

INSPECTION REPORT

HINCHINGBROOKE SCHOOL

Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110885

Head teacher: Keith Nancekievill

Lead inspector: Grace Marriott

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th March 2005

Inspection number: 268828

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: Voluntary controlled
Age range of students: 11-18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1828

School address: Brampton Road
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
Postcode: PE29 3BN

Telephone number: 01480 375700
Fax number: 01480 375699

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Alan Alder

Date of previous inspection: November 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hinchingbrooke is a very large 11-18 comprehensive school in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. It has over 1800 students on roll, including almost 350 students in the sixth form. The school serves a wide and very diverse catchment area. Though most students come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and the proportion of families claiming free school meals is low, the school also serves areas of social deprivation. The school has very few students from ethnic minorities or who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs is broadly average. The school has recently been awarded sports college status. The students join the school with above average attainment overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, though with relatively few students at the highest levels, and standards in other subjects are much more variable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Lead inspector	Business studies 6 th form
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	
3298 7	Mandy Mudd	Team inspector	English 11-16 and 6 th form
3329 5	Elaine Noden	Team inspector	English as an additional language
3081 4	Elizabeth Coley	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-16
3375 3	Philip Dean	Team inspector	6 th form mathematics, Citizenship
4922	Michael Driver	Team inspector	Science 11-16 and 6 th form chemistry
3510 0	Carol Ponchaud	Team inspector	6 th form Physics
1807 2	Joan Stephens	Team inspector	6 th form Psychology
3223 1	Adrian Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-16 and 6 th form, Vocational ICT
2501	Raye Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art and design 11-16 and 6 th form art
3336 8	Valerie Greatrex	Team inspector	Design Technology 11-16 and 6 th form
3501 0	Lesley Johnson	Team inspector	Geography 11-16
3234 0	Peter McKay	Team inspector	History 11-16 and 6 th form
3137 2	Robert Hardwick	Team inspector	Religious Education 11-16
2295 3	Peter Dacombe	Team inspector	Modern Languages 11-16 and 6 th form French
1507 5	Bryan Stephens	Team inspector	6 th Form German
3029 7	Gary Spruce	Team inspector	Music 11-16
3080 0	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical Education 11-16 and 6 th form
1935 2	Kiran Campbell Platt	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs

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	15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	22
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	24
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	64

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hinchingbrooke is a good school, because it provides a good all-round education. Teaching is good and students achieve well. The sixth form makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school. The leadership and management are good and clearly focused on providing a high quality education for all students. Parents and students are supportive of the school and appreciate what it has to offer.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- In 2004 Year 9 results and GCSE results were better than those of similar schools
- The sixth form provision is very good
- The teaching is very good in the sixth form and overall it is good
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good and students take full advantage of what is offered
- Provision in modern languages is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 7 to 9
- In a few lessons teaching is not planned as well as it could be and behaviour is not well-managed
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not being used as much as it should be

The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. A considerable amount of work has been done on assessment, teaching, learning, monitoring and evaluation but many of these good developments are relatively recent. They are having an impact but have not yet had time to be fully reflected in examination results. Other good improvements include the broadening and developing of the curriculum. The provision of ICT has improved but is still somewhat limited for a school of this size.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	C	B	B
*A/AS level and advanced VCE examinations	B	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 achieved similar results at the end of Year 9.*

Students are achieving well overall, though some achievement has been adversely affected by staffing issues in modern foreign languages, mathematics and religious education (RE). Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well, as do gifted and talented students. GCSE results were better than the national A* to C overall and better than those of similar schools. Results in Spanish, history, English Literature, art, drama and science were all significantly better than the national average. Results in the national tests in Year 9 were well above the national results. Current standards in Year 9 are above average in English, mathematics, and well above in science. They are below average in modern foreign languages and achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year 11 standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, music and PE, and well above in art and history. Standards average in ICT because of students' previous limited experience. **In the sixth form, students achieve well and many achieve very well.** Standards and achievement are improving. Standards are better than the 2004 examination results, and above average overall. They are well above average in physics, art, history, design and technology and business. In these subjects, students were also achieving very well.

Students' personal development, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The vast majority have good attitudes and are keen to participate in lessons and other activities, but in some lessons when teaching is less skilled, some students are reluctant learners.

Similarly, though most students behave well, the behaviour of a few students is sometimes unacceptable. Attendance is average, punctuality is satisfactory. The size of the site sometimes results in late starts to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school is providing a good education. The teaching is good, though with a higher proportion of good and very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. The teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects and keen to share their expertise with students. However, some difficulties in managing behaviour, particularly in classes which have been affected by staffing difficulties resulted in some unsatisfactory teaching and learning. The curriculum is good in the sixth form and in the main school, though not yet fully meeting requirements for RE in Year 11. The school provides a good range of courses and activities which promote academic and personal development well. The support, care and guidance given to students are good. Considerable effort is put into meeting individual needs. Students' views are taken seriously. Good partnerships with parents and links with the community contribute well to the overall quality of education. Some of the information on special educational needs is missing from the school's published information for parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good. The head teacher, strongly supported by the leadership team, provides very good leadership with a very clear focus on raising standards all round. The very good governing body is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and very closely involved in setting goals and monitoring how well the school is doing. Curricular and pastoral leaders are generally providing good and sometimes very good leadership in their areas though there is some inconsistency in the implementation of school policies. The school is working hard to overcome the problems created by staffing difficulties.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the school though not wholly uncritical. They appreciate the range of opportunities it gives their children and the high quality of much of the work. They have justifiable concerns, which are shared by the school, about the impact of staffing difficulties and the consequent behaviour of a minority of students. Students are similarly positive about the school and sixth form students are very positive. They appreciate how fortunate they are to be studying in the unique surroundings and also the quality of teaching.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

To raise standards further, the most important things the school should do to improve are

Years 7 to 11

- Improve achievement in modern foreign languages, particularly in Years 7 to 9
- Improve the unsatisfactory teaching by raising some teachers' expectations of what students can achieve, and ensuring more consistent application of school policies for behaviour
- Increase the use of ICT across the curriculum

Sixth form

- Increase the use of ICT across the curriculum

and to meet statutory requirements

- Provide a daily act of collective worship
- Complete the plans for improving provision for RE in Year 11
- Ensure that the information for parents includes all the special educational needs information required

SIXTH FORM SUMMARY

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hinchingbrooke School has a very good sixth form. The range of courses is very appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the students, who are strongly encouraged to play an important role in running of the school. They develop into mature and likeable young adults. The sixth form is largely cost-effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strengths evident in the main school are also evident in the sixth form
- Provision is very good in physics, psychology, design and technology, art, history, and good in almost all of the focus subjects
- Teaching is very good overall, almost half the lessons seen were very good or excellent
- The use of ICT is limited

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the thirteen 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 sixth form subjects were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	English: good. Results in English are average. Teaching is good overall but there are inconsistencies. Teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm for literature lead to students' good achievement. French: satisfactory. In French the most recent examination results were below average. Standards in Year 12 are average and in Year 13 below average. Achievement is satisfactory given students attainment at the start of the course. Teaching is satisfactory. German: good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and linguistic skills have a positive impact on standards and students achieve very well. Standards are average.
Mathematics	Good. Standards are above average. Most students achieve well although some students were ungraded in AS examinations. Teaching and learning are good and the subject is well led and managed.
Science	Chemistry: good. Standards are above average in Chemistry. Teaching and learning are good and result in students' good achievement. Physics: very good. In physics standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have high expectations and together with the students' very good attitudes this ensures very good achievement. Psychology: very good. The very good teaching and learning in psychology are leading to improved standards. These are now above average. Standards in Year 12 are significantly higher than in Year 13. Students are very positive about their studies.
ICT	Satisfactory: All students in Year 12 follow a course which gives them an advanced vocational qualification. Students begin the course having had very little teaching in the main school prior to joining the sixth form. Standards are below average. Teaching is good, although assessment is not effective enough in all areas of the course.
Humanities	History: very good. Standards are well above average. The very good teaching, a very well planned curriculum and effective support and guidance enables students to achieve very well. Students have very positive attitudes and they enjoy the subject.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Design and technology: very good. Standards are well above average with nearly all students achieving their target grades. Achievement is very good. All students taking Food Studies and graphics courses gained A-C grades. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' high expectations and their expertise encourage and motivate students.
Visual and performing arts and media	Art and design: very good. Standards are well above average with well over half of the students gaining A or B grades. Students achieve very well, sometimes joining the course with limited experience of the subject prior to the sixth form. The teaching inspires and motivates them. Field trips and visits to galleries have a profound impact on students' learning and leads to outstanding work.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical education: good. Achievement is good and standards are above average. Students benefit from the very good programme of extra curricular provision which supports the good teaching and learning.
Business	Good. Students achieve very well and standards are now well above average because the teaching is good and well-planned to meet their needs. Assessment is very well focused on enabling students to achieve as highly as possible.
Health and social care	No subjects in this category were inspected.
General education	No subjects in this category were inspected.

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

Students benefit from very good support, care and guidance. Throughout the sixth form, students' progress is closely monitored with a system of reports and interviews with tutors. Subject teachers are approachable, friendly and supportive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is very well led and managed. Teamwork is strong and focused very clearly on maintaining high standards and providing very good opportunities for students to achieve in all aspects of the school's life. Students are very closely involved in the management of the sixth form.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very positive about the sixth form and enjoy it. They appreciate the range of courses and the quality of teaching and the opportunities to play a full part in the life of the whole school. They value the quality of advice and guidance they receive. Students who transfer into the sixth form from other schools greatly value the support they receive. They recognise that Hinchingsbrooke House is a unique resource which the school uses well for their benefit.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average overall at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. Students achieve well at all stages in the school. Students' GCSE results are good when compared with their starting point in Year 7 and also when compared with similar schools. In the sixth form standards are good overall, with several subjects achieving well above average standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 9 test results in 2004 were well above the national average and much better than those of similar schools
- GCSE A* to C results in 2004 were better than the national results and those of similar schools
- Students have good literacy and numeracy skills which they use well in other subjects
- ICT skills have been affected by limited opportunities for students to use them
- Achievement in some subjects has been adversely affected by staffing difficulties
- Standards and achievement in modern foreign languages are not good enough in Years 7 to 9
- Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average overall and students are achieving well
- Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve very well in art, design and technology and history and well in most other subjects

Commentary

1. When they join the school most students are average or slightly above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, though with relatively few high or very low achievers. They achieved better results in science in their Year 6 tests than in either English or mathematics. In other subjects, standards on entry are much more variable, depending very much on students' experience in primary school and are broadly average.
2. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 have improved. The 2004 results were better than previous years. The English results were the best overall, but the difference between the three core subjects was not great. Students did much better than those from schools which had a similar intake in Year 7.
3. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average overall and students are achieving well. In the core subjects, standards in English and mathematics are above average and in science they are well above average. Students achieve well in geography, history, design and technology and PE. In French, German and music standards are below average, and in French and German achievement is unsatisfactory partly because of staffing difficulties which have also affected mathematics and RE. Where teaching has been weaker, expectations for what students can achieve have not been high enough.
4. In 2004, students achieved GCSE results which were above the national average overall. They were also better than the results of schools whose students achieved similar Year 9 test scores. In Spanish, history, English Literature, art, drama, and dual award science results were significantly better than the national A* to C results. Students generally did better in these subjects than they did in their other subjects. Home economics results were significantly worse and in general, students did not do as well in mathematics, French and RE as they did in their other subjects. Girls do better overall than boys. In the years since the last inspection, the gap between the school's results and the national results has narrowed.
5. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are very similar to the GCSE results. In Year 11, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology geography, music and PE, and well above in art and history. Standards are average in ICT because of students' previous limited experience. Students achieve very well in art, design and technology and history and they achieve well in English, science, geography and physical education. Achievement in music is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Standards in French and German are better than in Years 7 to 9 and achievement is satisfactory.

6. Students have good literacy and numeracy skills which they use well in other subjects. Their ICT skills are not as good as they should be in Years 9 to 11 because they have had relatively little ICT teaching in their earlier years in the school. Standards and achievement in ICT are better in Years 7 and 8 than in the older year groups because the provision for ICT is improving.
7. Students with special educational needs make good progress in learning in both key stages. They gain in confidence and their social skills development is good, especially in Years 10 and 11 where some groups of students with special educational needs follow the alternative curriculum which is appropriate to their needs. This gives them a range of practically based learning opportunities, including college courses which they enjoy and in which they make good progress. Students with statements make very good progress because of the good range of provision which includes in-class support from learning support assistants and external specialist support for example for students with behavioural difficulties who receive additional support from the local education authority (LEA) Secondary Support Service. Most students with social emotional and behavioural difficulties make progress in line with their ability. However, the achievement of students with the lowest level of special educational needs (School Action) is difficult to assess as there are no clear systems for monitoring their progress. The school has very few students with English as an additional language. Overall standards for these students are good. Most have sufficient language skills to access the curriculum and their progress is in line with that expected of all students.

Sixth form

8. The school is prepared to allow students to start courses with lower grades than many schools. A Level results have fluctuated but have mostly been above average, though they were average in 2004. Current standards in the thirteen subjects which were the focus for inspection were well above average in physics, art, history, design and technology and business, and above average in mathematics, chemistry, PE, psychology. Students are achieving well in most subjects and very well in some. Their achievement is at least satisfactory in all subjects. As in the main school sixth formers have good literacy and numeracy skills, but in ICT are still suffering from the lack of progress in their earlier years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.2 (35.4)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	38.4 (37.3)	n/a (35.4)
science	37.4 (36.2)	n/a (33.6)

There were 299 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2003.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	59 (55)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (86)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	302.2	282.8

There were 297 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for 2003.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	92.4 (94.4)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	34.3 (34)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per student	241.6 (264.3)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 145 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2003.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They are very good in the sixth form. Attendance is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. Punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students take full advantage of the many opportunities for their personal development, and their social development is a particular strength
- Most students in Years 7 to 11 have positive attitudes and want to do well, but a few students are reluctant to learn
- Students behave well around the school and in the majority of lessons, but when teaching is less skilled the behaviour of a few students in Years 7 to 9 affects the learning of others

Commentary

9. The school has maintained its good provision for students' personal development; as a result, students become confident young people who learn to take responsibility and to work well with others. Students participate enthusiastically in sports and performing arts activities and in trips and exchanges abroad. These make a significant contribution to their ability to work in teams and groups and to appreciate a wide range of cultures. Students develop their collaborative skills further in subjects such as English, design and technology, geography and physical education and this has a positive impact on their achievement. Students' understanding of other cultures has improved since the last inspection, through subjects such as art, music, modern foreign languages, history and religious education, foreign exchanges with schools in France and Germany, and the links with a school in Malawi. Students develop a good awareness of moral issues by debating, for example, children's rights and responsibilities in a Year 8 citizenship lesson. Assemblies, though not meeting requirements for collective worship, are well planned and contribute positively to students' personal education. This includes raising awareness of the ethnic diversity in the school and in society. Opportunities for reflection are often missed, however, in assemblies, lessons and tutor periods, despite the school's mission statement to encourage spiritual well-being. The school has a useful policy on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but this is not fully and consistently exploited within all subjects.
10. Attitudes and behaviour are good in the majority of lessons and subjects. They are very good in physical education and in a significant number of lessons in Years 7, 10 and 11. Most students want to learn and are keen to achieve, especially in subjects which they find interesting and relevant. Behaviour overall has improved since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. Students behave particularly well outside lessons, showing good self-discipline and response to the trust placed in them, for example in assemblies, at lunch-times and at the end of the school day. Parents and students are confident that there is little bullying at the school and that when it occurs it is dealt with effectively. This is a notable achievement for such a large school. A strong feature in the school's measures to combat bullying is the involvement of Year 11 students in running an anti-bullying club every lunch-time where any student can go for help. The school is a harmonious place with no tension between different groups. The small number of racist remarks are taken very seriously. The number of permanent exclusions is low for a school of this size and type. Most fixed period exclusions are for very short periods and there are few persistent offenders. The school works well with the local education authority's behaviour support team and with other schools to manage the behaviour of the most challenging students.
11. Students are generally positive about the school but some older students are frustrated at some of the inconsistencies they have experienced. In some lessons in all years, a small number of students show a lack of respect for the teacher or the subject and occasionally behave badly. In a small proportion of lessons, some students' behaviour is unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. This occurs when they do not value the subject, either because they do not see the point of it or because they have been taught by a series of temporary teachers. The school has revised its behaviour policy and procedures but these are not always applied consistently by all teachers. This has a

negative impact on learning in Years 8 and 9 where low-level disruption by a small number of students is not always well managed.

12. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average, as is both authorised and unauthorised absence. Most students attend sufficiently regularly so that they are able to make good progress in their learning. However, the school's attendance rates have not kept pace with national improvements and they are below the local rates. The school is aware that attendance should be better than it is and has taken steps to improve the situation. For example, it has introduced a new computerised registration system to enable it to monitor and track students' attendance throughout the school day. Parents are being increasingly encouraged to telephone on the day their child is absent. Administration and learning support staff are used well to monitor and follow up absences. The school is tightening up on procedures to ensure they are implemented consistently and effectively. The good liaison with the Education Welfare Service is helping the school improve its practice. These actions have not yet been in place long enough to have had an impact on the school's attendance figures. Students are generally punctual at the start of the school day and for lessons.

Sixth form

Main strength

- Students in the sixth form develop high levels of maturity and responsibility and make a significant contribution to school life

Commentary

13. Students in the sixth form are very good role models for the rest of the school. Their personal development is very good. They have a great sense of pride in being located in Hinchingsbrooke House and see themselves as guardians of the heritage that it represents. A considerable number work as volunteers or employees to preserve the building and show it to the public. At the same time, they play a full part in the life of the school as a whole. For example, Year 12 students are attached to departments and act as academic mentors for younger students. The senior student team in Year 13 take an impressive lead on a wide range of aspects of school life, including the House system, sports and arts events, fund-raising for charities and reviving the school council.
14. Attitudes and behaviour are very good in the great majority of lessons. Most students are mature, articulate and have a strong work ethic. Relationships, between students and between students and teachers, are a key strength which contributes significantly to their very good achievement. Students take responsibility and initiative in their own learning in subjects such as mathematics and history. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in lessons. Students consider moral issues such as what motivates a workforce in business studies or who was legally responsible for someone's death in a law lesson. Art students are inspired by the beauty of the Derbyshire landscape to produce paintings of such quality that they are displayed around the school. The richness of the culture of Spain was celebrated enthusiastically through dance in a lesson seen during the inspection.
15. Attendance is good with the result that students are able to make very good progress in their learning. The computerised registration system is used effectively to check that students are present in lessons. Sixth form staff monitor attendance weekly and interview any student whose attendance falls below 90 per cent. This is effective practice. Punctuality has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. Most students now arrive on time for their lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.0	School data:	1.0
National data:	6.9	National data:	1.1

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

Ethnic background of 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	1688	94	
White – Irish	6		
White – any other White background	29		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	8		
Mixed – any other mixed background	20		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	10		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4		
Chinese	1		
Any other ethnic group	5		
No ethnic group recorded	30	1	1

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The teaching is good overall and very good in the sixth form. The curriculum is good and the opportunities for extension and enrichment are very good. The school takes good care of its students and students and provides them with good advice and support.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and the teaching and learning in the sixth form are very good. Years 10 and 11 had a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than Years 7 to 9. However, the good quality of most teaching masks some weaknesses in managing behaviour, particularly in classes which have been affected by staffing difficulties. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most lessons move at a good pace
- Activities build constructively on previous work
- Teachers use a variety of activities and approaches to motivate and encourage students to achieve
- Good questioning challenges students to think and develop ideas and knowledge in more depth
- In some lessons behaviour was not managed well and this affected learning
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and also good understanding of examination requirements
- Some assessment does not focus enough on what students need to do to improve
- Work does not always match the needs of everyone in the class and sometimes expectations are not high enough
- Students have limited opportunities to use ICT

Commentary

16. Teaching was stronger in Years 10 and 11 where just over three-quarters of lessons were good or very good compared with just over half in Years 7 to 9. Teachers were keen to share their good knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subject with their students. In the good and very good lessons in all year groups lessons were well-structured using the principles of the national strategy. They shared the lesson aims with students and referred to these throughout the lesson, as well as at the end, so that students were clear about what they were learning and why. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 9 the regular checking in the lesson of what students had learnt enabled the teacher to increase the level of difficulty in the tasks and as a result students made good progress. The use of different teaching approaches within the lesson, which included whole class, individual, paired and group work, kept lessons moving at a brisk pace. Students were well motivated and were generally working hard and enjoying what they were doing. In a very good history lesson in Year 11 the teaching constantly challenged students to explain and justify their conclusions with reference to the evidence. This helped them to develop their analytical skills and apply their knowledge successfully to a new topic. In most subjects teachers are assessing students' work carefully using National Curriculum or examination criteria. They use the information to plan work and to give students feedback on what they need to do to improve.
17. Many of the approaches used in the good and very good lessons were also present in the satisfactory teaching, but they tended not to be used as effectively. For example lesson objectives were not always made clear to students and marking did not always give enough guidance to students on how to improve their work. Where teaching was unsatisfactory this was mainly because teachers' were having difficulty in managing low-level, and occasionally, more seriously disruptive behaviour, and in motivating students who were reluctant learners, to want to work. This was usually in classes which had had several changes of teacher and where students had lost motivation and enthusiasm. This particularly affected work in modern foreign languages, mathematics and RE. The school is very aware of the impact of staffing difficulties and is putting considerable effort into supporting teachers. In most subjects students are not able to make enough use of ICT mainly because of limited access to facilities, but at times also because its use is not being sufficiently planned.

18. Teaching is good in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs. In the very good lessons observed, teachers had high expectations of learning and behaviour; they broke tasks down into small steps and gave clear instructions which enabled students with special educational needs to understand and consolidate learning. They set clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour and apply these firmly. In these lessons, students with emotional and behavioural difficulties are able to apply themselves to learning. The response of students with special educational needs in lessons where teachers involve them in active learning is very good and they make progress in line with their abilities. Learning support assistants provide very good in-class support for students with special educational needs; they work effectively with students targeted for support and also across the classroom. They explain and modify tasks so students are able to participate actively in class work. However, there is a lack of consistency across the school in the extent to which teachers use the strategies noted in individual education plans to ensure that special educational needs students are able to access class work. Lessons taught by specialist special educational needs staff show that they have very good knowledge and understanding of students learning difficulties and strategies for support.
19. Teaching assistants who support students with English as an additional language are well directed by teachers. They use a good range of strategies to help the students to access the lesson and in general students achieve well. Some teachers lack the skills and understanding about language development to provide appropriate work and activities to help students at early stages of learning English as an additional language to make progress. Teachers have had insufficient training on issues relating to English as an additional language.

Sixth form

Main strength and weakness

- The strengths evident in the main school are even more in evidence in the sixth form
- Students do not have enough opportunities to use ICT in several subjects

Commentary

20. Teaching is very good in the sixth form. Over eight out of every ten lessons were graded good or better and nearly half were very good or excellent. The strengths evident in Years 7 to 11 are even more evident in the sixth form. In the subjects inspected in depth, teaching was particularly good in English, German, physics, psychology, history, design and technology, and art. It was good in mathematics, chemistry, business studies and PE, and satisfactory in French and ICT. Sixth form staff have very considerable subject expertise and have a very good understanding of the demands of the advanced courses. In an excellent Year 12 chemistry lesson, the clear explanations and the level of challenge in the questioning developed students' thinking and enabled them to use their increased knowledge to predict outcomes of practical work. Teachers provide constructive advice and guidance. Assessment is used effectively in most subjects inspected. It is generally closely related to the requirements of the various examination courses. Marking of students' work gives them good feedback and clear guidance on how to improve their work.
21. Teachers expect students to work hard and achieve well and are very willing to give of their time to support individual students who may be having a particular difficulty. There are few weaknesses in the sixth form teaching, though the use of ICT is not as extensive as it should be because of limited access to facilities and there are some variations in the quality of marking. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good or very good this was mainly specific to the subject. It related to the choice of materials and the development of speaking skills in French and the quality of marking in the ICT short course.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 222 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (5%)	71 (32%)	75 (34%)	51(23%)	14 (6%)	1 (0.4%)	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is good with particular strengths in the provision of enrichment and extension activities. The accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The more flexible curriculum in Year 10 and in the 6th form meets students' needs well
- The range of enrichment and extension activities is exceptionally wide
- Provision for gifted and talented students is very good
- Staffing difficulties in some subjects have affected achievement especially in modern foreign languages
- Facilities for music and drama are excellent, very good for PE and special educational needs, but unsatisfactory in art and ICT
- Many departments do not have enough access to ICT

Commentary

22. The curriculum provides good breadth and balance of experience in Years 7 to 11. The school recently reviewed its curriculum. All students in Years 7 to 11 now take information communication technology. The school introduced several changes in Years 7 to 9 and there are opportunities for subjects to be taught in sets or in mixed ability groups and the size of groups for practical subjects has been reduced. In Year 10 the school has introduced a more flexible curriculum to provide for the needs of high and low attaining students. In addition to traditional GCSE courses, some students successfully pursue vocational options within school and through a link with a local college. The plans to develop the curriculum in Years 10 to 13 by extending the range of vocational courses are good. In Year 10 all students take a GCSE short course in religious education. In Year 11 there is insufficient time for students to cover the agreed syllabus for religious education and there is no daily act of worship, so the school is in breach of statutory regulations. Students do work experience to support their vocational and non-vocational courses. Guidance and careers advice is good. Students interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the curriculum offered by the school. The school provides a good programme to enable students to develop their understanding of personal, social and health issues. It covers all the statutory requirements for sex, drugs and relationships education and for citizenship.
23. The school works hard to ensure that all students have access to the curriculum, and the provision made for all students with special educational needs is good overall. The special educational needs department has set clear criteria for the provision made for the different sets of students, for example, those with statements are appropriately prioritised for LSA support in lessons. The range of the provision made in Years 7 to 9 is good. There is a very good focus on providing early literacy support to develop students' reading and writing skills through additional lessons for some students who are not doing a second language. Learning support assistants are also deployed effectively in managing a range of special educational needs provision. They provide small group and one to one support across curriculum areas and this is strengthened by the joint planning carried out by learning support assistants who are linked to each curriculum area. Although the multi-skills lessons are delivered effectively by special educational needs specialist staff and promote students' confidence and learning skills, there is no clear planning for continuity and progression into Years 10 and 11. However, the quality of the provision for special educational needs students in Years 10 to 11 is developing well with a growing range of options for students with special educational needs.
24. Very good opportunities are provided to develop interests outside the taught day and students support these very well. The range of sporting and performing arts activities is very wide and these activities are very popular with students. Opportunities to pursue music at all levels include instrumental tuition and choirs, orchestras, jazz bands, steel bands and ensembles of very good standard. The school provides clubs in most subjects and such activities as gardening club, Duke of Edinburgh Award, first aid and an anti-bullying club. All of the above make a valuable contribution to the standards students achieve and additionally foster their general interests and social development. A very wide range of visits are organised to enrich the quality of the curriculum, for example a trip to Malawi in Africa, the long-standing exchange programmes for modern foreign languages and field trips in some subject areas. Staff give their time generously to make the extra

curricular activities a very good feature of the school's work. The provision for gifted and talented students is very good. The school has appointed a co-ordinator, who organises an extensive programme of activities, including Russian lessons, master classes in English and science, summer schools, Forensics Day, entry for national competitions and attendance at conferences for gifted and talented students.

25. Overall, accommodation is good. It is excellent for music and drama and very good for physical education and special educational needs. A designated room for students with special educational needs is a very popular 'haven' at lunchtime and after school and staff offer general guidance and support with homework as well as other activities. It is unsatisfactory, however, for art and information communication technology. Hinchingsbrooke House is a prestigious building with a national and international reputation, which is a constant reminder to both staff and students of the historical heritage of the site. Additionally, it provides opportunities for work experience for some students, who act as historic tour guides. It also offers the school opportunities to develop the school curriculum, especially in the area of catering and hospitality. The effective site management team ensures that a programme of repairs and improvements is kept under review, for example to ensure appropriate health and safety standards. The large site is well maintained. The school has worked hard to increase access for physically disabled and this is constantly under review. The large number of students efficiently moves around the site.
26. Resources are satisfactory overall. Departments spend their budgets wisely to support their curricular needs. Resources are good in modern foreign languages, music and for special educational needs, but unsatisfactory in art, psychology and information communication technology. Many departments do not have sufficient access to ICT facilities. The school has too few specific materials to promote language acquisition and the newly appointed teaching assistant who has responsibility for early stage learners of English as an additional language is beginning to collate these. The library offers an attractive learning environment, supporting all areas of the curriculum and allowing for independent learning through texts, periodicals and computers. Staffing is satisfactory and most subjects have a good match of staff to curricular needs. Staffing is very good in music, information communication technology and for special educational needs, but it is unsatisfactory in maths, modern foreign languages, religious education and physical education. The school has experienced a high turnover of staff in recent years and had difficulties in recruitment in some subject areas. This has resulted in turbulence for some classes and underachievement for some students, especially in modern foreign languages.

Sixth form

27. The main strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form are broadly the same as in the main school, with the exception that the impact of staffing difficulties has not been as great. The curriculum offered in the sixth form meets the needs of students well. It has been extended in recent years to enable as many students as possible to take advantage of what being in the sixth form has to offer. It now provides a wide range of A Level and AS level courses, good opportunities for vocational education through AVCE courses, key GCSE courses, general studies and religious education. Students are well supported in their preparation for higher education and employment. The school attracts over forty external students annually, because of the breadth of subjects on offer. Retention rates in the sixth form are good. The opportunities are very good for sixth formers to take part in a very good range of worthwhile extension and enrichment activities. Many of these involve sixth form students in working with younger students which strongly supports the personal development of both groups. The sixth form benefits from the use of Hinchingsbrooke House. Although the accommodation is not ideal for some teaching, it provides a good environment and atmosphere in which students can learn to work independently.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of support, care and guidance given to students is good. Considerable effort is put into meeting students' needs. The school consults students regularly and their views seriously.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are comprehensive and well-documented
- There have been inconsistencies in the management of health and safety
- Students feel safe in school and measures to prevent bullying are good
- Procedures for the induction, support, monitoring and guidance of students are good
- Tutor time is not consistently well used
- Students' views are taken seriously and they are involved well in the school's work, including the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning

Commentary

28. Procedures for child protection are very good. There are five named staff with responsibility in this area, including two non-teaching staff. Comprehensive advice and guidance is issued to all staff in the school in the "alert books" produced by the special educational needs department. Liaison and communication with the key stage pastoral teams is good, with clear channels to help identify and support vulnerable students, using outside agencies where needed.
29. The appropriately constituted health and safety committee meets regularly. The recently appointed manager for this area has identified the need to ensure that policies are more consistently implemented and inspectors agree with this judgement. For example, the programme of risk assessment has slipped somewhat and within art and design, formal risk assessments have only recently been completed. In physical education the rules on the wearing of jewellery in practical lessons are not consistently applied.
30. When interviewed, students said that they "felt safe" in the school, that "bullying was rare" and that the school dealt with it when it occurred. Year 7 students said that they were not afraid of older students and that they knew about the anti-bullying code. The anti – bullying club, provides a good first point of contact for students who have concerns and gives older students good opportunities to take on some responsibility.
31. Year 7 receive a good induction to the school. All new students attend a taster day in July and teachers visit partner primary schools to help identify any students who may need particular help or support. In English, maths and science, students work on jointly planned topics in their last half-term in primary school and continue with these when they start Year 7, to help make the transition easier.
32. Students and parents receive termly progress reports. These show students' actual levels compared to their target levels for the end of Year 9. The same is done with GCSE grades in Years 10 and 11. This regular information provides a good basis for form tutors and key stage managers to track students' progress. Guidance on choosing options for GCSE has recently been improved and students have good access to Connexions advisers to discuss careers and future plans. Students in Year 11 are well supported in their preparations for the GCSE examinations. They all receive advice on organising a revision programme and there are good opportunities to attend extra revision classes.
33. From time to time, students have one-to-one or small group interviews with their tutors. These are valuable as a way for tutors to get to know students better, and to play a role in their overall personal development. The school has used data well to identify groups of students who are potentially at risk of under-achieving and who might then benefit from these interviews. However, Year 11 students did not think that they were very useful in terms of helping them improve their GCSE grades because, "form tutors don't know what you do in lessons".
34. In Year 7 form tutor time is generally well used, with a planned programme of activities such as silent reading. However, as students move through the school, less use is made of this time, and in Years 10 and 11 students are often doing little that is constructive for the first twenty minutes of the day.
35. The school has good arrangements for seeking students' views. A strong feature is the recent involvement of students in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education in Years 10 and 11. Year 7 students have been surveyed about their experiences in the transition from primary to secondary education, and the points they raised have been acted upon. Students are encouraged to analyse their termly reports and to set targets with their form tutors. After a lapse, the school council

is being revived under the leadership of senior sixth formers, so that students in Years 7 to 11 are starting to be able to put forward their ideas again on whole-school issues.

36. The assessment of students with special educational needs is good as the school has set up secure systems for assessing students' needs at entry to the school and throughout the school years through testing for literacy needs and liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and pastoral staff. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed to support the transition of students from Year 6 to 7 through a system of co-tutoring. They play an active role in monitoring progress made by students with statements against their targets by completing monitoring reports for each lesson. This information is used effectively for the pastoral support meetings. This results in the SENCO having a clear view of the progress made by statemented students and those on school action plus who also have individual education plans or pastoral support plans and the nature of the intervention needed. The requirements of the Code of Practice are met and reviews of progress which involve parents and students are held regularly.
37. Provision for students with English as an additional language is organised within the Inclusion / Learning Support faculty. It is well managed by the coordinator of special educational needs who has a good overview of provision, is knowledgeable of issues and is aware of gaps in support relating to English as an additional language. The policy document 'Making Equality a Reality' provides a good vision for English as an additional language within the school. Very few students are at early stages of learning English as an additional language and support is designed to meet their individual needs including one to one tuition and in-class support in a range of subjects. This is effective practice. Good language assessments are used to devise the support programmes. The impact of this support is monitored using data such as end of key stage results, improvements in attendance and feedback from parents and carers with whom the team has good, close contacts. This data shows the support is effective overall.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems for the induction and the monitoring of students' progress are very good
- Students find teachers friendly, supportive and approachable
- Students in the sixth form are thoroughly involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects
- Students do not receive enough feedback about their progress on the core ICT course

Commentary

38. The quality of support, care and guidance is very good. Students play a prominent role in the development of the sixth form and in the life of the school as a whole. All Year 11 students planning to enrol in the sixth form are interviewed by the sixth form guidance team and this helps to make sure that students start off following an appropriate range of courses. As they move through the sixth form, students' progress is closely monitored with a system of reports and interviews with tutors. A strength of the system is that a relatively small, cohesive group of professional tutors brings a consistent approach to the process. Attendance is checked in every lesson and tutors monitor patterns of attendance closely.
39. Students themselves say that their work is very closely monitored, and that teachers are approachable, friendly and supportive. They value the "brilliant advice" which is available about applying to university and filling in the application forms. Students who transfer into the sixth form from other schools greatly value the support they receive. All students follow an ICT course, and some students on this course do not get enough feedback on the quality of their work.
40. The sixth form leadership has very effectively created an ethos in which students are treated as equal members of the team which is striving for improvement and success. Students' opinions are central to the reviews of provision by departments. In-depth interviews with 50 students last spring contributed to the development of a 'best practice' model for teaching and learning in the Post-16 phase. This has helped raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now very good. Students are confident that their wide-ranging ideas are listened to and valued, from improving the opportunities for Years 12 and 13 to mix socially, to challenging the curriculum offer in Years 10 and 11. Sixth formers are heavily involved in the life of the school, for example in the school council, and

have a very positive impact on the school's provision for the academic support and personal development of younger students.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community which contribute well to the overall quality of education in both the main school and the sixth form.

Main strengths

- Parents have access to a good range of information about the school and their children's progress and they support the work of the school well
- The school makes good use of its community links to enrich provision in several areas of its work and to support major developments
- The school is an active member of the local networks of schools which benefit students and staff

Commentary

41. Parents are given good information about the school through written material such as the termly newsletter and meetings like the well-attended educational forums organised by the Hinchingsbrooke School Association. Good use is made of electronic communication with a significant proportion of parents signed up to *Parentmail*. Nevertheless, some parents report that they do not always receive replies to their messages. There is a very good reporting structure whereby parents receive a termly report on their child's progress which clearly shows the standards their child is attaining and what needs to be done to achieve the next step. The quality of reports has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school has responded well to parents' wishes to meet subject teachers and is re-introducing the traditional-style parents' evening. This will supplement the review day when parents turn out in large numbers to meet form tutors and discuss their child's overall progress and targets. The school acknowledges that it has not communicated the new arrangements for meeting teachers as effectively as it could have done. Parents make a positive contribution to their children's education by supporting the school on matters such as transport to music and sports activities. A teaching assistant with a role as pastoral support manager is effective in building up relationships with parents who are not comfortable in approaching the school, by undertaking home visits, for example. The school seeks parents' views on issues such as how well their Year 7 child has settled and takes action, for example arranging an anti-bullying workshop to allay fears about how this topic is handled.
42. The school works well with the local community. The sports facilities on the site are extensively used by local clubs. The Christian element of assemblies is boosted by the termly visit of representatives from Huntingdon Churches Together. A good range of speakers is deployed on the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. Good use is made of the in-house catering company which provides a vocational course for students in Years 10 and 11. The school site is well used by the local community who come to events at the Performing Arts Centre and Hinchingsbrooke House. The Hinchingsbrooke Foundation makes significant grants to the school and to individual students. Subjects like mathematics, science and design and technology take part in various local competitions but have not developed significant links with firms in the area. There is limited use of community resources in history and geography.
43. The school has good links with primary schools and these contribute well to the successful arrangements for transfer from primary to secondary education. A growing number of students in Years 10 and 11 benefit from a college link which enables them to undertake work-related learning one day a week. Staff are able to take advantage of the training events which the consortia of schools are able to arrange. The head teacher is currently chair of the local secondary schools partnership which has an important role in sharing best practice and driving forward educational developments such as the 14 to 19 curriculum. There is a useful link with a special school that benefits students from both schools. The school works very closely with Cambridge and de Montfort universities to train new teachers. Local schools, as well as parents and businesses, have supported the school well in its successful bid for specialist Sports College status which will begin in September 2005.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good opportunities to take an active part in the local community
- Good links with universities help to prepare students well for the next stage of their education
- Most subjects do not exploit the resources of the local area as much as they could

Commentary

44. Partnerships are good in the sixth form. Parents are given good information about the school's expectations and they are kept well informed about their child's progress and targets through regular reports. An appropriate balance is struck between giving students responsibility for their own education and involving parents when necessary. Students have good opportunities to take an active part in the local community which enhances their personal development. For example, they are represented on the local youth council and Connexions service and host a pensioners' Christmas party and carol service. The two companies based on the school site provide valuable work experience and part-time employment for some students, as well as NVQ courses for those who need a vocational route to fulfil their career goals. The good links with local universities contribute to the effective guidance offered to students and their parents on the transfer to higher education. Most subjects, however, have limited links with other organisations and do not do as much as they could to enrich the curriculum by exploiting the various resources in the area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the head teacher is very good. Governance is very good. Leadership by key staff is good and management effective.

Main strengths

- The head teacher has generated a sense of optimism and shared goals
- The head teacher and senior leadership team have introduced more rigorous approaches to self review and monitoring
- Leadership and management of the sixth form is very good
- Governors have a very accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- Senior staff have clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- Financial systems are very well managed
- The school has worked hard to recruit and retain staff

Commentary

45. The governors give very good support to the school. They have diverse experience and very strong links with parents and the community. Following the previous report, they have worked in partnership to shape and direct the school's priorities including those for the sixth form. They have a very good understanding of the school's performance; they are robust in questioning and challenge key staff very effectively to guide and support improvement. Governors are formed into very efficient committees and are individually attached to departments to monitor and support work. They are fully aware of their responsibilities and the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are holding the school to account in tackling any weaknesses to ensure that statutory requirements and all aspects of the national curriculum are met. Action on the previous report was initially slow but structures now operational are systematic and robust. The school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship although governors continue to explore possibilities, and the annual report to parents does not provide all the information needed on special educational needs; governors meet their responsibilities in other areas.
46. The head teacher provides very good leadership. He has very high aspirations for the school and shares, with governors, an understanding of the school's potential and capacity for improvement. Since his appointment he and governors have embarked on a programme for improvement that has challenged some established, though not always effective, working practices. Rather than resenting the changes he has introduced, staff have been energised and there is an air of optimism about the future direction of the school. A contributing factor has been the recent successful bid for specialist

status. The planning process brought staff and students together with a common purpose and shared ambitions. Teamwork in the senior team, departments and across year groups is very strong, reflecting a commitment to the school's aims, equality of opportunity and social inclusion.

47. To spearhead these and other developments funding has been used to good effect to restructure the senior team and in some cases to redistribute key responsibilities. There is a good balance of experience and expertise and a greater clarity and transparency about delegated responsibilities. As line managers, senior leaders are accountable both for standards of achievement and for keeping a close watch on how improvement targets and deadlines are progressing. Performance management targets, alongside professional development and training programmes are playing an important and effective role in giving a more rigorous and sharper edge to the management of change. Teaching has improved since the last inspection.
48. Leadership of many subjects and whole school initiatives is at least good and often very good. There are some notable strengths, including for example, a range of monitoring activities introduced to provide a more rounded view of improvements. Here, in addition to the regular scrutiny of students' work, the views of parents, students and teachers are regularly canvassed. In most cases these monitoring activities have been very successful in shaping whole school and departmental improvement plans. The implementation of programmes for gifted and talented students with special educational needs have been well led and co-ordinated across the school. There are significant and particular weaknesses in the leadership and management of music and modern foreign languages.
49. The leadership and management of the special educational needs department is very good and makes a strong contribution to the development of inclusive provision in the school. The co-ordination of the extensive range of external services for students is good which results in integrated provision which is well targeted to need. Specialist teachers are effective in taking lessons with lower ability students in Years 10 and 11 and are well placed to extend the sharing of effective practice in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs with non-specialists.
50. In some areas of the school the pace of improvement has been slower than expected because of the prolonged absence of some teachers or a high turnover of staff. The school has done what it can to minimise the impact of these staffing difficulties. However, a relatively small but significant number of students have had their learning interrupted. As a temporary measure, some non-specialist teachers have been appointed to cover vacancies.
51. The commitment to the continuing development of staff is good. It is focused on the school's priorities as identified in the school's and departments' improvement plans. In addition, it provides opportunities for staff to extend their own professional expertise. The impact of staff development is monitored effectively through performance management and through monitoring and evaluation reviews. New staff, including newly qualified teachers, are supported very well. The school has close links with Cambridge University, and De Montfort University, Bedford, and contributes very effectively to initial teacher training. Whilst the school is currently experiencing difficulties with the recruitment of staff, senior managers very actively seek ways of attracting and retaining good staff, and do all they can to deploy staff in the best possible way for the students.
52. The 2003 audit, requested by the head teacher when he was appointed, revealed a number of serious shortcomings in financial management and procedures. These are currently being addressed, to the satisfaction of governors and LEA. The school currently projects a deficit at the end of 2004/2005 of £463,000 and is working closely with the local authority to develop an acceptable recovery plan. Following a major restructuring programme finances are very well controlled and managed. Governors receive accurate and up-to-date information, presented in ways that give them easy access to monitor income and expenditure. All contracts and spending are subject to rigorous checking to ensure they meet with the principles of 'best value'. The management of finance is now on a firm footing and represents a significant improvement on previous practice. The head teacher and governors have plans to maximise the opportunities for raising money. The plans are innovative, designed to capitalise on the uniqueness of the House, the hospitality business and the benefits of specialist college status.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	7,108,112
Total expenditure	7,542,311*
Expenditure per student	4126

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	(260,291)
Balance carried forward to the next	(423,908)

*Includes licensed deficit of (£250000)

Sixth form

Main strength

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good and based on ambitious plans for future developments and courses

Commentary

53. As in the main school the future direction for the sixth form is based on a shared vision and ambitious plans for future developments and possible expansion. There is a very strong commitment to inclusion, born out in the plans to broaden the curriculum and make the sixth form accessible to more students wishing to follow courses with a stronger vocational bias.
54. Leadership of key staff is very good. The majority of courses are well led and managed. A feature of very good leadership is the teamwork, the strong strategic direction and the maintenance of high standards. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, the roles are new and still developing or difficulties over staffing have not been resolved. The guidance programme is very effectively managed and connections between academic and personal development are very secure.
55. Students are encouraged to develop their own leadership skills and they play a prominent part in the day-to-day management of the school, in organising activities like fund raising events and by working alongside younger students in their lessons. They are reliable and trustworthy young adults who take their responsibilities to the school and to each other very seriously. Key staff actively seek their views and opinions because - what students feel about their courses, how well they are progressing and whether the quality of teaching matches their expectations really matters to the school. A number of changes have been made in response to students' comments and students themselves have come to recognise their shared responsibility for each others learning. Students play an informed and mature part within the school's wider monitoring programme.
56. The sixth form funding contributes a substantial amount to the whole school budget. There are appropriate plans in place to ensure courses are cost effective and where they are not, to find alternative ways of satisfying students' preferences. Currently, sixth form funding subsidises the main school.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work related learning

57. The provision for work related learning is good. The leadership and management of work related learning are good. The school is successfully following national guidelines and statutory requirements are being met. The school has audited the curriculum to identify clearly where work related learning is being delivered in subjects and has ensured that key aspects are taught through PSHE, citizenship and careers education throughout Years 7 to 11.
58. Learning through work is already well developed in the school and has been further improved through the addition of vocational courses such as hairdressing, motor vehicle craft and animal care, introduced into Year 10 through the *Step* programme. Some of these are linked with the local college and some are in house, such as the hospitality and catering course where students from Years 10 to 13 work in the sixth form kitchen whilst studying NVQs at various levels. Students in the sixth form who choose this route have opportunities to prepare meals for conferences and parents

and supervise the younger students. This course is boosting the self-esteem and confidence of students who are now thinking about catering as a career.

59. The school has a well developed programme of two weeks' work experience for all students in Year 10. Some students in Year 11 have further work placements and this has a good impact on their personal development. In 2004 Year 11 also had a day called 'World of Work' where they looked at business and enterprise with visitors from industry and from outside speakers. The 'Guidance' programme, delivered through weekly PHSE lessons, incorporates a personal learning plan where students of all abilities recognise their own skills, abilities and interests. An 'Enterprise' project is undertaken through IT in Year 10 and explores setting up a business which has good relevance to students' work experience.
60. Learning about work is well developed through a very good policy for careers education and guidance. Students have facilities in school to investigate careers and their suitability through an ICT programme which is well utilised. The Connexions service is also used to good effect. In lessons many subjects have work related learning embedded in the curriculum. In geography students look at the structure of employment comparing the UK with Kenya. In modern foreign languages students write about part time jobs and their work experience in their chosen language. In design and technology students design products for an end user and learn about industrial processes.
61. Work related learning is having a positive impact on students' achievements. Analysis of work experience programmes in Year 10 demonstrates that nearly all students find it to be a very worthwhile opportunity. Students feel the work experience programme is very effective in contributing to their personal development, their understanding of the workplace and their overall achievement. The programme of college placements and work placements are having a very good impact on students' attitudes, behaviour and attendance.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is good.

	Year 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

- Good teaching which uses a wide range of activities to involve everyone leads to good achievement
- Examination marking criteria are used very effectively to focus learning, build confidence and support achievement
- Leadership that is committed to securing opportunities for all students and on raising their achievement
- Sometimes where activities are not sufficiently matched to individual need, students do not work as productively as they could
- Very limited access to ICT means that this aspect of the English curriculum is underdeveloped

Commentary

Examination results

62. Results in Year 9 last year were well above those nationally and those of similar schools. Girls performed better than boys though by a similar gap to that nationally. In Year 11 results were in line with those nationally for English Language and well above for English Literature, though not all students in the year group were entered for English literature. In both subjects the most able achieved very good results. Girls outperform boys.

Standards and achievement

63. The standard of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 was above average. Most Year 7 students join the school in a fairly narrow band of attainment, with few very low or high attainers. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. The work seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection was above average. This is because of changes to teaching methods which are having a positive impact on the work of middle and low attaining students so that they are achieving well. Students read with understanding and are prepared to tackle challenging texts. The most able have very well developed reading skills. The range of written work is broad and all are able to write at length because of the effective use of planning activities and helpful structures which support middle and lower attaining students in this area. Spelling and punctuation are largely accurate with the most able using language confidently for creative effect and to express complex ideas.

Teaching and learning

64. Students make good progress because learning is well structured and varied, with a high level of challenge. Good classroom management skills ensure that time is used well and a fast pace is maintained. Creative use is made of student groupings to promote collaboration and support achievement for all. Teachers use their detailed understanding of assessment criteria to improve confidence, as in a Year 11 lesson where discussion of what was needed for a grade B, together with well chosen activities, enabled lower ability students to achieve very well. This is a strength of

the department. Where additional adults are present their work is well directed and students achieve well, as in a Year 9 class where a reading of Macbeth by two teachers in role enabled students to develop effectively their understanding of how to direct a character and added greatly to their enjoyment. In a few lessons time is not well used and there is insufficient matching of work and teaching strategies to individual need, leading to students becoming distracted. In addition teachers do not always check understanding enough or manage behaviour so not all students progress well. In the majority of lessons students expect to work hard and listen well to teachers and to each other. They are prepared to take risks in discussion and this aids their achievement. They talk with confidence, are able to develop their ideas at length and support these with examples. Students are clear about how to improve their work and, because of the explicit sharing of assessment criteria, are able to evaluate their own and other students' work effectively. Marking is detailed and gives precise advice about how to improve which supports students in developing effective redrafting skills.

Leadership and management

65. The very good leadership and management of the department are focused firmly on an inclusive approach as well as raising achievement. Practical strategies to achieve these, linked to the effective use of data, are already having an impact. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, though limited access to ICT means that there are few planned opportunities for it in English. Improvement since the last inspection has been good with a much larger percentage of good and very good teaching and the department is well placed to improve further.

Literacy across the curriculum

66. In general students have good literacy skills which enable them to cope with the demands of different subjects. Progress in developing literacy across the curriculum though satisfactory, has been limited, as the school has had a period without a co-ordinator. However, the appointment of a teacher to this post in September provides the school with the opportunity to extend the effective practice already observed in some subjects notably English and History where good use of writing frames, strategies to support reading skills and a focus on key words provide effective structures on which students can build their work.

Modern foreign languages

French and German were the main focus for inspection, but Spanish and an after-school Russian lesson for Year 11 gifted and talented students were sampled. In Russian, the teaching, learning and achievement were very good and students have made very good progress in a short space of time. The students are committed and enthusiastic and learn new language very quickly. The teacher's subject knowledge and linguistic skills are very good.

Provision in modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Years 7 to 9 are not achieving as much as they should and many lessons are disrupted by unsatisfactory behaviour
- Staffing difficulties are adversely affecting standards
- The range of exchanges and visits abroad is excellent and they are very well supported
- In Year 10, standards of achievement and student attitudes are consistently good

- In Year 11, students in top sets achieve well, but students in middle and lower sets are not doing as well as they should

Commentary

Examination results

67. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, overall results in modern languages were close to the national average. In German, students performed better than in the other subjects they took, whereas in French they did not do as well. Spanish results were above average.

Standards and achievement

68. Students in Years 7 to 9 are achieving below average standards. In a significant number of lessons this is because the quality of teaching and of students' behaviour is unsatisfactory, resulting in slow progress. Elsewhere, a difficulty with recruitment has led to students experiencing a series of short-term teachers, resulting in low levels of work and progress. Where the quality of teaching is good, standards are higher. For example, students in Year 9 in a number of top sets are doing pieces of accurate extended writing which meet the expected level for their year. However, across the department, not enough students are getting the opportunities to do this sort of work, so they cannot easily reach the higher national curriculum levels, which are an important foundation for GCSE work.
69. Results from trial examinations for the current Year 11 show that overall standards are similar to those achieved in the 2004 examinations, although with a more even balance of results between the three languages. The department's own analysis shows that students in top sets are achieving well and are either reaching or exceeding their target minimum grades. However, students in middle and lower sets are mostly not achieving as well as expected. These results are reflected in coursework from top sets which is detailed, accurate and of above average standard. However, in a set 2 French lesson, student attitudes were unsatisfactory and the pace of learning slow, leading to below average standards and achievement. In Year 10, where languages are now optional, standards of behaviour and achievement are consistently good. Taken as a whole, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

70. In Years 7 to 9 the overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Some students have good experiences of language learning and do well. However, in a significant proportion of lessons, the quality of both the teaching and students' behaviour and attitudes are unsatisfactory. In the weaker lessons there is not enough challenge to students to use the foreign language creatively and with a sense of purpose. Students are not always willing learners, but not all teachers are using a wide enough range of behaviour management strategies to deal with this. All teachers are following the topics in the scheme of work, but not all teachers are giving students opportunities to practise more extended tasks.
71. In Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching is good in German. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, students achieved very well because of the good lesson planning, brisk pace and very good relationships. Sample coursework from this class was of a good standard. In another lesson, carefully planned materials and exercises helped students made good progress on the complex topic of adjectival endings.
72. In French, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching is good, both teacher and students use a lot of French, the pace is brisk and activities varied. In the less successful lessons, teachers use more English, the pace is slower and students speak less French. Material made available on a CD-Rom gives students a very good revision resource. Foreign language assistants are deployed effectively and support learning well in both languages. In Spanish, staffing difficulties have led to two classes being merged into one, creating a large class with students of widely differing abilities and attitudes and this has had an adverse impact on standards.

Leadership and management

73. The leadership and management are satisfactory because the detailed and self-critical departmental self-evaluation has identified some of the key areas for improvement, for example French at GCSE. The impressive bank of revision resources now in use indicates the positive impact of the action

taken. The under-achievement of students in Years 9 to 11 has also been identified, but here the action planning is not sufficiently detailed or well targeted. Dealing with staffing problems over a period of time has been a drain on management time, and there has been insufficient opportunity for teachers to watch each other and share effective practice. Compared to the last inspection, standards in examinations are not as high as they were and the standard of teaching and students' behaviour in Years 7 to 9 has fallen. The department runs an impressive range of exchanges and residential visits which cover all three languages and are very well supported. The provision here is much better than in most schools. In the context of a national decline in exchange visits, the school has done very well to maintain these links.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

	Year 7	Year 11
Standards	Above Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Years 9 and 11
- Changes in teachers have affected the quality of teaching and resulted in some students losing motivation and not achieving as well as they could
- In most lessons, time is used effectively and students have good attitudes, responding well to the good questioning of their teachers
- Leadership has identified weaknesses and put in place strategies to remedy them
- Not enough use is made of ICT to develop students' mathematical skills

Commentary

Examination results

74. Results in 2004 in national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. Results have fluctuated from year to year, but the 2004 results are the highest in recent years. Students' results in the GCSE examinations were above the national average. Girls' results were better than boys'. Results in mathematics were not as good as in most other subjects.

Standards and achievement

75. Attainment in mathematics as students enter the school is above average. Standards observed during the inspection were above average at the end of Year 9 and also at the end of Year 11. Achievement is satisfactory across the school. In most lessons students achieve at least satisfactorily. An example of very good achievement was seen in a Year 10 lesson where students progressed from understanding the use of factorising for solving quadratic equations to knowing how to set up quadratic equations from word problems and then solved them successfully. The relatively large number of staff changes which have taken place recently are having an impact on students' achievement. Whilst the school is doing as much as possible to recruit staff and minimise the effect this difficulty is having on some mathematics classes, some students have already had three teachers this academic year. This constant change has resulted in a small minority of students becoming less well motivated, and behaving less well even in a few lessons with well established teachers.

Teaching and learning

76. In most lessons, teachers had a good command of their subject and developed students' understanding of new topics by demonstrating methods very well. Good relationships enabled good learning to take place. Most students were well motivated because activities were time-limited and this focused them on the task set. Students received good support and encouragement through good questioning and explanations, both in whole class activities and when working individually. Lessons generally began with a good starter activity which introduced the students to the main learning points and set the pace. The quality of teaching is, however, variable. In a few less effective lessons, behaviour management strategies were not used well, and this gave some less well-motivated students the opportunity to disrupt the learning of others. Some more able students were not challenged enough and were capable of a higher level of work. A few lessons ended prematurely and several minutes of learning time were lost.
77. Day-to-day assessment is generally good and the inspection evidence showed some teachers using the assessment well to decide what the students needed to learn next, and their planning being adjusted to take account of that. Marking is inconsistent, with some teachers giving helpful comments for improvement, and others not doing so. However, students indicated that they know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

78. Leadership is focused on raising achievement, and recognises that this will be challenging until staffing stabilises. Teachers are being well supported which has done much to lessen the impact of staffing difficulties. The very good classroom practice of senior staff is shared through encouraging staff to develop professionally, in order to remedy the strengths and weaknesses identified within the good department improvement plan. Performance data is analysed well and staff are beginning to be made accountable for students' achievements. Students' progress is checked closely and they are given target levels for future performance. Resources are satisfactory overall. Textbooks are matched well to the needs of students but the department does not find it easy to access the school's computers and the lack of their own ICT equipment, both for staff to teach and for students to learn, means that opportunities for developing mathematical skills through technology are lost. This issue, which was raised at the last inspection, together with a more variable quality of teaching means that progress over the last few years has been unsatisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

79. Students' numeracy skills are above average and are sufficiently developed to enable them to cope with mathematical work in other subjects. In history, students used timelines to demonstrate chronological order, and graphs were constructed in science and geography. In physical education, evidence was seen of analysing graphs and calculating pulse rates, having recorded results from fitness testing using heart monitors. In business studies, students used an appropriate choice of graphs to analyse statistics from market research. Overall, the opportunities given to students to develop their skills in other subjects are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 9 are well above average and students are achieving well

- Lessons are well structured and planned to sustain students' interest and as a result students make good progress
- Not enough emphasis is placed on developing students' skills in scientific enquiry
- The department is very clearly focused on raising standards

Commentary

Examination results

80. Results in the end of Year 9 tests in 2004 were well above average and well above those in similar schools. They were also better than the previous year. GCSE results were above average and in line with those in similar schools.

Standards and achievement

81. Standards are well above average in Year 9, for example in terms of students' ability to write word equations for some chemical reactions and interpret chemical formulae. In Year 11 standards are above average in terms of students' understanding of the reaction of photosynthesis, the action of plant hormones and students' ability to interpret graphical information to determine the best conditions for the Haber process. Students make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. Achievement of those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented is also good.

Teaching and learning

82. Whilst teaching and learning is good overall, it is more consistently effective in Years 7 to 9. Teaching ranges from very good or better to satisfactory, and the overall impact is good. There is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. In the better lessons learning objectives are made clear to students at the outset. Relationships are very good and there is a positive working environment. Explanations are clear and questioning is used to check students' understanding, although the use of more open questioning where students explain their ideas at greater length, is not common. Lessons are well structured and planned with a good variety of activity to engage and sustain students' interest. As a result students make good progress and achieve well. For example in an excellent lesson with Year 8 the teacher told the story of the *Minnemata* food poisoning tragedy in Japan. A very effective demonstration showed how mercury waste in the water becomes progressively more concentrated along the food chain. Students were effectively organised into groups using computers, or drawing story boards, to relate their account of the incident and then made presentations. The lesson concluded with students tackling some demanding Year 9 test questions. The increasing use of ICT is having a positive impact upon teaching and learning. The department has a new ICT suite and Sports College status will enable further expansion of provision.
83. The national strategy for science is having a positive impact on teaching and good progress has been made in implementing this. Starter activities are widely used to provide a stimulating beginning to lessons, and are then followed by the main activity. Concluding activities are less well developed, however,. Students are encouraged to use the proper technical language. There was evidence in some lessons of effective practice in getting students to write explanations in their own words. Some more extended writing has been introduced in Year 8, but is still too restricted. Not enough emphasis is placed upon developing students' skills in scientific enquiry, where students identify factors to investigate, choose one, design the methodology and carry out the experiment. Some practical work does not build on or extend earlier work enough. In satisfactory lessons the pace was less brisk, there was less overall challenge in the activities and there was some inattention by students. These factors detracted from the overall progress made. Good progress has been made in certain aspects of assessment. Some good examples were seen of detailed feedback to students on how to improve, although this is not yet consistent across the department. A positive start has been made on the use of self-assessment by students. Thorough monitoring of students' progress helps to identify signs of underachievement at an early stage. Revision procedures are thorough and the department has some good individualised resources where students can tackle their own areas of weakness.

Leadership and management

84. This is a successful, and improving department which has a clear focus on further raising standards. The thorough review included detailed analysis of performance data and key areas for improvement have been identified. Monitoring of teaching and learning is helping to raise standards and a good start has been made in developing more detailed schemes of work to provide guidance for all staff on effective teaching methods by sharing best practice throughout the department. Technician

support is very good. Curriculum development is appropriate. A new modular GCSE course has been introduced in Year 10, and a new course on Human Physiology and Health will be offered next year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Very good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is limited because of the relatively late adoption of the national strategy
- Very effective leadership is bringing about rapid improvement
- Students have significant gaps in their knowledge of ICT
- Good teaching and much improved planning is leading to rising achievement for all

Commentary

Examination results

85. Results in 2004 were above the national average for the Year 11 students entered. However, only a minority of students took an ICT qualification, and for those not doing so there was no formal ICT teaching. The situation is now resolved so that all students take an ICT course in Years 10 and 11 leading to an ICT qualification. In Year 10 two groups of students are now taking a vocationally orientated applied GCSE course.

Standards and achievement

86. Standards seen during the inspection were in line with course expectations in terms of the level at which students were working but gaps in the breadth of ICT skills were present. Year 9 students have not benefited from the national strategy until the current academic year. In Year 10 students are in their first year of focused ICT teaching. Standards on entry to the school are average and students in Years 7 and 8 have benefited from experiencing the national strategy from their arrival at the school so that their standards are above average. There has been a history of underachievement, which is now being turned around. There have been rapid improvements during the current academic year but while Year 7 students achieve well in relation to their abilities other year groups are still recovering from the previous unsatisfactory provision when essential ICT skills were not taught and their achievement is satisfactory. The students on the applied GCSE course were achieving well.

Teaching and learning

87. Teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. In Years 7 to 9 students now benefit from the adoption of the national strategy and this enables all teachers to deliver well structured lessons that lead to students learning about ICT in a systematic way and covering the requirements of the national curriculum. In the teaching observed good, and often very good relationships created an environment where students could be very effectively supported as they built up their ICT skills systematically. The course has been very well planned and work is well matched to the needs of experienced ICT users so that, for example, they are given the opportunity to use more sophisticated web writing programs.
88. In Year 10 students opting to follow the applied ICT course were well motivated and the tasks set were closely related to the needs of the workplace. For example, in one lesson they were

developing a website for a travel business, and explored the financial implications of setting up a website. Teachers have good classroom control and very good relationships result in a positive learning environment. In the short course GCSE taken by everyone, progress is more variable but is generally good in lessons. However, the years of missed ICT provision lead to gaps in knowledge and understanding that slow progress. For example a Year 11 class had to be taught how to create a mail merge document. In all lessons there was a very strong focus on assessment and the requirements of the examination preparing students well and helping to boost their coursework marks. The after school and lunchtime revision clubs are also valuable in boosting progress. Marking and assessment of students' work is very good with students receiving clear guidance on how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

89. The leadership of ICT is now very good. There is a very clear vision for the subject and its development shared between the school and departmental leadership. The department has been instrumental in helping the school to achieve the NAACE accreditation; an award which recognises a school's success in developing and implementing a strategic approach to ICT. There has been rapid improvement during the current academic year and students are now covering the national curriculum requirements in all years. The introduction of the applied GCSE course is a very positive development. The department has engaged in a rigorous process of self evaluation and has very good plans in place to further develop provision to meet the needs of different groups of learners more effectively.
90. The management has been good in implementing change but there has been insufficient time for the effect of innovations to be seen fully. There has been considerable investment in resources, both human and computers and this has resulted in a very effective team of staff. However, whilst the infrastructure is much improved, the ratio of students to computers is below the national average for secondary schools.
91. Progress since the last inspection has followed a U shaped curve. The last report stated that "almost all Year 11 students entered the short course GCSE last year and results were above average". Between that inspection and the arrival of the new subject leadership, standards and the quality of provision fell dramatically. This year the school has just got back to the position where all students follow an examination course but standards have not yet recovered fully. Provision in Years 7 to 9 has improved, but for too long, many students underachieved because of a lack of provision and missed out on their statutory entitlement. Whilst these issues are now resolved, progress in the past was far too slow.

Information and communications technology across the curriculum

92. ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Students have average skills which some subjects such as physical education make satisfactory use of to support learning. They make use of heart monitors and digital cameras. In science there is an improving situation because the subject has some dedicated computers. However, most subjects do not use ICT well enough because of a lack of access to computers. Despite major investment, the number of computers and related ICT equipment is still inadequate to support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

	Year 7	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is well led and managed
- The staff work together as a team and their enthusiasm contributes well to teaching and learning
- Teachers have good subject knowledge
- Lessons are well planned and organised to ensure that students achieve well
- Work is not always matched to the abilities of all students
- There are very limited opportunities for students to use ICT

Commentary

Examination results

93. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were above average in 2004. At GCSE in 2004 boys results were above average and girls results well above average. The department is aware of the need to improve boys' results in order to close the gap with girls. In order to achieve this, the completion of coursework has been brought forward to Year 10 and students' progress with this is closely monitored.

Standards and achievement

94. Most students enter the school with average standards in geography. By Year 9, most achieve well, improving to a level that is above the expected standard. Year 7 students showed a good knowledge of geographical processes and an understanding of how physical and human ones are interconnected. For example, they could describe the causes of a recent tsunami and the events which followed it. Achievement continues to be good in Years 10 and 11, as standards are consolidated at an above average level for most students. Achievement is limited in a few lessons for less able students because tasks are not well matched to their needs.

Teaching and learning

95. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Most lessons are very well planned, beginning with an activity which draws out the students' interest in the topic being covered. Students work at a good pace. Good questioning ensures that they pay attention and take part in discussions. Teachers show great enthusiasm for the subject and have good subject knowledge. They plan interesting activities which involve students in thinking around an issue in order to draw relevant conclusions. In a Year 9 lesson students had to locate areas of pollution on a map of Japan and then add the knock-on effects of the pollution as they affect the people who lived there. Students in Years 10 and 11 are encouraged to become independent learners. In a Year 10 lesson students were asked to show the results of fieldwork surveys in different ways and then justify their choices, the more able students experimented with different ideas working out the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Leadership and management

96. Leadership is good showing vision and commitment to good teaching and learning. New schemes of work have been put in place which enable good planning. The introduction of new approaches to teaching geography have improved students' attitudes. This has resulted in a rise in the numbers of students moving on to study at A Level. Management is effective, with well worked out procedures for monitoring and improving teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with the strengths being maintained in some areas and improved in others. There is now a well constructed assessment policy which is being developed to enable students to understand the level they are working at and how they can improve their work. Resources are adequate but with a lack of access to data projectors and interactive whiteboards. Although there is a commitment to the use of ICT, plans are often not implemented, due to difficulty in gaining access to computers.

History

Provision in history is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching
- GCSE results are consistently well above average
- There are inconsistencies in assessment practice in Years 7 to 9
- Very good leadership has established history as popular subject in which all students can achieve well
- There is insufficient use of ICT and off-site work to enhance learning in history

Commentary

Examination results

97. In 2004 teacher-assessed standards at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average. The trend of consistently well above average GCSE results was maintained.

Standards and achievement

98. In Year 7 to 9 students achieve well, given that they enter the school with below average historical skills, particularly in analysing sources of evidence. They build on their existing knowledge of historical events and changes and begin to understand the importance of evidence. Students at all levels can select information from a range of visual and written sources. Whilst most can express their understanding in descriptive writing, only those of higher attainment can offer convincing explanations of cause and consequence. Students with special educational needs and those with weak literacy skills are more confident orally than in writing. By Year 9 standards are in line with expectations and provide a firm foundation for GCSE.
99. In Years 10 and 11, students achieve very well in applying these skills to the totally new and challenging content of the Schools History GCSE course. They develop the ability to make inferences and use their prior knowledge when analysing evidence. Higher attaining students make some critical evaluation of the usefulness and reliability of sources. The majority write fluently and at length in constructing historical arguments. Year 11 students analysed and evaluated sources to examine arguments about General Custer as hero or glory hunter, prior to assessing his role in the defeat at the Battle of Little Big Horn. Standards in Year 11 are well above average, with a significant number of students on course to attain the highest GCSE grades.

Teaching and learning

100. Teaching is good because teachers are knowledgeable and convey their enthusiasm for the subject. Clear objectives are linked to both previous and future work to ensure that students build on what they know and make good progress. Students learn well because tasks of increasing challenge enable them to acquire knowledge in manageable steps. The tasks are structured well to the demands of essay questions. Materials are well matched to students' capabilities and those of lower attainment are well supported by teachers and learning assistants. Given such support, Year 9 students were able to categorise the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, thereby gaining insight into its significance and the German reaction to it. Frequent opportunities for discussion and debate challenge students' thinking and reasoning skills. In Years 10 and 11 there is a clear focus on examination technique through the use of mark schemes and the development of a persuasive style of historical writing. The best marking gives very good guidance on the standards reached and on

improvement, though some marking in Years 7 to 9 is less helpful. Most students work hard, behave well and clearly enjoy history. In classes without additional support a small number of students can display negative attitudes and poor behaviour which impedes their progress.

Leadership and management

101. Strategic planning demonstrates an ambitious but realistic vision for the development of the subject. A strong sense of teamwork ensures the collaborative development of the curriculum, with continuous review of work schemes and assessment. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the analysis of performance data identify areas for development and inform the departmental improvement plan. Improvement has been less marked in Years 7 to 9, where the procedures for target setting and tracking do not keep students sufficiently well informed about progress. In all years not enough has been done to develop learning through ICT and through off-site visits and fieldwork but progress has been made in improving the achievement of students with special educational needs through more suitable materials.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 11, not enough time is allocated to teaching the agreed syllabus
- The introduction of the GCSE course in Year 10 is raising standards
- There is some very good teaching particularly in Years 10 and 11 GCSE groups
- Marking of students' work is not consistent within the department
- Information technology is not used enough to improve teaching and learning

Commentary

Examination results

102. GCSE full course results in 2004 were well below national expectations. Just over half the students at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were assessed at Level 5 or above which was below expectations, however, the evidence suggests this was an underestimate of the true standard in that year.

Standards and Achievement

103. Standards in lessons observed and work scrutinised in Years 7 to 9 are average overall. The department has been badly affected over the last three years by a combination of recruitment problems and serious illness. Standards have inevitably been adversely affected despite the best efforts of the department. This situation is still not fully resolved and where there is less than satisfactory achievement it relates to non-specialist teaching. Students enter the school with below average and very varied experiences of religious education. They raise their standards through Years 7 to 9 and their formal Year 9 assessments shows that their achievement is currently satisfactory. More able students in Year 9 produce some work of a very high standard on morality and ethics for example in an extended essay on the existence of God. Students' oral work shows good levels of interest, reflection and understanding. There is still insufficient time in Year 11 to enable students to achieve the standard expected in the Agreed Syllabus. Overall the standard of work of students in the new GCSE short course in Year 10 is average and their achievement is satisfactory. There are however, some outstanding pieces of work, for example on the questions of good, evil and suffering. The small GCSE group in Year 11 achieved very well in a lesson on beliefs and values in Islam building up a model answer together.

Teaching and learning

104. Both teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 10. Where teaching is very good the pace, challenge and expectation and good subject knowledge bring out the best in students who respond well, particularly in oral work as in a very good exchange on forgiveness and punishment. Homework is set regularly. Marking of exercise books is more variable. The most helpful practice offers encouraging comments and guidance on how to improve with some indications of the level students have achieved. Other books have either not been marked up to date or have no meaningful guidance as to better performance. Video clips are used to good effect, for example in a lesson on pilgrimage where students were challenged to listen and extract relevant information. The GCSE RE group in Year 11 worked very well to build up a collaborative answer to an examination question, which was closely related to a real marking scheme. Unsatisfactory teaching, which is characterised by a slower pace and poorer management of behaviour, leads to students learning less than should be the case. Less able students have too little support in class.

Leadership and management

105. The judgement on leadership and management has to take considerable account of the serious and persistent staffing and recruitment difficulties. They are both nevertheless satisfactory because in spite of so much extra work and pressure good progress has been made with a new scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 and the introduction of the new short course GCSE in Y10. The subject leadership provides a very good role model for other teachers. The new formal assessments help students to understand their attainment better and how to set targets for improvement. The department conducts a full analysis of its results and reviews its performance by asking the students to complete their own questionnaire. Appropriate in service training and the gains made by welcoming teacher trainees are moving the department forward with new ideas. The drive to consider a greater variety of teaching and learning activities, especially for the different ability levels in teaching groups is an appropriate focus. ICT is currently underused both for teaching and learning. Some progress has been made with monitoring the work of members of the department. Strenuous efforts are being made to appoint another full time specialist teacher.

Social sciences

106. A GCSE course in **Psychology** commenced this year, as the result of students' requests. In the very good lesson observed, the teacher managed the mixed-ability class expertly. Very good questioning led the students to develop an understanding of conformity, including an appreciation that non-conforming teenage groups conform to their own norms. A challenging sequence of activities engaged the students in sharing their experiences and knowledge, which they did very articulately and reflectively. Detailed comments and advice from the teacher in students' exercise books gave very good guidance on improvement.

TECHNOLOGY

107. The department teaches the four aspects of **design and technology**: resistant materials, graphics, textiles, and food. In addition is also responsible for **child development** where one lesson was sampled. This was a good lesson. In 2004 GCSE results were well below the national average as a result of staffing difficulties, which are now resolved, and students failing to complete coursework. Standards of work seen in the lesson and students' work were in line with expectations.

Overall provision in design and technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resistant materials results at GCSE are well above average
- Specialist teachers motivate students by their own enthusiasm
- The assessment and monitoring of students work is very good
- Lack of cohesion between different subject areas in the department restricts the sharing of effective practice

Commentary

Examination results, standards and achievement

108. Current Year 9 work indicates that attainment is in line with national expectations which shows good achievement since attainment was below expectation on entry to the school. By the end of Year 11 students are above national expectations and this shows very good achievement. GCSE results in 2004 were above the national average overall and well above in resistant materials. Graphics suffered with disappointing results this year, partly due to staff shortages and to changing examination boards. All issues have been addressed with a highly structured framework of deadlines, more use of exemplar material and detailed revision books produced within the department. In 2004 some 'A' grade work was kept by the new examination board for use as exemplars, which shows that there is now a good understanding of the examination requirements.

Teaching and learning

109. Teaching and learning are good overall and has considerable strengths in Years 10 and 11 where some teaching was very good and excellent. Lessons are generally well planned but in some cases teachers' expectations of students are not sufficiently high and students don't achieve as much as they could. Good questioning by teachers establishes students' knowledge and understanding of topics covered. Many of the lessons have a variety of interesting activities that keep students focused and working hard. Some lessons lack pace and the strategies needed to make theory lessons more exciting and to engage students' interest for longer periods. Teachers encourage students to be competitive and students enter the *Rotary Young Cook of the Year* and *Young Designer of the Year* competitions with good success. Students know their attainment levels and how to improve them. Some poor behaviour by a few students hinders learning in some lessons and strategies to manage this need to be put in place. Teachers have good relationships with the students and use humour and enthusiasm to motivate them to achieve higher success.

Leadership and management

110. Leadership and management are good. Many new procedures have successfully been put in place to raise standards such as new schemes of work, monitoring and evaluation of students' work and using the data to target problem areas. The Project Progress Record sheets used in resistant materials and graphics are an excellent example of a scheme designed to enable all staff and students to see a students' progress throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 at a glance. Staff give generously of their time by having 'open house' sessions after school and on Saturdays during coursework time. Many aspects are being considered to ensure all students are catered for and a non-examination course is being offered to some lower ability students to teach basic building and life skills and is proving very successful. More training is needed to support staff and ensure they all have the necessary skills to raise standards in the department. Strategies are under review for trying to raise the achievement of boys to that of the girls. There is a strong vision for the direction of the department but this is hindered by the lack of teamwork between the two areas of design technology. The strengths, effective practice and behaviour management of both areas need to be shared. Self-evaluation is ongoing and all staff are keen for the department to prosper. The energy and excitement apparent in the resistant materials and graphics areas needs to be emulated across all areas to encourage students to opt for design technology, and to attract the whole range of student ability including the high achievers.
111. Accommodation is satisfactory but the open plan system causes some disturbance when students move through during lessons. Use of information and communication technology and computer aided design and manufacturing is good at in Years 10 and 11, but more investment is needed to enable Years 7 to 9 to have sufficient access during lesson time and to develop the systems and control element in design and technology. Extra curricular activities are good with a variety of

enrichment offered both in the department and off site. Gifted and talented students are encouraged to enter competitions and to attend revision classes to enable them to access the higher grades. Where technician and learning support is available it is well deployed and is a valuable resource for the department, particularly in support for students with special educational needs. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. All issues raised in the last report have been resolved apart from the lack of liaison between the two areas of the department which has not improved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The school offers courses in art, music and drama. **Art and music** were the focus subjects for inspection and **drama** was sampled. Students enjoy their drama lessons and achieve well because the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers is so infectious. In both of the lessons seen teachers used effective demonstrations to support students in raising the level of their performance and through detailed and expert direction enhanced students' performance skills. In these lessons students showed good team work, both in terms of dramatic awareness of stage movements and blocking and in relation to watching and assessing each other's performances. The proportion of A* to C grades was above average last year with boys' results being well above average.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Very good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Very good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Innovative curriculum developments in Years 10 and 11 meet students' needs very well
- In Years 7 to 9 standards are lower than might be expected because the work is not always matched to students' potential achievement
- There is a very good spread of experience and expertise in the department and very good teamwork
- Guidelines on health and safety have not been managed appropriately at whole school and department levels

Commentary

Examination results

112. In 2004 teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 showed standards to be in line with those reported nationally. These results are lower than might be expected given students' attainment in their core subjects. The results of the single award GCSE examinations in the same year were significantly above national averages with twice the national average gaining the highest A* and A grades. Both boys and girls performed better than boys and girls nationally. Results reflect a similar pattern and level of achievement to students' performance in their other examinations. Attainment in the applied GCSE course shows half the students gained A or B grades.

Standards and achievement

113. In Year 7 students make good progress. They learn basic colour theory and colour mixing and go on to use a range of different materials, working in two and three dimensions. However, by Year 9 overall standards are lower than expected, using students predicted achievements in the core subjects as an indicator of their potential attainment. Examples of very good clay modelling showed

imaginative use of materials to change the surface quality of the clay and to 'describe' for example facial details, armour and chain mail. Much of the work was above expectation but the use of sketchbooks, standards of research and written tasks were lower because the work that was set lacked the level of challenge students were clearly capable of.

114. Year 10 students in both the vocational and fine art courses are making very good progress and standards are high. They respond very positively to the teachers high expectations and they like the structure of the courses where common starting points lead to personalised work. Some very good ceramics and sculptural work was seen. Practical work was backed-up by good quality design sheets and excellent opportunities for critical analysis as students explained their ideas and decision-making to the rest of the class. Students in Year 11 have a very good understanding of the marking criteria and course requirements and benefit from detained one-to-one guidance on how to improve their work. Their achievement is particularly impressive in the single award courses given that the allocated time of 2 hours per week is less than in most schools. In all years there are opportunities for students to use digital media although in practice the depth and scope of the work is dependent on the expertise of teachers.

Teaching and learning

115. Teachers have very good specialist skills and their experience and teamwork has helped to broaden the option system, shape improvements and raise standards. Behaviour is generally well managed and students are enthusiastic learners. They are interested and inspired by the teachers' own work and exemplar materials and the work of sixth formers displayed around the school. Effective use is made of assessment criteria to plan lessons, monitor progress and give feedback to Year 10 and 11 students. In younger classes there is not the same rigorous attention to ensuring students are set work that is matched to their ability and potential.

Leadership and management

116. The department makes a significant contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the ethos of the school. The process of departmental evaluation has been thoughtful and rigorous in shaping an option programme that meets the needs and aspirations of students. The applied GCSE is still fairly new but an on-going challenge for the department and the school is to ensure that students fully explore and experience the vocational opportunities. Evaluating performance in Years 7 to 9 has so far been less rigorous and searching in identifying areas for improvement. However, the use of ICT and the need for training has rightly been identified as a key area for improvement. In addition the department is looking to refine the systems for assessing standards in Years 7 to 9. The health and safety risk assessments have only recently been completed. The level of clay dust in the pottery areas is too high and not enough has been done to ensure the areas are cleaned correctly. Technical staff have not been given the necessary training to load and fire the kiln.

MUSIC

Provision in music is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music makes an important contribution to the overall life of the school through very good extra-curricular activities and productions which involve many students
- Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory
- The organization and structure of the scheme of work is unsatisfactory
- Results at GCSE are consistently well above the national average
- Accommodation is excellent and resources are good

Commentary

Examination results

117. In 2004 almost all the students entered for GCSE music gained grades A*-C. These results are well above the national average and have been consistently so since the last inspection.

Standards and achievement

118. Standards observed in Years 10 and 11 were above average. Students produce extended, well-structured compositions which in some cases make good use of music technology. In a year 10 lesson students produced good minimalist compositions using keyboards with on-board sequencers. Most students perform with confidence and skill.
119. Students enter the school achieving standards in music which are in line with the national average. However, by the end of Year 9 standards are below average for all students except for the significant number who receive instrumental lessons. In Year 7, students create imaginative and well structured compositions based on extended vocal techniques, pentatonic scales and extra-musical stimuli such as film clips. Most have a good sense of pulse and can maintain an independent part in an ensemble. In Year 9 however, most students struggle to compose extended compositions and performances lack confidence which means that at best their achievement is satisfactory. The lack of a coherent scheme of work is a significant contributing factor to the decline in standards.

Teaching and learning

120. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good overall with some very good teaching taking place. In a very good Year 11 lesson, the teacher organized individual targets for students and ensured that they worked with enthusiasm even when unsupervised. In a Year 10 lesson on minimalism, good teaching resulted in students producing compositions of a good standard with two examples of outstanding work.
121. In Years 7 to 9 teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good but is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good or better, students are involved in musical activities which bring together performing composing and listening and are given opportunities to be creative and to make artistic decisions. Students have a clear understanding of what to do when working in groups and teaching and resources take account of students' musical interests and the different ways in which they learn musically. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, work is not well-matched to students' abilities and interests and musical theory and instrumental technique are not linked to a particular musical style or genre. In these lessons students' behaviour is unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management

122. The provision in music is satisfactory overall, despite the weaknesses, because of the overall contribution it makes to the students' personal and social development. Students have many opportunities to be involved in making music and in using music in all aspects of the performing arts. They respond well to these. The wide range of extra-curricular musical groups perform to a high standard. The number of students receiving instrumental lessons is also well above the national average. Accommodation for music is excellent. Classrooms are spacious and there are large practice rooms. The department possesses a good range of acoustic and electronic instruments, but there is a need for more computer-based music technology.
123. However, the leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The department handbook has not been updated to take account of revisions to the national curriculum made in

2000. The scheme of work consists of a number of module outlines but no agreed order in which they are to be taught, not do they always identify learning aims or outcomes. The unsatisfactory scheme of work undermines the effectiveness of some consistently good and very good teaching which is taking place in the department. The previous inspection raised two significant issues: the lack of curriculum time for music and the need to revise the schemes of work. Curriculum time for music is now sufficient but the scheme of work remains inadequate for supporting teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11 non-examination	Year 11 GCSE
Standards	Average	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has assisted the school in attaining sports college status
- Effective teaching is helping all students to learn and achieve well and leads to above average standards in examination groups
- Students have very good attitudes and this ensures good learning and achievement
- Extra-curricular activities give very good opportunities for students to extend their learning and experience
- Inconsistency in lesson evaluations, assessment and marking affects further improvement and achievement

Commentary

Examination results

124. GCSE results in 2004 were above average. More boys than girls were entered on the course and students do better in physical education than in many of their other subjects. Students do well when results are compared with predicted results but the proportion of boys who attain D rather than C grades is above the national average.

Standards and achievement

125. Students come from many different primary schools with varying access to facilities. A school sports co-ordinator has not been appointed for the area and a programme to link standards and tackle improvement, in conjunction with this scheme, has not yet begun. Students have below average skills in some activities when they enter the school. In Year 7, students are pleased to relate their progress in gymnastics since they started in the school. They are aware of the need to add quality to their movements and can link simple sequences of movement using their growing skills. Students' standards are average in Year 9, with top sets performing above this, but all students are achieving well from their starting points in Year 7. By the end of Year 11 standards for those following the core curriculum and the GCSE courses are above average and so achievement is good overall. Students acquire practical skills quickly because they listen and respond well to points for improvement. High-attaining students are challenged well, and lower-attaining students learn well because teachers break down tasks. Students with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language achieve well when there are clear demonstrations. Standards achieved by talented team players are very high and students have very good opportunities to perform up to national levels. The school is working on an effective programme to confront non-participation as one of the objectives within the school's sports college bid.

Teaching and learning

126. Students' observation is effective in promoting their learning. For example, Year 7 students, in the early stages of gymnastics, learned how to improve their movement vocabulary by viewing one another's work and evaluating the performance. Lessons are well planned, with high expectations of behaviour, participation and performance so that students achieve well and respond and learn effectively. Students demonstrate good personal development; they learn well from each other and cooperate well together. Opportunities to extend learning in citizenship are slow in developing. ICT is infrequently used but in GCSE lessons heart monitors are used effectively to check fitness and to measure change in heart rate before, during and after exercise. There are good opportunities for research on the school website and the Internet and in the good provision of books in the library. Lessons are not well linked with National Curriculum assessment and there are few opportunities to compare activities with national curriculum levels to see how well students are doing. On the GCSE course marking does not always highlight areas for improvement or clearly relate to grades and assessment is not used to help students to check their progress and measure performance against targets. Teachers usually review lessons to consolidate learning, but this is not done consistently to identify strengths and weaknesses as well as areas for improvement.

Leadership and management

127. Good leadership has given effective direction to improve standards since the previous report and the targeting of borderline C/D pass rates is more rigorous. Courses and activities are well chosen to interest students but proposed changes at the time of the previous inspection have not developed. The curriculum is to be regularly evaluated and monitored under the proposals within the sports college bid. There is encouragement in lessons to widen students' experience and this has improved work related learning skills; there are good examples in lessons of problem solving and activities which link practical and theory but this is not consistent at an early stage to provide a solid base for the GCSE theory course. Satisfactory management ensures guidance for teachers in schemes of work and a handbook but these are not comprehensive enough and consistency in application is not evident in lessons. For example, maintaining the same standards in safety issues and including literacy and numeracy in lessons are not always applied. There is no specific theory room but the new building is planned to meet the needs for linking theory and demonstration in the new sports college. The department has tackled most of the issues in the previous report and gained a prestigious *Sportsmark* so overall improvement since the previous report has been good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school offers a good range of vocational courses in ICT, hospitality and catering, health and social care, the ASDAN Youth Award, business studies, art and design, physical education. Wherever possible the courses make use of the facilities of, and the businesses linked to, Hinchingsbrooke House. This is particularly valuable for NVQ hospitality and catering students and for physical education. ICT was the main focus area and is reported on in the ICT subject report. **Business studies** was sampled. Students were enthusiastic about the course and in the lesson seen, good teaching enabled them to increase their understanding of the functions and responsibilities of human resources departments. Year 11 course work folders showed a very thorough approach to the study of business opportunities in the local area and detailed guidance which enabled students to improve their work.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

All students from Year 7 to Year 11 are timetabled one hour a week for this subject. This course includes modules of citizenship and PSHE.

Provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievements	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good
Progress since the last inspection	N/A	N/A

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of and vision for PSHE and citizenship are a strength
- Strong teaching teams are backed up by well organised programmes of study and good course materials
- The course has good links to outside agencies
- There is inconsistency between departments in the delivery and recording of citizenship

Commentary

Examination results

128. By the end of Year 9, students reach broadly average standards. Students in Year 8 show a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities in society and know the role of government. Students in Year 10 have a satisfactory understanding of the workplace and the most effective practice required to be successful at interview. Achievements in all years were also satisfactory including those students with special educational needs.

Teaching and Learning

129. The good learning in Years 7 to 9 stemmed from good teaching. Teachers were well prepared for their lessons and used varied approaches including active learning methods. Year 9 students were observed using computers well to research websites dealing with 'safe sex' and 'responsible relationships'. Learning in Years 10 and 11 was satisfactory but students' attitudes to PSHE and citizenship were more variable. Students were observed successfully practising interview techniques to be used at the beginning of their imminent work experience. Some students enthusiastically took part in role play whereas others with a more negative attitude would not co-operate.

Leadership and Management

130. Leadership and management are good and demonstrate a passionate belief in the value to students of a good PSHE course and accordingly considerable work has gone into improving the programmes of study. These are now well structured and are backed up by greatly improved resources. The course is delivered by dedicated teams of staff who are enthusiastic about their topics which in turn generates interest from the students. These teams are a strength of the programme but have very limited opportunities to meet together to ensure consistency. There is also only a limited amount of linkage between the tutorial programme and the PSHE programme. The co-ordinator has had good support from the Cambridgeshire Guidance Unit which have given training and advice to improve the programmes of study. It has also assisted in the setting up of an assessment and recording programme which is being used this year to record achievements.
131. The co-ordinator and curriculum leaders are systematically auditing the subject departments in the school. In geography and history where this has been completed, schemes of work clearly identify citizenship overlap and teachers refer to this in teaching. Often, where this audit has not been completed, there is no clear reference to citizenship and teaching and learning opportunities are missed. The current cross curricular delivery of citizenship is therefore inconsistent. Students have

satisfactory opportunities to gain understanding and skills in citizenship through the extra curricular programmes on offer at the school.

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 2004 (latest year for which national comparisons are available).

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	3	33.3	10.4	66.7	63.7	30.0	19.8
Business studies	9	0.0	15.4	44.4	75.3	14.4	25.7
Chemistry	8	12.5	13.2	62.5	70.3	22.5	23.0
Communication studies	1	0.0	24.9	100.0	87.2	20.0	32.8
Drama	3	66.7	19.8	100.0	86.6	46.7	30.9
Economics	3	0.0	18.6	66.7	71.6	20.0	25.8
English/Eng language	4	0.0	16.1	100.0	85.3	30.0	29.0
English literature	5	20.0	17.4	100.00	86.2	38.0	29.7
French	2	0.0	19.4	0.0	79.8	0.0	28.2
Design and technology	10	30.0	13.9	90.0	72.6	37.0	24.3
General studies	6	0.0	16.9	50.0	73.6	18.3	25.5
Geography	3	66.7	20.4	100.0	75.5	46.7	27.0
German	4	25.0	18.8	50.0	81.6	20.0	28.8
History	15	6.7	20.8	73.3	82.2	20.7	29.2
Information technology	17	5.9	8.8	94.1	66.6	28.8	20.6
Mathematics	22	4.5	14.1	31.8	59.9	10.5	20.5
Other sciences	1	0.0	14.8	0.0	67.4	0.0	22.8
Other social studies	43	9.3	15.1	79.1	67.8	24.0	23.2
Physics	2	0.0	14.8	100.0	66.4	35.0	22.4
Sociology	20	5.0	19.6	40.0	72.1	13.0	25.9
Spanish	1	0.0	17.0	0.0	77.1	0.0	26.5
Sports/PE studies	5	20.0	11.8	100.0	72.2	38.0	22.8

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-B		% gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	20	65.0	50.2	100.0	98.3	98.0	87.1
Biology	18	66.7	40.0	100.0	96.6	90.0	79.3
Business studies	18	33.3	39.4	100.0	98.9	80.0	81.8
Chemistry	17	35.3	50.0	94.1	97.7	80.0	85.7
Communication studies	13	53.8	40.4	100.0	99.2	89.2	83.5
Drama	7	85.7	42.8	100.0	99.6	100.0	85.1
Economics	16	31.3	54.3	100.0	98.8	76.3	89.8
English/Eng language	13	30.8	36.4	100.0	99.2	73.8	81.1
English literature	20	45.0	44.9	100.0	99.4	86.0	85.5
French	8	37.5	53.1	100.0	99.9	72.5	88.9
Design and technology	30	40.0	35.0	96.7	97.8	78.0	77.9
Geography	6	50.0	46.4	100.0	98.8	76.7	85.2
German	5	40.0	49.6	100.0	98.6	84.0	86.3
History	29	41.4	45.6	93.1	99.0	75.9	85.1
Mathematics	29	58.6	56.6	96.6	96.8	93.8	89.5
Music	4	0.0	37.1	100.0	98.2	45.0	79.5
Other sciences	6	33.3	44.2	100.0	97.4	80.0	82.5
Other social studies	56	25.0	42.5	98.2	97.4	68.2	81.6
Physics	12	58.3	45.3	100.0	96.7	91.7	82.6
Sociology	20	20.0	45.3	100.0	98.5	75.0	84.6
Spanish	5	80.0	53.5	100.0	98.2	96.0	88.7
Sports/PE studies	17	23.5	30.9	100.0	97.8	67.1	75.4
Business	11	36.4	24.1	90.9	91.6	74.5	67.9
Health and social care	9	36.4	24.1	90.9	91.6	74.5	67.9
Performing arts	4	25.0	48.8	100.0	94.7	80.0	85.5
Art and design	1	100.0	45.3	100.0	94.8	100.0	82.4
Information technology	1	0.0	26.9	100.0	88.3	60.0	67.8
Leisure and recreation	1	100.0	18.3	100.0	90.7	100.0	64.6
Travel and tourism	7	14.3	19.6	100.0	90.1	74.3	64.9

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

English Literature was inspected in detail. English Language courses were sampled. Results in English Language were below those nationally in 2004 though all students achieved a pass grade. In the lesson sampled students achieved very well because of a very well planned collaborative activity that effectively used examination assessment criteria and the creative application of ICT to increase the pace of learning.

English literature

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge of leads to a good choice of texts which provides challenge for students of all abilities
- Though marking is detailed and helpful, targets are not always precise enough
- Students value the approachability of staff and the rapid return of work
- There is not enough explicit teaching of strategies to build skills and encourage independence

Commentary

Examination results, standards and achievement

132. Results last year were in line with those nationally. Current standards are above average with a significant amount of very good work. Students are achieving well.

Teaching and learning

133. Students enjoy their lessons and feel well supported because of the approachability of the committed staff team. The excellent subject knowledge of the teachers enables both clear explanation of new material and of social and historical context and leads to probing questioning which extends learning. In the most effective lessons the strong sense of collaborative learning and the emphasis on strategies which encourage independence contribute to the good pace of lessons. Some lessons are strongly teacher dominated, and though students benefit from the expertise of the staff they do not work as productively as in more interactive lessons. The atmosphere in all lessons is open and students are confident to challenge teacher interpretations. Teachers use praise well to build confidence and show genuine appreciation and respect for students' ideas.
134. Students discuss texts with confidence and the most able make connections across subjects to deepen their analysis. Students are respectful of each other's views and there is much exploratory dialogue with confident development of alternative interpretations. Students of all abilities write well and produce good analysis which mixes broader contextual knowledge with detailed reading and analysis. There is evidence of progress during the course, particularly for weaker students. The range of tasks set ensure appropriate challenge for all. Students' folders are well organised with plentiful notes. Marking is detailed and helpful though comments could be more directly related to specific assessment criteria and used to set more precise targets. The detailed marking, quick turn around and the approachability of the teachers are greatly valued by the students and add to their motivation

Leadership and management

135. The leadership of the sixth form courses is satisfactory. The provision is well managed with co-ordination of coursework timing and deadlines and sensitive pairings of staff. Examination results are analysed and have led to some changes in practice. Students' feedback is sought and acted on. There is scope for considerable flexibility in choosing texts and approaches so that staff interests enhance the quality of students' experience. However, this flexibility also leads to some inconsistency in approaches to teaching and assessment which do not always serve students well.
136. Student numbers and the range of English courses are comparable to the time of the last inspection, though there has been a dip in examination performance. Current standards are above average which shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Literacy across the Curriculum

137. Students' above average literacy skills allow effective learning. All are fluent writers though the work of weaker students still contains some technical and stylistic errors. Subjects make a satisfactory contribution to the development of students' skills. Independent research is well promoted in some subjects, though this is inconsistent.

French

Provision in French is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 12 now meet the national average and achievement is satisfactory
- Recent examination results have been below average and students have not achieved as well as expected at AS level
- Standards in Year 13 are below average in speaking, but standards in coursework are higher

Commentary

Examination results

138. In the 2004 A Level examinations all students passed, though with lower grades than the average nationally. In the 2004 AS examinations, results were below average. Two thirds of students passed, and the overall average grade for the group was an E. The majority of students did not reach their target minimum grades.

Standards and achievement

139. The current Year 12 group is much smaller than last year and standards are average. Students were able to conduct interpreting tasks based on information in National Trust leaflets and could also carry out role-plays about part-time jobs, working from memory, by the end of the lesson. Their ability to speak independently is developing, although still with some hesitation.
140. In Year 13, standards are below average. Students have a good knowledge of features of grammar such as the imperfect tense, but were working on this in a context which was below A Level standard. When working on the topic of French speaking countries, students did not express themselves confidently, and were over-reliant on the printed word to support their speaking. A small sample of written coursework was seen, which was of a better standard. Both pieces were based on

extensive Internet research using French sources. The overall quality of language was much better than that seen in the classroom.

Teaching and learning

141. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Year 12 and satisfactory in Year 13. A Year 12 lesson was very effective because students were given time to plan their role-plays and to express their ideas without too much intervention from the teacher. A good emphasis on learning by heart helped students to achieve well in this task. In Year 13, lessons are clearly structured, but the planned activities do not give the best possible opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills.
142. At the start of the course students receive appropriate information about the examination and the content of the course. Students' work is regularly marked and graded and the help and support available from teachers is appreciated. The French assistant makes a good contribution to the subject and this too is appreciated by students. However, students find French much harder than their other subjects and they feel that they are not making as much progress in French as in their other subjects. Students in Year 13 would like less emphasis on the textbook, greater opportunity to learn from contemporary resources and closer integration of grammar and topic work.

Leadership and management

143. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Course evaluations incorporate the results of student questionnaires, but there is scope for more rigorous analysis and follow-up of the results. Outline schemes of work are in place, but these do not contain any guidance on how topics should be developed and what outcomes should be expected from students. The evidence from Year 12 shows some recent improvement, but overall, standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection.

German

Provision in German is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and linguistic skills have a positive impact on raising standards
- The challenge and pace of lessons motivate students to achieve very well in listening speaking and reading
- Very good relationships create a positive learning environment
- The exchange with a German school and the effective deployment of the German assistant raise motivation

Commentary

Examination results

144. Results at A Level in 2004 were average. All students passed and two fifths gained the highest grades. Students achieved or exceeded their predicted grades.

Standards and achievement

145. By the end of Year 13 students' listening and speaking skills are well developed. They communicate confidently and fluently on a range of topics, cope well with unexpected language and situations,

read authentic texts and watch modern German cinema. Their pronunciation and intonation are very good. They have a good awareness of grammar, but it is not consistently put into practice. As a result, their written work is less well developed, although some course work is of A grade standard. In Year 12 students are already at ease using spoken German for general communication and they cope very well with lessons conducted entirely in German. Their pronunciation is good and they have acquired a good general and specialist vocabulary base, which they use effectively when they speak. Their knowledge of basic grammar still has gaps, however, and their written work contains some basic errors. Progress from Year 12 to Year 13 is very good and students achieve very well in relation to their ability in speaking, listening and reading. Achievement in relation to writing is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

146. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they have very good linguistic skills which they use very effectively. Lessons are very well structured and have challenging objectives. A particular strength of the teaching is the very good development of students' speaking and listening skills. Students enjoy using German to communicate their ideas, opinions and feelings. Lessons are very brisk and purposeful and all students are fully supported and stretched. Many of the teaching approaches are very stimulating and very innovative and take into account students' interests and needs. Students work very well in pairs and independently. Homework is used very effectively to consolidate learning. Relationships between students and with teachers are very positive. Students are encouraged to use ICT to do research for course work and most word process written work and some do *Power Point* presentations.

Leadership and management

147. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers work very well together to ensure students have an appropriate balance of experiences. The quality of assessment in the classroom is very good and helps students to improve their work. There is also very good monitoring and marking of students' written work and teachers write comments and set targets to help students to improve. Teachers do not, however, observe each other teaching and the handbook does not contain detailed guidance on teaching approaches. These two factors limit the opportunity to share the most effective practice. The German assistant is well deployed and has a positive impact on raising standards in speaking and listening. The school exchange with a German school has provided opportunities for students to do first hand research for their coursework. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS

The 'A' level courses in Mathematics were inspected. In addition the department runs a Further Mathematics Course at A Level and a GCSE retake group.

Provision in Mathematics is good.

	Year 13
Standard	Good
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A Level mathematics is well led and managed
- Students learn well because teaching is good
- Some lower attaining students do not progress well enough especially at AS level

Commentary

Examination results

148. Results at A Level are above the national average and the results for girls are well above. Most students are making good progress. Mathematics is a popular choice of course with three groups in Year 13 and four AS groups in Year 12. Students are usually expected to achieve a B at GCSE to take A Level Mathematics. However, one group in Year 12 contains students mostly with C at GCSE who will take the AS examinations after two years. In 2004 a significant number of students were ungraded at AS level. The department has taken steps to improve results in 2005 including the introduction of early entry for modular tests. Retention rates at A Level are high.

Teaching and Learning

149. Teachers have developed strong relationships with the students, resulting in trust and confidence. Staff give their time freely at lunchtime and after school running revision and extra support classes and individual support counselling. In lessons, students learn well because the teaching is good. Staff have a high level of subject knowledge and they teach modules where they are most confident. Lessons are well structured and well prepared. Prior knowledge is revised before the introduction of a new topic. Teaching explanations are clear and able students are given opportunities to extend their knowledge, experiment with different methodology, and take control of their learning. Students studying trigonometry and exponential fractions were confident enough to compare and discuss varying approaches to solving problems and work these through with the class using the whiteboard. Some less able students on one year AS courses did not progress as well despite support from class teachers. This was not the case on the two year AS course where less able students were grouped together and were making good progress. Assessment practice was variable and not all students received written advice to assist them in their learning.

Leadership

150. The new leadership of the department has clear strategic vision and sets high standards for staff and students. In addition, sixth form mathematics courses are well managed on a day-to-day basis. Staff training is limited due to budget restraints but when this has taken place it has been targeted to greatest need. The department has recently undertaken a self review which was thorough and identified strengths and weaknesses accurately. As a result key developmental areas are targeted for improvement and strategies have been put in place. For example, mechanics and statistics options are now in place to diversify the opportunities for students and new assessment materials have now been obtained. Students' progress is tracked and they are supported if necessary. The department uses only a limited amount of ICT both in lesson presentation and in student use. All teachers now have laptops and plans are in place to purchase data projectors this summer.

Mathematics across the curriculum

151. Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory overall, both in terms of the standard of students' work and the contribution other subjects make to developing their skills. Students had no difficulty with numeracy in any subject seen and students were sure help would be available from their subject tutors if this was needed and requested. Students used *Excel* spreadsheets to successfully draw and interpret diagrams and charts in psychology and drew and interpreted timelines in history. Good standards were observed in business where students were able to interpret the complex relationships between price and supply and demand. Similarly in science, students were able to undertake complex analysis with graphs and scales. In all cases mathematics was taught and applied well. No member of staff has been asked to co-ordinate mathematics across the curriculum and no audit of numeracy skills has been undertaken.

SCIENCE

Chemistry and physics were inspected in detail and biology was sampled. Biology results in 2004 were well above average. In one very good Year 12 lesson seen, efficient use was made of time. Students examined the results of an experiment on growth of bacteria. They then analysed the data and evaluated the reliability of the procedure. They made good use of statistical techniques and mathematicians gave good support to non-mathematicians.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	N/A

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in students learning and achieving well
- Good achievement in lessons has not always been reflected in higher than expected examination grades
- Teachers are using an increasing range of teaching and learning activities to motivate and engage students' interest

Commentary

Examination results, standards and achievement

152. Examination results in 2004 were average. Standards in Year 13 are above average, for example in students' understanding of electrochemical cells and the preparation of various types of organic compounds such as alcohols, halogen alkanes and phenols, and tests for the different functional groups. Students make good progress and achieve well in lessons.

Teaching and learning

153. Teachers have high expectations and lessons are well structured and planned. Explanations are clear and in the best lessons understanding is skilfully developed. Questioning checks students' understanding and progressively builds up their understanding of the key concepts. They are made to think about principles and make predictions based upon their understanding. In one excellent lesson, for example the teacher moved from a consideration of relative energies of reactants and products to develop the idea of activation energy and to challenge the misconception that this involves the complete breaking of bonds. Continual questioning of students led to the idea of a catalysed reaction having a lower activation energy and to students' understanding the impact of this upon reaction rate in terms of particle theory and the fact that both the forward and back reactions in a reversible reaction will be speeded up. Very good use was made of mathematical modelling to develop students' understanding of dynamic equilibrium. Effects of various factors upon equilibrium were considered and the students predicted the results of an experiment to be carried out later. Concepts are developed and reinforced using an increasing variety of activities including practical work, problem-solving (e.g. mass spectra of organic molecules), extended project work, past questions, comprehension, research, student presentations, use of models and group work.
154. The national strategy for science is having a positive impact with three part lessons, involving a starter activity and a main and concluding activity though the improvements to teaching have not yet been reflected in higher examination results. In one lesson a very good starter activity was very effective in consolidating students' understanding of recent work on organic chemistry. There is some use of ICT, for example for data logging, but overall use is too limited as a result of resource issues. Students enjoy the subject and feel they are making good progress. Teachers give very good support both in and out of lessons. Students' achievements in module tests are broadly in line with expectations rather than above expectations as might be expected from the progress in lessons. The department have identified the need for closer monitoring of students' notes as they vary in quality. Homework is marked regularly with helpful comments but not all teachers are marking with examination grades. Internal tests are not always given regularly.

Leadership and management

155. A new head of department will take up post in September. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching has identified developments which should raise standards further. These include changing to a different course, which is more appealing to the full ability range and provision of different texts. There is currently no centralised system for monitoring students' progress and the early identification of signs of underachievement. Schemes of work do not currently give good guidance to all staff on the most effective teaching methods and promote the sharing of best practice.

Physics

Provision in physics is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average
- Teaching in the department is very good
- Students are well motivated, enthusiastic and keen to learn
- The assessment of students' work is very thorough and provides feedback which enables them to make rapid progress
- The delivery of the course is sometimes restricted by insufficient access to ICT

Commentary

Examination results

156. In 2004 the A Level examination results were well above the national average, as they had been the previous year. All students gained at least a grade E with nearly 60% gaining a grade A or B. AS results were also well above the national average. In relation to their prior attainment a large majority of students achieved better results than predicted.

Standards and achievement

157. The standard of work of the current students is also well above the national average. In year 13 students show a good understanding of the concept of fundamental forces and exchange particles and are able to make links between areas of learning to develop their understanding. Year 12 students are building well on previous GCSE work.
158. Students' competence in the use of mathematics is well developed. They can manipulate equations and perform calculations using appropriate units consistently. Graphical work shows good application of the conventions. Students find the course intellectually stimulating and challenging. They respond by working hard and make very good progress.

Teaching and learning

159. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and so they can respond quickly and accurately to students' queries and offer clear explanation of physics concepts. However, as a consequence, teachers sometimes provide a direct answer instead of encouraging students to think through the problem for themselves and articulating their understanding.
160. Lessons are well paced, challenging and incorporate a variety of activities which maintain interest and motivation. Students would benefit from the more explicit sharing of learning objectives. A key reason for students' very good learning is the excellent relationships between teachers and students and the support provided by the highly committed staff.

161. Students are encouraged to become independent learners and make use of the 'Advancing Physics' course materials, including models and simulations, which are provided on a CD-Rom. Homework is well used to support learning. Assignments include calculations, research topics, presentations and revision questions. These are very thoroughly marked and annotated with recommendations for improvement – a conscientious practice appreciated by the students.

Leadership and management

162. The very good teaching and learning results from the subject being very well led and managed. The decision to change to a more up to date syllabus has proved popular with teachers and students. It is well matched to their interests. However, limited access to ICT has required modifications to the way in which the course is delivered, a situation which has been well managed but is not ideal. The team of teachers works well together sharing ideas and resources. The subject leader provides effective support for the teacher taking the course for the first time. A team of very good technicians is used effectively to provide a good level of support for the department. Data is well used to analyse performance and set targets.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths

- Leadership and management are focused very clearly on improvement
- Expert subject knowledge is the foundation for very good teaching and learning
- Very well managed class discussion ensures that students progress very well

Commentary

Examination results

163. Results in the A Level examinations in 2004 were below those seen nationally. Results in the AS examinations in 2004 were above average, and better than those for 2003.

Standards and achievement

164. Standards at entry to sixth form psychology are below average, with no requirement for students to have gained grade C in GCSE English or mathematics. Standards improve rapidly as the result of innovative and engaging teaching methods which ensure very good achievement. Activities chosen ensure that students of all abilities achieve equally well, gaining a wide perspective on the issues studied. The departments' emphasis on questioning and discussion leads to rapid progress. For example, in a very good Year 13 lesson observed, students held a debate which was very well-managed by a very knowledgeable teacher. This experience ensured that all students progressed to a high level of understanding of the issues relating to research and experimentation in socially sensitive areas.

Teaching and learning

165. Teachers' very good and up-to-date subject and assessment knowledge ensures that they are able to select stimulating resources and tasks. Very good classroom relationships are a feature, ensuring that students cooperate and engage very effectively with their own learning. In a very good and well-planned Year 12 lesson on day care issues, for example, the teacher provided a wide range of relevant and appropriate articles together with a collection of photographs of babies and toddlers of various ages. Groups of students worked industriously to develop arguments for or against day

care, and also to identify weaknesses in their own arguments. At all stages students are expertly encouraged to make links to their prior study and with the literature. A group of Year 13 students compared sample examination responses, confidently identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Good emphasis is placed on literacy and precise terminology. Written feedback on coursework is very constructive and thorough, showing students how to improve. Students are encouraged to make extensive use of the internet in their research outside lessons and software such as spreadsheets are used confidently in coursework, but neither teachers nor students can access ICT in the psychology classrooms.

Leadership and management

166. Enthusiastic, industrious and knowledgeable leadership provides very good role models for the teaching team, encouraging all members to contribute fully. The departmental development plan sets out an ambitious but realistic set of objectives. The effective and well-monitored team functions smoothly and confidently day-to-day, with care being taken to develop and extend less experienced teachers. Challenging targets are set for students. Their achievement is thoroughly monitored, with comparison made between groups of students. The regular use of student questionnaires ensures a good understanding of the students' experience. Students thoroughly enjoy their study of psychology and the high quality of its teaching. Numbers opting for the subject are growing rapidly, with students encouraged by positive reports from those in the year above. Increased numbers are putting pressures on resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in the advanced certificate in vocational education (AVCE) in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	This is a new course

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An AVCE course for all Year 12 students provides a structured ICT experience
- Students lack expected knowledge and understanding because of the lack of ICT provision when they were in the main school
- Teaching is effective in lessons but assessment is inadequate
- Students appreciate the opportunity to gain an ICT qualification

Commentary

Examination results

167. In 2004 only one student took the AVCE and so it is not possible to make national comparisons. There were seventeen entries for the now discontinued AS in ICT and results were above average.

Standards and achievement

168. The school is very unusual in making the three unit AVCE (equivalent to an AS) part of the core curriculum taken by all Year 12 students. This makes comparisons with the national picture difficult because the vast majority of students nationally have chosen the subject as one of a small number of A or AS levels. However, it is clear that standards are below average because students have not had formal ICT teaching in the main school since this only started this year. Even in a Year 12 lesson where students had opted to take a six unit AVCE (equivalent to a full A Level), students were beginning from a very low skill base. For example, the teacher had audited their understanding of spreadsheets and there were many basic concepts with which students were not familiar. One

student out of eighteen felt comfortable with using the sum function and could calculate an average. Absolute referencing was unfamiliar.

Teaching and learning

169. The achievement of students is hindered by their lack of ICT skills because they missed out on vital teaching in the main school. Students they are now having a productive experience in lessons because the teaching observed was invariably good or very good. A common characteristic of the teaching is the focus on the assessment criteria for the examination. A very effective example of this was in a Year 12 lesson where the new unit was introduced by giving students a copy of an examiner's comments on an ICT project. The teacher used this as a focus for explaining to students how they could achieve different marks. Students following the three unit AVCE report that their work is not marked and they do not get formal feedback. They hand in coursework but do not get drafts back to improve. This problem does not apply to the six unit course.
170. In a Year 13 lesson skills were built up very well. Students had researched and prepared for a debate on whether ICT protects the public. In the lesson observed, students were making formal reference to one another's notes to compile reports and were receiving well focused individual support. The working atmosphere in all lessons is good and relationships are very supportive. In one lesson, music playing quietly in the background enhanced the environment. The teacher talked to individuals about their marks and what they had to do to achieve their target grade. This was very good, but in the light of some of the challenging messages being conveyed, Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* seemed a little premature.

Leadership and Management

171. The decision to include ICT as part of the core recognises and attempts to redress the students' lack of formal teaching in the main school. The vision is good and while some students resent the imposition, most recognise the value of an ICT qualification. The strengths in assessment in the main school have yet to be implemented in the sixth form.

ICT across the curriculum

172. The use of ICT by subjects is rather better in the sixth form than in the main school. For example the whole physics course is written on a compact disk so that students can use it at home. In business studies students email work to teachers, have it commented on and returned electronically leading to good communication. Other subjects such as psychology cannot access computers and in vocational subjects such as travel and tourism students have insufficient ICT access. Students have a dedicated computer room for private study.

HUMANITIES

Courses in geography, history, government and politics, law and sociology are taught. The main focus was history, and lessons were sampled in the other areas. In **government and politics** students were able to advance strong cases for and against Britain's continuing membership of the European Community. They were being challenged to develop their ideas in some depth. In a very good **law** lesson students were achieving well. They were applying their knowledge of case law in the context of a mock trial. This developed their skills in arguing and presenting a case and gave other students who did not study law the experience of acting as a jury which was a useful lesson in citizenship. In **sociology** the very knowledgeable teaching helped students to develop their understanding of different theories and perspectives. Students were able to analyse topical events and discuss well the effects and influences of different sources of power in society. A very good **geography** lesson on managing change in an urban environment enabled students to gain confidence in interpreting data and developed their understanding of causes of factors such as rural migration.

History

Provision in history is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well 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

- Students achieve very well as a result of challenging teaching
- Standards are rising as a result of very effective leadership and management
- Very positive attitudes are a major factor in students' achievement
- Students do not have access to a sufficiently wide range of resources

Commentary

Examination results

173. The results in A Level examinations in 2004 were lower than those of the previous year. Girls' performance was in line with the national average but that of boys was well below. The proportion of students gaining A or B grades was close to the national average. Results in AS examinations in Year 12 were also below average, though most students achieved their predicted grade.

Standards and achievement

174. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is average and a small number of students have not taken history at GCSE level. Current standards in the sixth form are better than the examination results mainly because of improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Students in Year 13 show well above average levels of understanding of complex historical events and changes. Students at all levels use research and investigative skills effectively to collect and organise information through the critical analysis of sources. Most students develop the ability to analyse the meaning implicit in essay questions. Students in Year 13 produce high quality coursework in analysing the failures of agricultural policy under both tsarist and communist rule in Russia. They write persuasively to reach conclusions and sustain arguments supported by evidence and show the capacity to take account of different historical interpretations.

Teaching and learning

175. Students respond very positively to the varied and challenging style of teaching. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and infectious enthusiasm stimulate independent thinking and the development of understanding through argument and discussion. Students learn well because tasks enable them to acquire knowledge and understanding in a format tailored to the demands of examination essay questions. In a Year 13 lesson, for example, a 'University Challenge' type quiz generated a mass of factual detail, the significance of which emerged through lively discussion, prompted by good questioning. Students then worked in groups to synthesise and organise information into a structure to address a question on the role of technology in the Battle of the Atlantic. In some lessons pace and momentum were lost when too long was spent on routine tasks or on organising activities. Teachers do not always do enough to ensure the participation of all students in group activities. Marking provides very constructive, subject-specific comment on what has been done well and on what could be done to improve. Teachers know students well and are quick to identify students at risk of not attaining their target grades. Homework is used effectively to extend learning from lessons or to prepare for new topics.

Leadership and management

176. Committed leadership has engendered a strong sense of teamwork and a very inclusive approach towards staff and students. Teaching is shared across the department and staff work collaboratively to review and revise curriculum and assessment. Very effective monitoring procedures and thorough analysis of performance data generate strategies for improvement in teaching, curriculum, guidance and support. Students now benefit from a wider range of teaching and learning styles. The modules of the curriculum are carefully chosen and students enjoy the balance of studies in breadth or in depth from different periods. Close monitoring of their performance enables students to feel well supported and able to seek guidance on any aspect of their work. They do not have access to a sufficiently wide range of resources, including the use of ICT. In particular, their breadth of reading is restricted by a lack of alternatives to textbooks.
177. History makes a very good contribution to students' personal development. There are many opportunities in lessons for them to lead in debate and group activities. A number of students show great commitment to their role as learning assistants in main school history classes, which they carry out with skill and sensitivity.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Provision for design and technology in the sixth form is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths

- Students achieve very well and results are well above average
- The best teaching makes good links between work done in school and the work of professional designers and manufacturers
- Students receive good individual support and feedback which helps them to improve their work

Commentary

Examination results

178. Standards on entry to the sixth form are average but results at AS and A level examinations are very good overall which shows very good achievement. In 2004 nearly all students achieved their target grades and performed as expected. Graphics and food students at AS in 2004 all achieved A to C grades.

Standards and achievement

179. Students in resistant materials have real skills and are their very innovative ideas show a high level of design skills and the ability to translate this into finished products. Graphics work is of a very high standard and coursework folders and prototypes are to be commended for individuality and quality. Students have success in external competitions such as that sponsored by the Royal Navy and Rotary. Links with industry are encouraged to widen the experience of the students.

Teaching and learning

180. Teaching and learning are very good and show some great strengths with an excellent lesson seen in resistant materials using many references to industry and how designers and manufacturers work. This very good quality results in students achieving much better results than might be expected and lower ability students have been able to pass AS.

Leadership and management

181. Leadership and management are very good with good consideration given to the different needs of sixth form students in the department. Students receive individual tuition and feedback on their work and continual evaluation of the methods of examination success is carried out.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The school provides courses in art and design, music, theatre studies, and media studies. Results in **theatre studies** were well above those nationally in 2004 and all students achieved a pass grade. In the lesson sampled, achievement was very good because of carefully planned activities to build confidence, deepen students' involvement in their characters and effective use of examination assessment criteria to support the rehearsal process and evaluation of end of lesson performance. As a result of this students showed a strong sense of stagecraft which raised their performance. Results in **media studies** were above those nationally in 2004 and all students achieved a pass grade. In the lesson sampled achievement was satisfactory because the teacher gave clear explanations about new ideas and students made effective use of note taking strategies to prepare a textual comparison. More probing questioning would have provided more challenge for the higher attaining students and extended the complexity of analysis.

Provision in art and design is very good.

	Year 13
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

- Teachers expertise and their understanding of examination requirements are excellent
- Field trips have a profound impact and lead to excellent work

Commentary

Examination results

182. In 2004 results were significantly above the average. Overall, of the 20 students entered 13 gained either A or B grades. Many more girls than boys choose to study the subject, as is the case nationally. Students achieved very well from their different starting points. Each year a small number of students take the subject with very limited experiences prior to joining the sixth form. Results have remained at these high levels for several years.

Standards and achievement

183. In the current year groups there is a similar pattern of achievement. In Year 12 students make very good progress and respond very positively to the opportunities provided for them. Drawing is considered a high priority and so there are weekly classes devoted to drawing and painting from a life model and all students are encouraged to attend. By Year 13 standards are much higher and form a very secure foundation for figurative painting. The quality of written research demonstrates good standards of critical analysis. There are too few planned opportunities for students to talk about and quote from contemporary as well as historical sources. Whilst most talk confidently about their own work and the artists who inspired them they are more reluctant to disagree or present an alternative view to that held by artists and critics. Students' demonstrate their enjoyment for learning in lessons, and take the initiative to visit museums and galleries in their own time.

184. The annual field trip is a powerful learning experience that will remain with students for many years. The large-scale landscape paintings and drawings that began during a four-day course show advanced levels of independent study and very high standards of painting.

Teaching and learning

185. The very good teaching is characterised by the teachers' passion for the subject and the way this inspires and motivates students. Teachers have an excellent understanding of the examination syllabus and so their guidance to students is constructive and to the point. From these discussions students gain a good understanding of the course requirements and so they use their time effectively, both in and outside of lessons. An excellent example of questioning was seen where the teacher's skilful prompting and searching questions enabled students to understand how the combination of composition and lighting and foreshortening all contributed to the sense of theatre in Caravaggio's work.

Leadership and management

186. The subject is conscientiously led and managed. There is rigorous analysis of A/S and A Level results and effective action to address any areas where improvements can be made. Because of this the high standards of previous years have been maintained. The breadth of the curriculum and the range of experiences all provide students with a very secure platform for further study including entry onto arts and design degree courses.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel

The school offers courses in **travel and tourism**, **catering**, and **physical education**. The focus subject was physical education. In the travel and tourism lesson sampled students were achieving well because the teaching built systematically on previous work and made good use of students' own experience. In a sampled lesson of the NVQ course in **sport and recreation**, Year 12 students were highly motivated by the new course and were making good progress in working independently to plan a Year 7 girls' football tournament.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led, the course is well structured and teachers work to their strengths
- Students have very good attitudes and this boosts their achievement and learning effectively
- Very good extra-curricular activities support the curriculum and enhance learning opportunities
- Teachers feedback on students' work does not offer enough support for improvement and guidance to meet deadlines

Commentary

Examination results

187. In 2003 results at A Level were average. In 2004 results were below this with the physical education results following the pattern in the rest of the school for this year group. AS results in 2004 were high with most boys attaining the higher A and B grades. Retention of students into Year 13 from the Year 12 course is low especially amongst boys. At A Level students achieve in line with their

predicted grades. More boys than girls took A Level in 2003 and 2004 but now there are more girls on the courses.

Standards and achievement

188. Standards in Years 12 are average and students achieve satisfactorily when results at GCSE and predicted grades are taken into account. Students who have not completed the GCSE course are achieving as well as others towards the end of the A/S-level course in Year 12. Year 12 students use technical terms accurately and identify reasons why fitness and heart rate varies in different groups of people. Their coursework, on fitness programmes, developed in personally selected sports areas, gives explanations on performance and reaction times and girls, in particular, relish the opportunities for individual work and conscientiously record and structure their material effectively so they achieve well. A minority of boys are not as well motivated to demonstrate their attainment in written work in an organised way and teachers' monitoring of their work is not frequent or effective enough to keep these lower attaining students to deadlines so they do not achieve as well as others. These students indicate they will not follow the course through to A Level.
189. In Year 13, students are achieving well, building on very high A/S results. They are showing a growing confidence in linking learning across aspects and demonstrate above average standards. They are able to explain the various factors influencing the success of elite performers and how recognition of achievement differs by gender and the popularity of the sport through media influence. Students are able to plan and research for essays; they have good supporting texts in the library and access to ICT facilities is satisfactory. Within lessons ICT is used to support some learning but it is not used widely. Students are able to construct and analyse graphs using tables of results, they collect data and relate theory and practical work well. Talented team players attain very high standards because of the very good opportunities within the extra-curricular programme. 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

190. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, enabling them to provide variety and good examples to illustrate teaching. They are well versed in examination preparation and give some good pointers for success. They extend students' understanding and interest. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students built up a thorough understanding of acceleration and velocity because it was well related to the Seoul Olympics and well-known athletes. They used actual performance data to calculate the acceleration and velocity of different athletes and then constructed graphs to give explanations of performance at the different stages of sprint events. This resulted in confident discussion with opportunities for gifted and talented students to contribute well to the whole group's learning. In most lessons students are involved in good question and answer sessions that probe and check students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers have high expectations of students' preparation, contributions and responsibility for their individual learning but a minority of students fall short of these demands and help by teachers to embed learning through effective evaluations to check understanding is not consistent. Regular homework is set, but the marking does not always identify areas for improvement. Feedback is not always consistent enough to help all students understand how to achieve the targets set. Students are aware of the course's impact on their future careers and see how different topic areas link the whole subject and other subjects.

Leadership and management

191. A well-planned programme is offered to students and teachers mainly work to their strengths. Teachers and students are well focussed on examination technique and this drives improvement. Teachers attend subject examination courses regularly to help to keep students up-to-date. Management systems of targeting, monitoring and reviewing students' progress are satisfactory but when students' strengths and weaknesses are identified action is not taken quickly enough on coursework. Teachers usually advise students adequately.
192. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. A Level results are consistently close to average. The proportion of girls to boys on the course has improved. Teachers and students make the best uses of facilities to link practical and theory work. Students have opportunities for improvement through research and analysis and this assists good understanding of techniques and performance.

BUSINESS

The school offers courses in business studies at A Level and AVCE, and in economics. A Level business studies was the main focus of the inspection and economics was sampled. In the **economics** lesson observed students achieved well because good questioning built up their understanding of economic growth and its implications for environmental and ethical issues.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because the teaching is good
- Activities in lessons are well-tailored to the specific needs of the classes
- Not enough use is made of ICT, mainly because of limited access
- Assessment and marking is good and enables students know how to improve their work and exactly what they need to do to achieve a higher grade

Commentary

Examination results

193. A Level results have improved in recent years and in 2004 were in line with national results. Boys achieved above average results and did better than girls. However, girls' results also improved though still below average. AS results have fluctuated, in 2003 they were above average, but in 2004 they were well below average. The school has taken careful note of the issues raised and amended teaching and assessment approaches accordingly. The results for the modules taken so far in Year 13 indicate well above average results.

Standards and achievement

194. Students are achieving very well and current standards in Year 13 are well above average. Students are knowledgeable and able to argue their business case convincingly, though occasionally reluctant to listen to and evaluate other points of view. Boys tended to dominate discussion, but the evidence from their coursework showed that girls were capable of producing equally high quality work. Course work folders showed that students had drawn on a wide range of appropriate information on human resource theory and practice and from published research. They had then applied this to their evaluation of human resource issues in companies where they had done their work experience. Their analysis was usually thorough and the best work showed the ability to draw well-argued and sophisticated conclusions. Students enjoy business studies and are appreciative of the support and guidance they receive from their teachers.

Teaching and learning

195. Good teaching and learning are contributing strongly to the standards being achieved. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to provide relevant tasks with a good level of challenge. These are well-tailored to the specific needs of the classes. For example in a Year 12 lesson on marketing, students used case studies of large and well-known companies as the basis for their analysis of marketing opportunities and how companies market new products. They used their knowledge well to analyse critically the various strategies used and suggest alternative strategies where the marketing had not had the intended effect. In Year 13, the questioning drew

out from students their existing knowledge of the relationship between price, supply and demand and apply what they knew to a practical analysis. Students' work is carefully and helpfully assessed. Staff have made themselves very familiar with the examination board requirements and assessment criteria, and use these to provide specific guidance. As a result students know how to improve their work and exactly what they need to do to achieve a higher grade.

Leadership and management

196. Business studies courses are led and managed well. In recent years the department has carefully analysed its teaching approaches and students' results. As a result, staff have developed good new courses and re-written schemes of work to encourage a more active approach to teaching and learning. This is assignment based and requires students to undertake considerable independent research. Staff work well as a team and have produced a good range of resources to support students' learning. Teaching is carefully monitored and all staff have benefited from the opportunity to watch other classes. The improvement since the last inspection has been good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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