

80. Students' standards on entry to the school are above the national average and they achieve well, especially at GCSE. Standards of work seen in lessons in Years 9 and 11 were well above the national average. In Year 9, the students were confident to discuss the relative reaction rates of metals in relation to the periodic table. Year 11 students effectively linked different scientific concepts, for example the structure of the heart with the need for oxygen in respiration in other cells. The achievement of the higher-attaining students is very good, due in part to their very good attitudes in lessons. The achievement of students, with special educational needs is good. Teachers are fully aware of each student's needs and give them good support in lessons with suitable extra resources. The achievement of some students, especially lower-attaining boys, is not as good due to their lack of involvement in lessons.

Teaching and learning

81. Teachers are well qualified and work very well as a team. The most effective teaching was seen with higher-attaining students in Years 10 and 11. These students are fully engaged in the lessons and have very good attitudes to learning. In the most successful lessons, the planning is very good and includes a wide range of short, focused activities that give the lesson good pace. The teachers have very good classroom control and very high expectations. These successful lessons also end with the teacher using different methods of questioning in order to gauge how well the students had learnt. In the less successful lessons, the pace is slower with little variation in activities, with the result that not all students are fully occupied. The students do not participate fully and make less progress in the lesson. Some teachers do not use a sufficiently wide range of teaching styles and their lessons are mainly centred on their teaching. In some lessons, there is insufficient practical work or use of computers to motivate the students. This leads to some underachievement.

Leadership and management

82. The department has introduced effective strategies on marking, assessment and evaluation, and has devised a very relevant and focused development plan. There is a shared vision and desire to raise expectations and standards even higher. Data is now kept centrally and well used to track the progress of individual students and to evaluate effectiveness of the teaching and learning. A very effective team of technicians supports the teachers very well. Standards have risen since the last inspection, the accommodation is better and the assessment procedures are more useful. Accommodation has improved but there are still insufficient laboratories, resulting in too many lessons being held in non-specialist rooms. The preparation rooms are inadequate in size and in the facilities they offer. Continuing health and safety issues include the security of storage and water ingress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is good in Years 7 to 9 and for students studying ICT as a separate subject in Years 10 to 11. Provision is unsatisfactory for those students in Years 10 and 11 who do not take a GCSE course in ICT.

	Year 9	Year 11	Year 11 non-examination
Standards	Above average	Above average	Below expectation
Achievement	Very good	Very good	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good	N/A

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and attitudes to work
- The teachers have a very good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well, using innovative methods to motivate students
- Good assessment procedures ensure that students know what they must do to improve
- A lack of effective technical support for the ICT systems means that students cannot always complete tasks

Commentary

Examination results

83. The first cohort of Year 11 students completed the applied GCSE course in 2004. This course was more popular with boys than girls, but girls performed better than boys.

Standards and achievement

84. Students enter the school with average standards in ICT. Standards seen in lessons in Years 7 to 11 were above average. In Year 7, students evaluate their own presentations and adapt them for different audiences. By Year 9, they use spreadsheets with confidence. They explore and refine sequences to control a car park barrier, showing efficiency in the framing of instructions, using subroutines. Year 10 students make good use of animation in a PowerPoint presentation and extract relevant information from web sites to support their presentations. In Year 11, students use complex formulae in spreadsheets and have a clear understanding of the effects of ICT in society. Good use is made of data analysis, for example by incorporating graphs and charts into word-processed documents. In their coursework students use screen dumps to demonstrate a clear understanding of the advanced features of the software they use and they are able to test and evaluate systems thoroughly.

Teaching and learning

85. All teachers make it clear to students that they have high expectations for good behaviour. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, are confident in their presentation and make effective use of brisk starter activities to focus learning. Relationships between teachers and students are good. Teachers support students well, and use humour and praise to encourage them to develop their ideas. Students of all abilities are supported well, which helps them to achieve well. Teachers use innovative methods to interest students. In one lesson, students were encouraged to make as much noise as possible to see the effect of audio sensors. The playback created a 'wow' factor. This activity, executed in a very controlled manner, promoted a high degree of motivation leading to very good learning. Teachers use full sessions at the end of lessons well to reinforce lesson objectives. Students are able to assess their own work and that of others. They receive clear guidance on what is needed to improve the standard of their written work. Although there are very good resources in the ICT department, too little technical support for some equipment impairs students' learning. ICT is used in some subject areas to support learning but there is no methodical delivery of all areas of the ICT curriculum in Years 10 and 11 through other subjects. As a result the curriculum for students not following a discrete ICT is unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

86. Comprehensive documentation guides the department and good practice is effectively shared. Teaching and learning are monitored to assist in increasing effectiveness. Newly qualified and trainee teachers are well supported. The head of department has clear vision for developing the subject, and is a very good role model, motivating staff. The leadership is aware that the provision of ICT for all students in Years 10 and 11 is an area of development requiring urgent attention.

The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. Students' competence in using ICT is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The use of ICT has increased significantly since the last inspection. Its use is particularly well developed in science and geography. All students use data logging in science experiments and make good use of data handling software in geography. In modern foreign languages, ICT is used well to develop language skills. Computers are used well in design and technology and mathematics. The

school uses video-conferencing as part of enrichment in Years 7 to 11. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in many teaching rooms and are used effectively, particularly in mathematics, modern foreign languages and geography. In art and design, accommodation is cramped, leaving no room for computers. The ICT department is helping the school to make good progress as a mathematics and computing college. All staff now have a lap top computer to assist their planning, and, overall, the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is satisfactory.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is very good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have established geography as a popular and successful subject
- GCSE results are consistently well above average
- Good teaching enables students of all attainment levels to achieve well
- Students in Year 9 do not have an opportunity for off-site fieldwork

Commentary

Examination results

88. GCSE results were well above average in 2003, and very high in 2004.

Standards and achievement

89. Students enter Year 7 with average attainment. They achieve well in developing mapping and investigative skills and a sound knowledge of places and features. By the end of Year 9, the oral and written work of the majority of students demonstrates a good understanding of geographical ideas. They use vocabulary confidently and accurately in explaining geographical patterns and processes, such as tectonic activity. The work of lower-attaining students is less detailed and tends to be descriptive. Students in Year 11 apply and extend their knowledge through case studies and show very good enquiry and ICT skills. They produce high quality coursework. Those working at the higher levels successfully combine information from a range of sources to investigate and reach conclusions about key issues, for example, relating to coastal management. Students of lower attainment have good presentational techniques but show less understanding of geographical ideas.

Teaching and learning

90. Teaching is never less than good and has many very good features. Teachers know the capabilities and needs of their students very well and plan lessons which provide challenge and offer support at all levels. Students with special educational needs are particularly well supported both by suitable materials and individual attention from teachers and teaching assistants. A clear focus is maintained on 'learning by doing'. Good examples were: Year 7 students taking measurements of temperature and wind speed in the school grounds, or Year 9 students designing and making models of earthquake-proof buildings. This is especially effective in engaging the attention of boys, whose attainment exceeds expectations. ICT is used very effectively as a visual focus. Three-dimensional animation is used very effectively to help Year 11 students to understand the processes involved in the formation and passage of a depression. The great majority of students

respond with very positive attitudes, enthusiasm and hard work. A small number, however, are not engaged by even the most stimulating teaching and remain largely passive.

Leadership and management

91. The strength of geography is evident in rising standards, the rapidly increasing numbers who opt for GCSE and the enjoyment students of all abilities gain from the subject. This is a testament to the vision and determination of leadership and the quality of management. Very imaginative planning focuses on raising achievement through more variety in teaching style, and through developing the curriculum to provide more opportunities for independent research and the use of ICT. Very good teamwork allows the sharing of ideas, resources and good practice, which, together with informal observation and discussion, have a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Delegation encourages all members of the department to lead on their areas of expertise. Extensive analysis of performance data is used as a basis for devising the department's development plan, which is evaluated regularly and rigorously and has led to a coherent programme of professional development. Results have improved since the previous inspection, the proportion of good teaching is much higher, and opportunities for ICT have been increased.

History

Provision in history is very good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently high
- Staff are very able historians; they have very good relationships with students and support them very well
- Subject leadership is excellent and all aspects of learning are very well managed, especially literacy, assessment and preparation for examinations
- The behaviour and attitude of some students leads to underachievement

Commentary

Examination results

92. GCSE examination results were very high in 2003 and 2004, as they had been since 2001.

Standards and achievement

93. Current standards in Year 9 are above average. Standards in Year 11 are well above average and show a similar pattern of improvement to past years. Although standards can vary in individual lessons, the long-term management of learning and the very constructive use of assessment have a significant impact on students' achievement. Students enter the school with average standards in history, and they consistently do much better than would be expected at GCSE. They are very well prepared for answering past examination questions. The evaluation of sources of evidence is a particular strength.

Teaching and learning

94. Students learn very well in all years because teachers plan well, with very good understanding of recent developments in the subject. Teachers know, and meet most students' needs, but work is not sufficiently adapted for students with special educational needs. Learning is very good overall because teachers' expectations are consistently high and work is relevant and interesting. Teachers'

knowledge of history and of examination technique is particularly strong. The best teaching involves students in high quality discussion and decision-making, for example when Year 8 considered whether to execute King Charles 1. Year 9 were engrossed by an excellent and memorable lesson given by an actor in role as a corporal from the ‘Great War’ which brought the graphic reality of trench warfare into their classroom. Most lessons in Years 7 to 9 are at least good and some are excellent, but in Years 8 and 9 the learning of a small minority of boys is sometimes unsatisfactory due to immature attitudes and chatty behaviour. Year 11 students learn well because they are very well motivated and respond well to teachers’ very effective mixture of warmth and rigour, which creates a very productive long term learning relationship.

Leadership and management

95. The impact of current staffing difficulties has been minimised because teachers’ work as a committed team and share a vision for continual improvement. The department has worked with universities, trained teachers and led a number of innovations both in and outside the school. It is strong at self-review, and so is clear on what to do next. Some issues can still, however, be improved. For example, teachers do not consistently use the full range of recent developments in active teaching techniques to involve and motivate students as much as possible. Although teachers’ skill levels are good, ICT cannot be used as frequently in lessons as good practice requires, because of a lack of equipment. Improved results are amongst the good developments since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11 - GCSE	Non - GCSE
Standards	Above average	Well above average	No evidence
Achievements	Good	Good	No evidence
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good	No evidence

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for students non-GCSE students in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory, and fails to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus
- 2004 GCSE results were well above the national average and the students achieved well
- Students learn well because they are challenged and interested by good teaching
- Students work hard in their lessons and enjoy finding out about the beliefs and practices of the major world faith groups

Commentary

Examination results

96. GCSE results in 2003 and 2004 were well above average.

Standards and achievement

97. Student’s standards on entry to Year 7 are average. Standards in Year 9 at present are above average and students are achieving well. Standards of work for students in Years 10 and 11 GCSE classes are well above average. Their achievement overall is good.

Teaching and learning

98. The teachers use skilled questioning techniques well and give very frank answers to students’ questions. This helps students to challenge ideas and think about major questions about life. Where the teaching builds upon the students’ ideas, learning is very good as was seen in a Year 8

lesson on fact, opinion and belief. The pace of work in a very good GCSE lesson enabled students to revise their knowledge and understanding of the impact of the Vedas on Hinduism today very well. Students also learn well because teachers challenge them to consider their own prejudices and reactions to religious practices, teachings and events. In the more effective lessons, it is not sufficient to express views, students have to justify and give examples to support their ideas. In this way, they are able to draw conclusions well. This particularly challenges the gifted students, who generally make very good progress in their GCSE work and achieve highly. Where tasks are written they are well marked, showing students how they can improve their work. This clearly helps their progress. Where lessons are less challenging, teaching does not interest students sufficiently. This resulted in a small amount of low level disruptive behaviour in several lessons. It was particularly noticeable when students were asked to copy notes rather than being actively involved in learning. Teachers inform students about their level of work, help them set targets and good assessment worksheets have been developed to support this process at the end of each module.

Leadership and management

99. The acting head of department and her team have clear ideas for developing the department and plans are detailed well. All teachers are enthusiastic and committed. In Year 7, the ‘opening minds initiative’ with its themed approach across several subjects is innovative. The programme for Years 8 and 9 students is good. All students have good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, cultural and social skills. The GCSE course provides good opportunities to explore Christian and Hindu beliefs and practices. It links well to the good GCE A-level course. Despite a well planned programme for non-GCSE students, the school’s recent staffing difficulties have stopped its full delivery. Consequently, the school fails to meet the statutory requirements for Year 10 students outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. There was a similar issue at the time of the previous inspection. The school is however providing some core religious education for Year 11 students. The very good results over the last three years and improved teaching and learning are positive improvements. However, the school has still not resolved the key issue of the Year 10 core students’ entitlement to religious education.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Design and technology comprises resistant materials, graphic products, food technology, textiles, electronics and systems and control and health and social care.

Provision in design and technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students reach high standards at the end of Year 11 because of good teaching and learning
- Results in textiles, graphic products and food technology are very high
- ICT is used well to promote teaching and learning
- Good extra-curricular opportunities exist for students to work with design and engineering professionals
- Teachers do not plan lessons to match the expectations of the National Curriculum attainment target levels sufficiently

Commentary

Examination results

100. Results were well above average in 2003 and higher in 2004. Results were best in textiles, graphic products and food; results in resistant materials, electronics and health and social care were above average.

Standards and achievement

101. Students enter the school with average skills and achieve well. They make good gains in their design-and-making skills in resistant materials, textiles, graphics and in food technology. Students enjoy the practical nature of the subjects, in working with wood and metal, fabrics and in food products. They design electronic circuits and test these by programme simulations and record their work, using PowerPoint presentations. Across the department, students acquire a good knowledge of the properties of materials, tools and equipment and can develop a design brief from inception to completion, as demonstrated by their work folders. Girls generally achieve better than boys and have better developed presentation skills. Standards in Year 11 are above average, and well above average in textiles, food technology and graphics. Students' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is generally better in the practical than in the theoretical aspects of the subject. Many design folders show a good standard of presentation and appropriately chart the development of design ideas, product refinement and evaluation. Students use ICT well as a designing and making tool as well as for presenting data. This is a particular strength in food technology.

Teaching and learning

102. Teaching is well matched to the needs of courses and examinations. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, promote high expectations of work and conduct and know their students well. They employ a stimulating range of teaching methods. Relationships between students and teachers are good and encourage effective learning. In the best lessons, students work collaboratively and independently to very good effect. ICT is used very well, including the use of PowerPoint presentations and computer-aided design programmes. Teachers promote the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills soundly in most lessons. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, learning was unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory management of behaviour. The learning of a few disaffected students is unsatisfactory when they are taught by temporary staff. Teachers give students useful individual feedback. This is more effective in Years 10 and 11 because students are clearer about the criteria for marking.

Leadership and management

103. In recent years the department has suffered from some long-term staff absences and is currently led by an acting head of department. The staff work well together and are starting to share more closely good practice across the department. A sound improvement plan identifies appropriate development needs. The curriculum is very broad and offers good access to all the design and technology subjects. Resources are very well organised. Internet-based teaching and learning opportunities and assessment resources are used effectively, particularly in electronics, to improve students' access to learning outside the school day. The effective work of the technicians is an aid to good learning. Extra-curricular opportunities are worthwhile, despite the short and staggered lunch period. The department has a high profile through participation in external projects with partner schools. Currently it is working with the National Grid and Transco in a design project in electrical and electronics engineering and is designated a curriculum support school by **DATA**. The quality of display in the department is very good and promotes high expectations. The accommodation is good. Standards have risen and the range of activities has increased since the last report.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because teachers use their very good subject knowledge to structure learning
- Students do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others, or to work independently
- Students do not use computers enough to assist in the creative process
- Very good leadership is clearly focused on raising standards
- The superb display of art work around the school inspires students and gives art a high profile

Commentary

Examination results

104. The 2003 GCSE examination results in art and design were very high. Boys performed slightly better than girls. Results in 2004 were similarly very high. Students performed better in art than their other subjects, both within the school and when compared to other schools.

Standards and achievement

105. Standards are average when students enter the school. Students achieve well in learning a variety of techniques. For example, they created interesting, repeating patterns, from their observational drawings of fruit and vegetables. Students have below-average knowledge about other artists. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students, because of the good support they receive from teachers. Standards in Year 11 are well above average, with little difference between boys and girls. Students achieve highly in developing confidence with a wide range of media, including painting on large-scale canvas. Students' observational drawings of still life are accurate, and their composition is well balanced. Students use art vocabulary to talk about their work, and in their written annotations. They make links with the work of other artists, but this tends to be related to technique. Higher-attaining students make more complex links between artists' meanings and their own. Students do not experiment enough or take risks with new ideas, and this reduces their achievement. Their work folders contain beautifully presented work, but students do not retain their preparatory work to show how they have developed their ideas. This reduces the effectiveness of self-evaluation as a means of developing students' understanding of the stages in the creative process and applying similar procedures in subsequent work.

Teaching and learning

106. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations of students, which results in students working hard and striving to produce work of a high standard. Attitudes and behaviour in most lessons are good. In Years 7 to 9, work is tightly structured and leads to students developing confidence with a wide range of techniques. In a Year 9 lesson, students used hessian thread and newspaper to create accurate three-dimensional effects in sea life drawings. Although teachers make good use of artists' work to

stimulate students, this tends to focus on technique, and students do not learn about the context and meaning. In Years 10 and 11, students have more freedom to select areas of interest. Teaching remains very structured. Whilst this prepares students very well for the examination, students are not given enough opportunities for independent learning. Teachers focus closely on developing students' skills in media studies, they give intensive one-to-one support which is well matched to students' individual needs, but this tends to make students very teacher-reliant. This leads to a lack of exploration, and personal discovery. Students have few opportunities to share and evaluate their work with others.

Leadership and management

107. Strong leadership is committed to achieving high standards. The department is very well organised and the teachers work well as a team. Professional development is well used to improve teaching and learning. The very good range of enrichment opportunities enhances students' experience. These range from success with local and national competitions to gallery visits. Students' art is celebrated in stimulating displays throughout the school, greatly enhancing the environment and the profile of art in the school. Teacher assessment and marking are not consistent across the department. Teaching and learning are not formally monitored, and this leads to inconsistencies of practice, as that assessment. Resources are good, but the lack of computers leads to students in Years 7 to 9 not experiencing full National Curriculum requirements. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The art rooms are spread out and this limits the sharing of ideas. As a result of the timetable arrangements some students have very long or split lessons and this has an adverse impact on achievement. Results have risen since the last inspection.

Music

Provision in music is unsatisfactory.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently above the national average
- Poor accommodation acts as a barrier to good achievement and undermines standards
- Provision of instrumental tuition is good
- Resources are unsatisfactory, particularly for music technology and ICT
- Teachers' musical knowledge and skills are good
- Assessment methods lack clarity and do not result in constructive support for students

Commentary

Examination results

108. GCSE results were well above the national average in 2003 and 2004, as they have been for some years.

Standards and achievement

109. Students enter the school with standards below national expectations. Teacher assessments indicate that by the end of Year 9 standards have risen slightly but remain below national expectations. Students perform from simple notations and maintain their own part in ensembles, but performances

lack fluency. Students understand what the different musical elements are and can talk about them. However, most produce only basic compositions. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because poor accommodation restricts access to the full music curriculum. Insufficient space prevents students from work effectively in groups, and noise from the adjoining classroom makes listening and concentration very difficult. Limited resources for music technology mean that students do not use ICT to create their own music. Standards are above average in Year 11. Some students improvise fluently and this enables them to compose in a consistent style that reflects the characteristics of their chosen instruments well. Students' performing is above average and in most cases well developed through participation in school ensembles. Their knowledge of eras and styles in music is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

110. Students received good support as they work individually or in groups. They are encouraged to make the best use of their musical skills and interests. In Year 10, however, they were given insufficient opportunities to relate theoretical learning to real musical experiences. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 ranges from unsatisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, lessons include a good range of musical activities and students are clear about what is expected of them. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by poor management of time and resources. A general weakness in teaching is that it does not make clear to students what they are expected to achieve when working in groups. This results in group work being less effective than it might be.

Leadership and management

111. The leadership has moved quickly to deal with the issues raised in a recent LEA review, through an effective action plan. However, the department has yet to develop clear and consistent assessment systems. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen and the school has not been enabled to improve the poor accommodation. Instrumental teaching is of a high standard and well organised. It makes a significant contribution to the cultural development of participating students. The department supports a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for students who are in the early stages of learning an instrument. The department is currently involved in a major production of the musical 'Grease'. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen and deficiencies in the accommodation remain.

Dance

112. Dance was sampled. Teaching was very good in a Year 11 GCSE class seen. The teacher used a PowerPoint presentation to focus students' concentration on essential technical vocabulary and definitions. Students' enthusiasm and general good attitudes enhanced their achievement. The course is supported by very good extra-curricular opportunities, some led by external coaches who improve performance and enhance students' work in productions.

Drama

113. Drama was sampled. It is taught through English in Years 7 and 9, and as a separate subject in Year 8. It is also a GCSE subject. Results in 2003 were very high. In a lesson observed, Year 11 students showed considerable empathy in their re-creation of characters based on a play by Alan Bennett. They demonstrated very good speaking and listening skills. Standards were above average and teaching and learning were very good. Very good opportunities are provided for students to take part in extra-curricular drama activities and regular school productions, including a forthcoming production of 'Grease'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is good.

	Year 9	Year 11 GCSE	Year 11 non-examination
Standards	Above average	Above average	Well above average

Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is helping all students to learn and achieve well and leads to generally high standards in examination groups, although a few students underachieve
- Students' good attitudes contribute positively to learning and achievement
- Extra-curricular activities give very good opportunities for students to extend their learning and experience
- Timetabling issues affect the distribution of lessons and the unsatisfactory use of limited facilities. This impacts on what can be taught and achieved
- Evaluations and assessments do not give enough information to guide improvement

Commentary

Examination results

114. GCSE results were well above average in both 2003 and 2004. Girls do better than boys although more boys are entered on the course.

Standards and achievement

115. Students have average skills in games activities when they enter the school. They have varying levels of prior experience and the impact of the school sports coordination programme has not yet been felt in local primary schools. Standards are above average in Year 9 and students are achieving well from their starting points in the school. By the end of Year 11, standards for those following the core curriculum course are well above average. Achievement is good overall. On the GCSE course, standards are above average and achievement is good when early work is compared with predicted grades. Work seen in Year 10 was better than in Year 11. A minority of boys in Year 11 underachieve in theory lessons compared with their performance in practical lessons, where they are more committed and have better attitudes. Standards achieved by talented team players are very high and some students perform at regional and national levels.

Teaching and learning

116. Students learn well because of teachers' effective questioning. Teachers challenge high-attaining students well, and break down tasks so that lower-attaining students learn well. Year 7 students, in the early stages of learning rugby execute accurate passes and tackle low down the body to upset balance, whilst being aware of safety within the rules. This good demonstration of consideration for others provided a good opportunity for personal development. Lessons are well planned, with high expectations of behaviour and performance. This leads to good learning. In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to view one another's work and to help each other. ICT and digital cameras are used too little by students for analysing one another's performances as a means of improvement. Talented students have some good opportunities to lead groups or assist with demonstrations. Assessment in the GCSE course is used effectively to help students to check their progress against targets, but marking does not always pinpoint areas for improvement or clearly relate to grades. Teachers usually review lessons to embed learning, but this is not done consistently.

Leadership and management

117. Good leadership and management have led to a strong focus on improving standards. Courses and activities are well chosen to meet students' needs. For example, in Year 10, students are offered swimming and ten-pin bowling using external facilities. Extra-curricular dance and trampolining have been introduced to increase students' aesthetic awareness. Good guidance for teachers is provided in detailed schemes of work. The timetable is unsatisfactory; it is constructed so that some students, in different year groups, have all their physical education lessons on one day and others have their lessons interrupted by lunchtime, which means that students wear kit over lunchtime, and warm-up sessions have to be repeated. This affects achievement as well as having implications for health. Accommodation, criticised in the previous report, is not used effectively. Sometimes the very limited indoor facilities lie idle, while at other times accommodation is over-stretched. Courts have

been refurbished since the previous report and a theory room has been allocated, but this is not well sited for linking theory and demonstration. The fields are affected by poor drainage. The boys' changing area is cramped and does not easily accommodate the large numbers timetabled. Standards are consistently above average and the school has achieved the Sportsmark award. Despite some unsatisfactory facilities, overall improvement since the previous report has been good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is good.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership and management give clear direction to the development of the subject
- Teaching and learning are well monitored which has had a good impact on their effectiveness
- Students' awareness of political processes and institutions is underdeveloped
- The course in Years 10 and 11 is very well planned and imaginative

Commentary

Standards and achievement

118. Year 7 students enter the school with knowledge, understanding and skills related to citizenship that are average. Standards in the present Year 9 are above average and students achieve well. In the present Year 11, standards remain above average. Students have good knowledge, understanding and active experience of citizenship. They achieve well.

Teaching and learning

119. Teachers use a wide range of activities to stimulate students' interest and ensure a positive response. Students usually work hard and the majority behave well. In the most effective tutorials and lessons, teachers create a very positive learning environment by using their very good subject knowledge to shape interesting tasks that challenge the students to think for themselves. Students express their ideas very well orally and consider the ideas of others maturely, as was seen in a debate on child labour in the Third World. Teachers deal well with sensitive issues and students are confident to discuss openly what they think. Good teaching develops students' skills in discussion. This was particularly seen in Year 10 work on the effects of violence in films and television, where students expressed their reasoned views clearly and listened thoughtfully to those of others. Teachers generally make good use of their individual skills to develop students' interest in the well planned work. However, the quality of tutorial sessions is very dependent on the tutors preparing well and having good command of topics. Lack of preparation in some tutorials led to unsatisfactory learning, as students were not fully involved. Unsatisfactory behaviour in a few tutorials and lessons affected the learning adversely. Sound assessment of work is developing. Reports to parents on students' standards and progress in the subject at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

120. The schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 adequately cover the major areas required. The range of the programme for students in Years 10 and 11 is very good. The organisation and monitoring of the

work of the tutor team are good. All students are given good opportunity to learn about rights and responsibilities within society and actively take part in citizenship through the school council, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and work experience. The programme makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Good planning offsets the time constraints that limit the time available for citizenship in Years 7 to 9. Modules for Years 10 and 11 are very well designed for the needs of young adult citizens. However, some tutors do not adapt modules to the needs of their form group, in order to make the best use of them. Good plans are in place to develop further the political aspects of the subject. The 'shadow a councillor day' scheme has already had a very positive impact on some students' understanding of local government. Citizenship makes a good contribution to the community ethos of the school.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

121. Provision for PSHE is good. The teaching of PSHE in tutorial time effectively explores key issues, such as bullying, smoking, drugs and crime. This helps them have a better understanding of many everyday life situations. Provision in Years 10 and 11 lessons is often very good, because a team of teachers opts to lead the very well planned and diverse activities. Students explore a wide range of issues that directly affect their lives. All students have good access to activities and these develop them well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. The good relationships between students and teachers, who know them well, enable open and frank discussions to take place. This was a particularly strong feature of a very well taught sex education lesson in Year 10. Students with special educational needs and those whose principal language is not English take a full part in lessons. They contribute well orally and are given very good support by fellow students. In a small proportion of tutorial periods observed, teachers had not prepared work sufficiently well. Time was then wasted and unsatisfactory behaviour by a few students marred the learning opportunities of the class.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	20	100	99	57	50	87	88
Biology	22	100	96	36	39	77	79
Business Studies	10	100	99	25	37	70	80
Business (AVCE)	7	90	65	90	15	95	60
Chemistry	13	100	98	46	49	85	85
Dance	1	100	99	0	45	80	84
Drama	4	100	99	100	40	115	84
Economics	6	100	99	33	52	83	88
English Language / Literature	24	100	99	50	36	90	81
English Literature	20	100	99	71	47	102	87
French	9	100	99	67	52	91	88
Design and Technology	22	100	98	39	35	84	78
Geography	24	100	99	29	45	76	84
History	25	100	99	50	45	88	85
Information Technology (AVCE)	21	100	96	57	25	93	70
Information Technology (VQ)	24	96	78	54	23	90	65
Mathematics	40	100	97	55	56	94	89
Media Studies (AVCE)	15	100	72	60	29	96	n/a
Music	5	100	99	60	39	96	81
Physics	19	100	97	44	45	81	82
Psychology	39	100	97	59	43	98	82
Religious Studies	8	100	99	88	47	103	86
Sports Studies	16	100	98	31	31	76	75

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature was the focus subject. An English language and literature lesson was sampled in Year 13. Students worked together well in groups and achieved well when analysing the language used to describe chief characters in Othello. They showed a good understanding of characterisation and symbolism and confidently reported their findings to the class. Teaching and learning were good. In a good Year 12 English language lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge, planning and resources engaged the students well. In pairs, they analysed and compared the language and grammar used in three texts and showed a good grasp of technicalities. Teaching, learning and achievement were good.

English literature

Provision in English literature is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The assessment of students' work and the support and guidance they receive from teachers are very constructive
- Students discuss the texts studied with considerable skill and understanding
- Teachers readily share their expertise and enthusiasm and this strongly motivates students
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not systematic enough and the best teaching practice is insufficiently shared
- Opportunities for independent learning through the use of paired and small group discussions are insufficient

Commentary

Examination results

122. All students have passed at A-level since 2000 and the numbers of A and B grades increased significantly between 2000 and 2003. In 2003 results were well above the national average but fell to well below average in 2004. Many more girls than boys opt to study the subject. Boys generally perform as well as girls.

Standards and achievement

123. Current standards are higher than those indicated by the 2004 A-level results. High numbers of students opt for English Literature and almost all continue their studies in Year 13. Students begin the course with GCSE results that are well above the national average. Their achievement, relative to their prior attainment, is good. They work with enjoyment and contribute positively in a wide range of discussion-based activities. Students' well-developed speaking and listening skills enable them to respond to texts critically and with appreciation. Their skills in selecting apt quotations and textual references are well developed. One class made perceptive comparisons between texts, contrasting the writers' use of colour and imagery in two novels in preparation for a coursework assignment. Current standards in the subject are above average.

Teaching and learning

124. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of assessment criteria and examination technique. They communicate their enthusiasm well to students. This leads to purposeful and well-motivated learning. An excellent lesson featured well-structured opportunities for paired and small group discussions of 'The Tempest', which helped students to develop a very good understanding of the play. Later, they contributed confidently to a whole-class analysis of stagecraft and characterisation. Teachers provide good support materials to structure students' preparation for seminar-based learning. As a result, students prepare well for these lessons, which enabled them, for example, to analyse perceptively the characterisation of Mr Collins in 'Pride and Prejudice'. Students demonstrate well-developed note-making skills to assist their learning and revision. Teachers assess written work thoroughly and provide clear guidance and targets for improvement. Teachers are aware of the need to develop a wider range of independent learning styles to extend and consolidate students' achievements. Students receive good individual and whole-class

support from their teachers. Too few opportunities are provided, however, for them to review their learning at the end of lessons as a means of confirming their understanding.

Leadership and management

125. The good leadership has led to effective teamwork by well-qualified staff. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching, learning and the quality of provision. The curriculum is carefully planned to cater for students' needs and to stimulate their interest. Theatre visits provide good opportunities for students to see texts in performance. Progress has been good since the last inspection in terms of the high numbers choosing the subject as well as the increased proportions of students attaining A and B grades. Resources are good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

126. Students join the sixth form with above average standards in language skills. These are developed well throughout Years 12 and 13. Teachers emphasise the correct use of subject-specific language, which is well taught and practised across all subjects. Note-taking and essay-writing skills are good. Where discussion and debate are regularly used, as in English, geography and history, students develop their language particularly well.

French

Provision in French is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons include very good use of French by the teacher
- Students are well motivated and use sophisticated language when exchanging ideas in French
- The quality of assessment is inconsistent and students are given insufficient opportunities to have extended writing assessed
- Students' achievement is increased by their very good use of ICT
- Analysis of examination results is not thorough enough to provide a firm basis for planning future developments in teaching and learning

Commentary

Examination results

127. A-level results in 2003 were average. The performance of girls was above average. A pass rate of 100 per cent at A-level has been maintained for the last three years. The drop out rate after Year 12, at almost 50 per cent, is high.

Standards and achievement

128. Students are building well on the skills acquired for GCSE, and are acquiring a good grasp of more complex language. They make good progress during lessons. Their pronunciation is good, and higher-attaining students communicate effectively in French. Year 13 students construct sophisticated sentences, including use of the subjunctive, with a good level of accuracy. They explore ideas in French, for example when discussing arguments for and against legalisation of soft drugs. In preparing their coursework, they show well developed research skills, and make good use of conversations they have had with French people. Current standards are above those indicated by the 2004 A-level results.

Teaching and learning

129. Teachers develop a good rapport with their students, who generally value the support they are given. Lessons include a good range of activities, including language games and very good use of ICT, and this stimulates students' interest. In the best lessons, a lively pace was maintained, and French was used throughout, including for technical explanations of words and phrases, which challenged the students' understanding effectively. Lessons regularly include lively discussions in French between students. Resources are satisfactory, and improved by the recently-installed interactive whiteboard, which is proving a valuable asset, and is already enhancing students' learning. Students have too few opportunities to practise their extended writing skills. Errors in extended writing, including significant ones, are not always corrected. Teachers' comments on written work are generally too brief, with the result that students are unclear about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

130. The head of department provides a good model as a teacher for colleagues, particularly in the extensive use of French in lessons. The departmental handbook is a thorough document which includes detailed information about policies, procedures and priorities. However, insufficient work has been done to analyse areas of weakness in examination performance and to devise strategies to overcome them. Schemes of work are insufficiently detailed to provide thorough guidance for colleagues. The very good work experience link with France, praised in the last inspection report, has been maintained, and all the current Year 13 students are eagerly looking forward to their placement in a French primary school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Insufficient evidence

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject enjoys a high pass rate
- Teaching is good overall, but not enough opportunities are provided for students to discuss their mathematical thinking
- Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and this aids achievement
- Timetabling arrangements lead to some inconsistency in learning
- Teacher student relationships are good and this enhances learning by making the lessons pleasant experiences

Commentary

Examination results

131. All of the candidates passed the A-level examination in 2003, with half of them receiving A or B grades. Results were above average overall. All five students taking further mathematics at A-level passed, three with A grades. Unconfirmed results for 2004 were lower.

Standards and achievement

132. The students have a good understanding of mathematics. They can manipulate algebraic relationships accurately and with confidence and have good recall of facts and formulae. They have a good grasp of trigonometric functions and the effect that differentiation and integration has on them. Achievement

is best where the teachers have planned the work to build upon prior knowledge. For example in one lesson a Year 13 group started by revising differential calculus and by the end were confidently using the chain rule to differentiate composite functions.

Teaching and learning

133. Relationships between teachers and students are positive and this motivates the students to work conscientiously. The students are willing learners and lessons are enjoyable. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to challenge students well. Students are confident when asked questions individually. They respond well to challenges that are within their grasp. Even in good lessons, students are presented with few opportunities to discuss their mathematical thinking and philosophy. Students do not show great mathematical curiosity, and they rarely respond with questions of their own which extend the topic into new realms or which form the basis of mathematical hypotheses.

Leadership and management

134. Under strong, new leadership, the department has realistic plans for development. The department is clearly focused on improving the provision and attracting more students onto the courses. Good developments in teaching include increasingly effective use of ICT. Timetabling decisions, and particularly the uneven distribution of lessons in the school week, have an adverse effect on students' learning. At the time of the last inspection, mathematics at sixth form was not reported on as a separate subject and therefore it is not possible to evaluate progress since that time.

Mathematics across the curriculum

135. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is good. Students speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences in the school and how these have prepared them for their present courses and for entry into higher education. Evidence of students using their mathematical knowledge in other subjects was found in ICT and physical education, and in chemistry, where students receive many opportunities to investigate rates of chemical reactions. The school library has a good range of material to support independent study of the subject and presents a welcoming environment in which to work.

SCIENCE

The focus was on chemistry and physics. Biology was sampled. In the lesson observed, teaching and learning were good and the standards were above expectations for this stage in the course. The teacher showed a very good knowledge of course and examination requirements and this ensured good achievement. The lesson provided students with very good advice on the organisation and presentation of coursework. Students were enthusiastic in their preparation for a forthcoming field study trip to Wales.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is satisfactory.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers are well qualified and have a good subject knowledge
- The attitudes of students are good and they share a good relationship with their teachers
- Monitoring of students' work is insufficiently used as a means of raising achievement
- A new chemistry course is catering better for students' needs

Commentary

Examination results

136. A-level results in 2003 were average and the standard was maintained in 2004.

Standards and achievement

137. Students enter the sixth form with average standards. The teaching and learning in lessons are good which results in good achievement by students. Achievement over a period of time had previously been unsatisfactory because students had an inappropriate course at AS level. In the lesson observed, the achievement of students following the new course was good. Students who were re-sitting the AS course said that they were much more confident and were now enjoying the subject.

Teaching and learning

138. The department has a wealth of experience that is used well to benefit of the students. A team of well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers gives the students good support. Students appreciate this and feel they are making good progress. The teachers are fully aware of examination requirements and use this knowledge to plan and prepare lessons well. Teachers and students share good relationships and work in a cooperative atmosphere. Insufficient use is made of ICT by students, and this restricts their ability to work independently. The department has detailed data on students' previous attainment and potential grades. The value of this data is restricted because it is not readily available to all the teachers to use as a constructive means of checking students' progress.

Leadership and management

139. The subject is well organised on a day-to-day basis. Teachers work well as a team. The department has responded well to the high drop-out rate at the end of Year 12. A new course has been introduced that is better suited to the students' previous experiences at GCSE. The progress of all students has been in general insufficiently monitored, but any student found to be struggling is given further support. The department has now recognised this and introduced formal procedures to assist these students further. Standards have remained similar at A-level since the last inspection, and the new course has improved the overall provision.

Physics

Provision in physics is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The A-level pass rate is consistently close to 100 percent
- Very good leadership and good management ensure that courses are well planned and taught
- The teachers are experienced subject specialists and work well as a team, which leads to good learning
- There are very good systems for monitoring students' progress and providing support which results in good achievement
- Good relationships contribute to the effective learning environment
- In some lessons, a few students were insufficiently involved in discussion activities

Commentary

Examination results

140. A-level results in 2003 were average and a marked improvement on the previous year. Boys' results were well above average. In 2004, fewer students gained A or B grades, but, as in previous years, all students passed.

Standards and achievement

141. Students begin Year 12 with average standards. Standards in Year 13 are above average, which indicates good achievement. Current standards are above those indicated in A-level results in 2003 and 2004. Students show a good level of skill in both calculations and investigation. In practical work Year 13 students manipulate apparatus well in order to obtain relevant data which is then confidently analysed and evaluated. Graphs are accurately drawn, though sometimes with errors in labelling axes, and used accurately to identify trends and obtain further data. Year 13 students show confidence in explaining concepts, though some in Year 12 show reticence in answering questions in class and tend to be passive listeners in discussions. The detail and quality of students' notes were very good.

Teaching and learning

142. Courses are very well planned and well taught by experienced and enthusiastic subject specialists who form a strong team. Lesson planning is thorough and students are well challenged. Planning includes good emphasis on the development of independent learning. Lessons include the effective use of ICT, groupwork and communication skills. Teachers check written work regularly and this provides students with a very good basis for revision. They provide good support for individuals, which promotes good levels of achievement. This is particularly effective in group-work when teachers are closely involved in checking students work and providing further challenge through detailed questioning on a one-to-one basis. This enables teachers to obtain good feedback of students' understanding. The recently-introduced student database is well used by teachers to monitor progress and to identify areas of weakness. Relationships are good and contribute to the good learning culture developed in lessons.

Leadership and management

143. The new head of department has identified areas requiring attention and has already taken effective action towards improvement. Schemes of work have developed very well, new assessment and monitoring systems are proving effective, and good use is being made of student data. Particular emphasis is now given to students having a greater role in their own learning. They are gaining a better understanding of examination standards through peer marking of work under the guidance of teachers. Present leadership and management are good with the potential of being very good once the new systems have had time to be fully implemented and success evaluated. Greater numbers of students now study physics and the overall pass rate is higher. Consortium arrangements continue to work well and good enrichment activities are provided. These increase students' interest in the subject and provide suitable challenges, particularly for higher-attaining students. Retention rates for the courses are high which indicates that students have a good level of interest in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus was on AVCE ICT. A-level computing was sampled.

A-level computing

The teachers have very good subject knowledge and a very good relationship with the students. Students' achievement is high and their computing skills are well developed. Students have a very good understanding of the use of macros to develop a system using a spreadsheet. Test plans are

clear, showing a comprehensive use of suitable test data. Results are well presented using annotated screen dumps and the use of the auditing tool bar.

Information and communication technology

Provision in information and communication technology is very good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Teachers have a very good relationship with students and work well as a strong team to plan their lessons well to ensure achievement by all students is very good
- Teachers have an excellent understanding of the examination board requirements and students know exactly what they need to do to get good grades
- Students enjoy working independently

Commentary

Examination results

144. In 2003, results in Year 13 were well above the national average. However these results dipped in 2004.

Standards and achievement

145. Year 13 students made good use of the advanced features of spreadsheets to complete project work to design systems. They used annotated screen dumps to present their work. Testing was thorough, including extreme and erroneous data. Refinements to the systems were clearly documented. Students provide clear training materials, demonstrating thorough planning. In one lesson, some students were developing and evaluating a web site whilst others were handling publishing software with confidence. Year 12 students used case study materials effectively to produce organisational diagrams of a company and described relationships between suppliers and departments within the company. All students work well independently and enjoy their lessons.

Teaching and learning

146. The teachers work very well as a cohesive team and their planning is meticulous. They are well respected by the students who consider themselves to be fortunate to be taught by them. The teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and the examination board requirements, using clear summaries on worksheets to guide students' learning. Although some of the teaching is teacher-dominated, it is presented with an infectious enthusiasm and well supported by an imaginative use of resources. More experienced teachers draw on their considerable past experience to support students. The teaching stimulates the interest of all students leading to very good learning. In an excellent lesson, the teacher expertly managed the work of students following three distinct units, ensuring that all students learned very effectively. Course work is well marked. Students are given grade descriptors and the teachers give feedback on what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

147. The department offers a good range of courses, including the AVCE single award, A-level computing and the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). The head of department has clear vision for developing ICT. Subject documentation is extensive and informative. Teaching is well monitored and leads to the sharing of good practice amongst teachers. The head of department is an excellent role model who supports a very strong team of highly-motivated teachers. The improvement since the last inspection has been particularly over the past year, since specialist college status has led to an increase in resources and greater focus on ICT across the curriculum.

ICT across the curriculum

148. Students have good access to ICT equipment to support independent learning. They are able to borrow lap top computers from the librarian and from the sixth form centre. Good use of ICT was seen in mathematics, where students used laptops to compare binomial and Poisson distribution. ICT is used in physics and chemistry lessons for data-logging and data-handling. In music, students use Sibelius software for composition. Students make good use of ICT in modern foreign languages.

HUMANITIES

Focus subjects were geography, history and psychology. Religious studies was sampled.

Religious studies

149. In the lesson sampled in Year 12, effective and very well-informed teaching in a topic on eastern religions enabled students to achieve well. They made good progress in understanding and interpreting Hindu beliefs. Students made very good use of ICT for research.

Geography

Provision in geography is very good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising after a period of decline
- Very good leadership is committed to the achievement of students of all capabilities
- Students respond to very good teaching with positive attitudes
- There is some inconsistency in the marking of students' work

Commentary

Examination results

150. A-level results in 2003 were below average overall, but girls' results were average. In 2004, results were a considerable improvement on those of the previous year. All students gained a pass grade.

Standards and achievement

151. Attainment on entry to the sixth form, based on students' performance at GCSE, is below average and a small number of students have not taken the subject at GCSE level. Students presently in Year 13 show above-average levels of understanding of complex processes that effect change in both human and physical geography. They use geographical vocabulary confidently and accurately in discussion and writing. Those of higher attainment can select and organise information from textual and graphical sources to make presentations on, for example the conditions that create the El Nino weather event and its effects. Those working at a lower level are more secure in description than explanation. Students at all levels show competence in using ICT for research and use investigative skills and techniques effectively to reach conclusions supported by evidence. Almost all students meet or exceed their targets.

Teaching and learning

152. Students respond very positively to the informal but challenging tutorial style of teaching. Teachers' very good subject knowledge allows targeted, probing questioning which encourages them to think independently and to develop understanding through argument and discussion. Teachers set demanding deadlines for the completion of work and provide rapid feedback on its quality. Most

marking provides constructive, subject-specific comment on what has been done well and on what could be done to improve. Some marking is less effective because it is more concerned with organisation and presentation than content. Teachers know students well and are quick to identify and address areas of weakness. Students feel well supported and able to seek guidance on any aspect of their work.

Leadership and management

153. The department adopts a virtually open-access policy to students. All staff share the sixth form teaching. The modules of the curriculum are carefully chosen and the diversity of human and environmental topics are much appreciated and enjoyed by students. Detailed monitoring of performance data highlights areas for improvement in teaching and curriculum. Excellent resources, including books, videos and software, are readily available for students' personal use.

History

Provision in history is very good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- History is a very popular option at A-level and students regularly go on to study the subject at university
- Teachers are expert in their knowledge and experienced in how to prepare students for examinations
- Excellent leadership has led to consistent improvement and to very good achievement by students
- Students work very productively both individually and in group work

Commentary

Examination results

154. In 2003, the percentage of students gaining higher grades at A-level was above the national average and all twenty six students passed. Girls and boys gain similar standards. In 2004, students gained fewer of the highest grades, but, again, all passed.

Standards and achievement

155. In Year 13, standards are currently above the national average. Students enter Year 12 with average to below-average attainment, and they achieve very well. The courses are particularly well chosen by teachers to interest students. As a result, they are well motivated and this benefits their achievement. Year 13 students are studying British political history, including appeasement and totalitarian ideologies. They were gaining a good understanding of the causes and principles behind the events and facts, and relating this work readily to current events. Students are regularly challenged to work together to solve complex problems and to share their views orally and in writing, which they do perceptively.

Teaching and learning

156. Teachers' expectations are very high and teaching methods are demanding and imaginative. Students sustain a high workload, and value the intellectual rigour of the subject. Individual lessons and long-term learning are both very well structured and teachers really know their subject. The quality of staff / student relationships is very good. Clear deadlines give pace to lessons. ICT is not used enough in lessons, but computers are used well individually by students. Assessment is very

well managed and marking is detailed and supportive, making clear what students need to do to improve. Students appreciate the high standard of individual support they receive. Students are encouraged to learn independently and this greatly benefits their achievement. Their attitudes are very positive and a significant number speak of enjoying history and of wishing to continue their studies into higher education.

Leadership and management

157. As a result of excellent leadership, teachers work together with enthusiasm and very strong commitment. The department reviews its provision constantly and is firmly committed to continual improvement. The department has a very good awareness of current developments in teaching and learning from the initiatives with which they are involved outside school. Fewer teachers teach at this level and so communication and mutual support are very effective. Teachers are very well acquainted with examination requirements, and this influences teaching methods without limiting the degree of scholarship that teachers seek to impart. Examination preparation is built into all work, but not in a way which is oppressive. The good progress since the last inspection has included the introduction of AS level, which has been very well managed.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is very good.

Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are well above the national average
- Students achieve better than expected
- Teaching is very good overall and students are very committed learners
- The leadership of the department is determined to maintain high standards

Commentary

Examination results

158. A-level results in 2003 were well above the national average, with all students gaining grade D or above. In 2004, results were similarly high, with a large entry of 42 students.

Standards and achievement

159. Sixty per cent of students achieved better grades than had been predicted for them. In terms of adding value to the level of attainment at which students begin the course, the department is very successful. Students rapidly develop key skills of evidence and data analysis, critical evaluation, problem-solving in practical investigations, and rational explanation using psychological terminology. A Year 12 class was learning observational techniques before carrying out their own practical investigation. By analysing the behaviour of some of their members who were building a model of a bridge, they were able to identify the functional roles each was playing. This task had the effect that the observers became more accurate in their observations and learned to ascribe roles to each team member according to the psychological model under consideration. The lesson led to excellent achievement in psychological skills, knowledge and understanding. The teaching of key examination skills and active learning play a large part in students' achievement.

Teaching and learning

160. Teaching is very good overall, and is sometimes excellent. The best teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge, dynamic presentation which captures students' interest, very good classroom strategies which give students experience of learning in different ways, excellent use of questioning to challenge and extend students and very constructive marking of work so they all know what to do to improve. A Year 13 class was learning about the story of 'Little Hans'. Instead of giving a lecture to the class, the teacher structured the activity very well so that students considered the characters' behaviour from the analyst's point of view in terms of Freudian theory. This led to the students understanding complex psychological ideas and concepts, and was excellent learning. A notably effective feature of the teaching is the use of posters. Students work in groups to create imaginative and colourful representations of psychological ideas or research, which are displayed on the classroom walls. Students value the high standard of provision. They particularly like the opportunities for active learning provided in the participatory style of the teaching. They often make significant contributions to lessons, and to each others' learning, by bringing in knowledge they have gained from their own reading or research. They respect each other's views and work hard in lessons.

Leadership and management

161. The leadership has high aspirations for students' achievement. It is very committed to the principle that psychology is of value to all students, and this communicates itself very well to students. Monitoring of students' progress enables underachievement to be remedied. Monitoring of teaching ensures a consistently high standard. The department has sustained very good provision and results in this increasingly popular subject since the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

There was no focus subject in this area. A lesson in electronics was sampled.

ELECTRONICS

162. In a Year 12 electronics lesson, the topic concerned the conversion of serial data to parallel. Students gained a satisfactory understanding of the principles involved. Despite the encouragement and expertise of the teacher, learning and achievement were only satisfactory because most of the students were reluctant to answer questions and this limited the pace of learning.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design, media studies and music were focus subjects. Lessons were sampled in graphics, photography and theatre studies.

Graphics

163. In the Year 13 graphics lesson seen, achievement was good because the teacher had very good knowledge of graphics to support and challenge each individual student. The lesson focused on developing students' technical skills, which are average overall. Students do not relate their research of other artists to their own work enough. Relationships between students and teacher were good and resulted in students working hard and acting on advice. Results from the very small number of candidates in 2003 included a pass at grade B, as was the case in 2004.

Photography

164. In the Year 12 photography lesson seen students were encouraged by the teacher to think beyond their original ideas, to encourage them to experiment. This led to excellent learning in the lesson. Achievement was very high, because the teacher had very high expectations and constantly challenged the students. All the students have acquired confidence with the technical skills of photography, enabling them to explore and experiment. No students have yet taken A-level in this subject.

Theatre studies

165. Teaching and learning were very good in the sampled lesson in Year 12 where students considered the key themes and characters in Anouilh's version of Antigone. The lesson contained an appropriate blend of practical and theoretical work. Clear lesson objectives, closely related to examination requirements, helped to ensure very good achievement.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their very good subject expertise to guide students next steps
- Students achieve very well because teachers have very high expectations
- Students' technical skills are well above average
- The very good relationships between teachers and students leads to high levels of motivation
- Students do not have many opportunities to share and evaluate work

Commentary

Examination results

166. A-level results in 2003 were average. Boys performed better than boys nationally, with girls performing similarly to girls nationally. Results in 2004 were significantly higher, as they had been in 2002.

Standards and achievement

167. By Year 13, students have developed confident, and in some cases fluent, technical skills and this leads to very good achievement. Students develop well-above-average drawing and painting skills in portrait work. In exceptional work, students used paint very fluently and confidently to develop particularly arresting images. Students link their work well to that of other artists and cultures and enrich their work by reflecting their influences in their work. They understand and explain how their work develops through the use of very high quality visual research, though they do not make enough use of first-hand observation.

Teaching and learning

168. Teachers have very good practical skills and evaluate students' work constructively. Students benefit from the very good support and guidance they receive. The teacher advised students in Year 13 to keep standing back from their work to evaluate progress. This increased their understanding of the relative impact of different colours in a background, and increased their awareness of how to make brushwork more effective. This provided significant learning experiences. Students work very hard because they are motivated by teachers' very high expectations and harmonious teacher / student relationships. Where students are not encouraged to work independently, in reviewing and refining their work, achievement is lessened. Students rarely have opportunities to share and evaluate their own work or that of others.

Leadership and management

169. Teachers are very good role models for students. They are committed to high standards, and challenge students to achieve them. The department is very well organised, with good schemes of work and resources. The lack of ICT, however, means that students miss the opportunity to manipulate images, and this limits students' creative exploration of ideas. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, overall. The art rooms are spread out, and this limits teachers sharing ideas. Storage areas are limited. The outstanding display of art work around the school inspires students to reach similar standards.

Media studies

Provision in media studies is very good.

Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The course attracts high numbers each year, including students from other sixth forms within the Federation of schools
- Students enjoy the strong emphasis on practical skills and vocational learning
- Teachers effectively share their expertise and enthusiasm with their students which leads to very good teacher/student relationships
- The subject provides very good opportunities for independent learning
- The best practice is insufficiently shared amongst teachers

Commentary

Examination results

170. Since the first AVCE examination results in 2002, a 100 per cent pass rate has been maintained and the proportion of A and B grades is well above average. Boys and girls attain equally high standards. In 2003, the results were well above average, and the 2004 results were similar.

Standards and achievement

171. Finham Park students begin the course with GCSE results significantly above the national average. The course recruits up to 25 per cent of the cohort from other South West Coventry Federation of Schools. Some students begin Year 12 with no previous experience of media studies. Students achieve very well from their different starting points. Annually, a significant number of dedicated students opt to take additional units, working with initiative and independence in their own time to convert the single to a double award in Year 13. Most students produce grade A or B coursework indicating very good progress. Effective examples of project work were seen in Year 13 covering a range of forms including print, audio and visual. In a Year 12 lesson analysing tabloid front pages, students perceptively linked their understanding of theory, concepts and terminology to the impact the front page would have on its readers. The use of advanced ICT programmes strongly motivates all students. For example, 'Photoshop' enables students to edit their own photographs to produce very good slide show presentations in Year 13.

Teaching and learning

172. The course is carefully planned to combine the teaching of theoretical components with practical skills, enabling students to apply production processes to concepts learned in theory. This strongly benefits their learning. Students are well motivated and show their commitment by contributing readily to discussions. Very good use of seminar-based teaching and learning was seen when a Year 13 student researched and presented a paper on how the BBC is organised; this was followed by searching questions and purposeful class discussion. Learning is less effective when lessons have over-lengthy input from the teacher without enough questions or detailed discussion to check and consolidate learning. Very good assessment provides students with helpful guidance when they plan and complete portfolio projects. An ICT-based system records individual and group profiles to assist planning and students are involved in monitoring their progress towards their learning targets. Individual students' progress is reviewed to guide their selection of optional units. Independent

learning is encouraged when students evaluate the skills they have developed in their projects and schedule their work to achieve targets and meet deadlines.

Leadership and management

173. Good documentation supports independent learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The subject is very popular and standards are high. The development plan appropriately reflects subject needs and school improvement priorities. However, insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning takes place to enable best practice to be shared. Staff training to support students in developing specialist practical skills is an area for development that has been recognised but not fully addressed. Accommodation and resources are good. ICT facilities and equipment are available for three hours after school and are well used by students independently. Media-related conferences and exhibitions are available to enrich the course, and students visit local businesses and industries where good opportunities are provided for training, guidance and work-related learning.

Music

Provision in music is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in good learning for all students
- Students are receptive to a wide range of musical styles
- Resources are unsatisfactory and restrict students' achievement
- Students' attitudes are very good, which benefits their learning

Commentary

Examination results

174. Students regularly achieve the higher grades at A-level, but since numbers are small, national comparisons are not valid.

Standards and achievement

175. Candidates for A-level music in Year 13 are studying the subject at another school as part of the Federation arrangements. Their work was not inspected. Five students are following an AS course in Year 12. The students are good instrumentalists and most use music ICT confidently to create sophisticated and effective compositions. In a lesson on Peter Maxwell Davies's 'Eight Songs of a Mad King', students developed a good awareness of the composing techniques. They then discussed with appropriate musical terminology, the way in which these techniques are used to produce the intended musical effect. The students have an open-minded approach to all kinds of music and this contributes significantly to their good achievement.

Teaching and learning

176. Students' attitudes in music lessons are very good and they respond very well to the enthusiastic and skilful teaching, some of which is very good. Students have a good awareness of a wide range of musical styles. They analyse music through perceptive listening and confidently relate what they hear to complex printed scores. Teachers involve students well in discussing their compositions, and encourage them to make informed artistic decisions. Lessons have good pace and integrate very well a good range of musical activities. Sometimes teaching does not take sufficient account of the different musical skills students bring to lessons.

Leadership and management

177. One teacher is primarily responsible for teaching music in the sixth form. This provision is well coordinated by the head of music. Students are encouraged to send work-in-progress via e-mail to teachers who respond quickly and effectively. This immediate response is much valued by students and considerably benefits their learning. The close monitoring and support of students' work are effective features of their good progress. Sixth form music teaching takes place in a room separate from the music block. This room is of sufficient size for the small groups presently following examination courses. Resources are unsatisfactory. No keyboards are attached to the computers, audio equipment is of poor quality, and the room lacks a good quality keyboard on which the teacher can play musical examples. This is a barrier to more effective learning.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus subject was A-level physical education. Non-examination physical education was sampled.

Non-examination physical education

178. Provision is good. The subject is very well led and managed for the success of students. Standards are above average and students have achieved well. Very good extra-curricular opportunities assist learning and achievement.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed so students have good support and guidance
- Good teaching and a well-structured course enable students to learn efficiently
- Students' attitudes are very positive, and this benefits their learning
- Insufficient technical support means that ICT is insufficiently used to benefit students' learning

Commentary

Examination results

179. In 2003, results were above average. Results in 2004 were considerably higher, but national comparisons are not yet available.

Standards and achievement

180. Students achieve well in Year 13 in relation to their GCSE grades. Students who have not completed the GCSE course do very well as they achieve as well as the others by the end of Year 12. Students use technical terms accurately and identify reasons why fitness and heart rate vary in different groups of people. They develop an awareness of the psychology that may affect individual performance, such as aggression and assertiveness. Communication skills develop well when students discuss well-known sportsmen, and sporting incidents. Students are competent at planning and researching essays, using ICT and a good range of textbooks. Students construct and analyse graphs, they collect data and relate theory and practical work well from their fitness programmes and chosen sports. Regular homework is set, but marking and feedback and an insistence on high standards of presentation are given insufficient priority by teachers. Talented team players achieve very well because they are encouraged to join clubs and have opportunities to lead younger students and perform at local, regional and national level in a variety of sports.

Teaching and learning

181. Students have good attitudes and cooperate well in lessons. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject, enabling them to challenge and extend students' understanding and interest by providing good examples to illustrate teaching. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students built up a thorough understanding of the psychological differences between being fired up for performance and being fired up with anger to create a foul. This was well related to Amir Khan's Olympic boxing ambitions compared with David Beckham's 1998 World Cup foul. This resulted in good sharing of personal experience in confident discussion with individuals contributing to the whole group's learning. In most lessons, students are involved in good question-and-answer sessions. Students are very positive about the course.

Leadership and management

182. A good team of teachers provide very good role models. They are well focused on examination technique and this drives improvement. A well-planned and varied programme of activities is provided across the curriculum. Teachers attend courses regularly to keep the department and students up-to-date and refine provision for examinations. Good systems for monitoring students' progress enable teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses and provide carefully targeted assistance. A-level results have remained above average since the last inspection. Teachers and students now have a specific theory room but this is not well linked with practical facilities. Good opportunities are provided for analysing games skills using video cameras, but ICT is not used enough to help students analyse techniques and improve their own performance.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

There was no focus subject in this area, but critical thinking and general studies were sampled.

General studies

183. A combined Year 12/13 group considered what determines social class. Teaching and learning were very good. The teacher's thoughtful questioning enabled students to form and express their ideas confidently, which led to very good achievement.

Critical thinking

184. A Year 12 group debated 'this house believes fat is not an issue'. Teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory. The range of attainment was wide. Some good interventions from the teacher ensured that, overall, students made satisfactory gains learning how to understand, and respond to the views of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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