

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Waterlooville

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116503

Headteacher: Mr C Whitfield

Lead inspector: Akram Khan OBE

Dates of inspection: 8th - 11th November 2004

Inspection number: 268868

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,271
School address:	Stakes Hill Road Waterlooville Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Captain Paul Quinn RN

Date of previous inspection: 26th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oaklands is a larger-than-average-sized, mixed, 11-18, Roman Catholic voluntary aided school. It draws pupils from a very wide catchment area which extends between Petersfield and Clanfield in the north, Fareham in the west, Emsworth in the east, and Hayling Island and Portsmouth in the south. Seventy per cent of its pupils are Catholic and 30 per cent are from practising families of other Christian denominations. As a result of the school's increasing popularity it is oversubscribed and numbers in all years, including in the sixth form, have increased significantly since the last inspection. There are broadly equal numbers of boys and girls in the main school. The sixth form is now of average size, with more female than male students. Pupils come from areas in which the level of social advantage, while varying, is average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There are four pupils in public care. The great majority of pupils are white British, with a few from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is low, with only four pupils at the early stages of language acquisition. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is above the national average, but includes the full ability range. Standards on entry to the sixth form are average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the proportion with statements of special educational needs are both below average. The school received an achievement award in 2000. Pupils participate in Trident Work Experience and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh award at bronze and silver level. As a Catholic/Christian school, it has a strong religious ethos which underpins all aspects of school life.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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31683	Mr Stephen Beaven	Team inspector	Music
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31665	Ms Diane Dale	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Post 16 French
19135	Mr Derek Ebbage	Team inspector	Post-16 Mathematics
11695	Mr Anthony Edwards	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
32869	Mr Douglas Folan	Team inspector	Physical education Post-16 Physical education
10088	Mr Robert Forsyth	Team Inspector	Mathematics
10060	Mr David Gutmann	Team inspector	Business studies Post-16 Health and social care
31779	Mr Vivian Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology
28199	Mr Peter Lawley	Team inspector	English Post-16 English
17732	Mr Dave Martin	Team inspector	History Post-16 History
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with some excellent features. Standards in the main school are well above average, representing good achievement. Standards in the sixth form are well above average and students achieve very well. The quality of teaching and learning seen was good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Leadership and management are very good. Sixth form provision is a strength of the school. The school provides **good** value for money.

THE MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Standards are well above average by the end of Years 9 and 11. Achievement is good overall; it is very good in English, mathematics, history and geography. Standards in French and ICT are not high enough.
- Standards in the sixth form are well above the national average and students' achievement is very good. The sixth form offers a very good quality of education.
- The school makes very good use of performance data to improve standards - though the good practice in assessment seen in some subjects is not consistent across all subjects.
- The school provides a very good range of curricular and excellent extra-curricular opportunities in the main school and in the sixth form.
- Highly effective leadership sets a clear direction for the school to achieve high standards.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development is very good. There is a strong Christian ethos in the school that promotes hard work, very positive attitudes and very good relationships. Provision for pastoral care is very good.
- Some areas of the school's accommodation need improvement.

There has been good progress since the last inspection in April 1999. Much has been achieved on whole-school and departmental performance reviews, which are well supported by the Local Authority Inspection Service. There has been significant investment in ICT equipment but standards are still below average. The governing body has a clear strategic view and works closely with the school and parents to ensure good quality education in the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are well above average. At the end of Year 9, standards are well above average and achievement is good. In comparison with similar schools, the results in national tests were very high in English, well above average in science and above average in mathematics. In 2003, the GCSE results were well above

the national average compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, GCSE results in 2003 were average overall but well below average for 5+ A*-C grades. The provisional results for 2004, show significant increase in the 5+ A*-C grades GCSE. Overall, pupils' achievement is good, but their achievement is very good in English, mathematics, history and geography; good in science, drama, art, design and technology, music and physical education, and satisfactory in French, ICT and citizenship. Standards in the sixth form are well above average and achievement is very good. In 2003, standards achieved were well above average in A-level English literature, geography, mathematics and physical education. In the subjects inspected in detail in the sixth form, achievement is very good in English, French, history, health and social care, and good in mathematics, chemistry and physical education.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. The school puts its mission statement into practice in all it does. Pupils are mature and responsible and have very positive attitudes to work. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is almost always good. There is strong support for pupils' personal development. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Sixth form students provide excellent role models for younger pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7-11. In the sixth form, teaching is very good and enables students to develop good independent learning habits, including research skills. Teachers make very good use of their subject expertise to challenge pupils and students to work hard and think imaginatively. Basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, are taught well and incorporated successfully into lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and gifted and talented pupils are challenged appropriately. In the sixth form, teachers have very high expectations and very good understanding of how to teach their subjects at higher levels. The curriculum is very good in Years 7-11 and in the sixth form a wide range of courses is offered to enable students to realise their aspirations. The provision for extra-curricular activities is outstanding and very well supported by pupils. Care and guidance are very good. New accommodation enhances teaching and learning in subjects such as music and in the sixth form, although some areas of the school's accommodation are in need of improvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides thoughtful and perceptive leadership. Aply supported by the senior management team, he challenges and supports subject leaders and staff and sets high expectations across the school. The governing body is pro-active, well informed and is highly influential in shaping the direction of the school. At all levels, there is strong commitment to improving standards of achievement and the quality of education offered to pupils. The school's self-review and evaluation procedures are rigorous and indicate appropriate areas for development and improvement. Staff performance is managed efficiently. Financial management is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very pleased with the school. They appreciate particularly the high expectations and very good opportunities for all-round development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:

- Raise standards of achievement in French and ICT.
- Develop consistent assessment and marking practices that help pupils improve their work.
- Improve deficiencies in the school's accommodation.

THE SIXTH FORM AT OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The sixth form is average but increasing in size and providing a wide range of GCE AS- and A-level courses.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective sixth form and it is very cost effective. It successfully attracts students from Year 11 against strong competition, with numbers having significantly increased in the current year. Governors, the headteacher and parents highly value the sixth form. The recent acquisition of a new centre has given the sixth form additional status. The quality of teaching and students' learning is very good. Students achieve very well and work at standards well above average. In the 2003 examinations, compared with all sixth forms, students gained standards above average, and better than in the previous year. The sixth form provides very good value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve very well, leading to well-above-average standards.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Students have highly positive attitudes to school and to their work.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- There is a very good range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities.
- Opportunities are limited within the general studies programme.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum area	Evaluation
Mathematics	Good. Standards are above average. The quality of teaching and learning is good and achievement is good. The new leadership is good. Well qualified teachers enable very highly motivated students to succeed.
Chemistry	Good. Standards are above average and students achieve well, because of good teaching. Students' positive attitudes to work are in response to supportive teacher/student relationships.
Physical education	Very good. Standards are well above average. Teachers build successfully upon the good work covered by the end of Year 11 and achievement is good. Leadership and management are very good.
Health and social care	Very good. Standards are above average, and students achieve very well, as a result of very good teaching. Links with local care settings are particularly good.
Drama and theatre studies	Very good. Teaching and learning are very good and students achieve well. Standards of practical work are above average and strategies are in place to raise standards of written work. Students are given very many opportunities to visit live theatre.
History	Very good. Very good teaching leads to very good learning, well-above-average standards and very good achievement. The subject is very popular and attracts large numbers.
French	Very good. Very good teaching leads to very good achievement and above-average standards. Relationships are very good and students are well motivated. There is insufficient use of ICT to enhance learning.
English	Very good. Very good leadership and management support very good teaching and learning and very good achievement. Standards are above average in English literature and are average in English language and

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Advice, guidance and support for students are very good. Induction procedures into the sixth form from Year 11, and for pupils from other schools, are very good. Students receive very good support and guidance about their work and future careers and their views and suggestions are valued and acted upon. The head of sixth form and form tutors are always available to help and support any students experiencing difficulties. Strategies for monitoring and evaluating and assessing students' progress are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. The head of sixth form is an experienced teacher who has the total support and respect of the students, the headteacher, teachers and governing body. Tutors and sixth form subject teachers work closely with the head of sixth form to offer very good education to the students and to ensure that the students take advantage of what is on offer. Leadership and management are very good in English, French, history, theatre studies, physical education and health and social care, and good in chemistry and mathematics.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very satisfied with the sixth form. Students have highly positive attitudes to school and their work. They consider that courses are very well run, and are delighted with the new centre, which gives added status to the sixth form. Students cite teachers as being subject experts and believe that work is often challenging and demanding. The quality of teaching, together with very effective student/teacher relationships, is the principal reason why the staying-on rate is very high. A significant number of students believe that there is not a good range of enrichment courses outside their main studies. A very wide range of extra-curriculum activities is on offer, but opportunities through the general studies programme are limited.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE at the end of Year 11 are well above average. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7-11. Standards are well above average in the sixth form. They indicate very good achievement.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards of attainment are well above average in the main school and pupils achieve well.
- Achievement is very good in English, mathematics, geography and history. Standards in French and ICT are not high enough.
- Pupils with special needs and gifted and talented pupils are well supported in their learning and they achieve well.
- Standards in the sixth form have improved and are now well above the national average.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is very good.

COMMENTARY

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are above average. In Years 7-9, pupils make good progress. In 2003, results in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was very high in English, well above average in science and above average in mathematics. The provisional results for 2004 show similar trends. Over the last five years, results at age 14 have been rising at a rate faster than the national trend and have remained consistently well above average. The value-added improvement between Year 6 and Year 9 is high in comparison with the national average and in comparison with similar schools. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards are well above national expectations in geography; they were above the national expectations in drama, art and design, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, music and physical education, in line with expectations in citizenship but below expectations in ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	39.2 (37.2)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	38.8 (38.5)	35.4 (34.7)
science	37.4 (36.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 231 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Overall, pupils' **achievement is good**. Good teaching and high expectations in most subjects ensure that pupils achieve well and make good progress towards their challenging targets. The school reached its targets in English and mathematics but missed in science. Work seen during the inspection was generally of a similar standard to the results being achieved. Pupils' achievement is very good in English, mathematics, geography and history; good in science, drama, art and design, design and technology, physical education and modern foreign languages, music and physical education; and satisfactory in ICT and citizenship.

3. The GCSE results, over the last five years, have remained well above the national average. In 2003, the GCSE results were well above the national average. Oaklands Catholic School is achieving in the top 25 per cent of all maintained schools. Girls gained better results than boys in their GCSE examinations in 2003, but in 2000, boys performed better than girls and the boys' results have always been well above the national average for boys. The school sets challenging targets and monitors carefully the progress that individual pupils make towards them. Compared with similar schools, GCSE results in 2003 were average overall. The targets were reached in respect of the average points score per pupil but the 5+ A*-C grades GCSE pass rate was below the target set and well below those found in similar schools, which reflects the high attainment at the end of Year 9. The provisional results for 2004 show significant increase in the 5+ A*-C grades GCSE. Over the last four years, the rate of improvement in the GCSE results is in line with the national trend, and the value-added measure for GCSE shows average gains compared with the gains made by all schools nationally. There is variation in the quality of results for different subjects. Standards are consistently well above average in English language, English literature, drama, mathematics, history, music, business studies, physical education and Spanish; and above average in science. Pupils perform less well in French and ICT.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	64 (68)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	41.3 (41)	34.7(34.8)

There were 193 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are well above average at the end of Year 11 and all pupils are achieving well. Work seen during the course of the inspection was generally of a similar standard to the results being achieved. The important contributory factors are good-quality teaching, pupils' very positive attitudes to work and effective use of extensive performance data by the staff to raise expectations and improve pupils' achievement. Achievement is good overall. It ranges from very good in English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education, good in science, drama, art and design, design and technology and business studies, to satisfactory in ICT and citizenship.

5. Pupils' good achievement across subjects is partly due to good levels of competence in basic skills. Standards of literacy are good across the school; pupils write and read a good range of texts for pleasure and to support research. In discussions, pupils give reasons for their opinions. Pupils' competence in mathematics is good. They can handle competently number and measurement, mentally, orally and in writing. ICT skills are used effectively to support teaching and learning in geography. Whilst many of the applications in ICT in business studies, design and technology, mathematics, English and physical education are satisfactory, they do not encourage an in-depth working knowledge of a much wider range of computer applications.
6. A very small number of pupils use English as an additional language and most have advanced English skills. They achieve in line with their peers. The few pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are supported very well in small groups and by additional staff in the classroom. Good systems to check and report back on their progress ensure that teaching is adapted usefully to their needs. As a result, this group achieves very well.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Precise targets for improvement are identified and individual education plans are used effectively in lessons to support these pupils, ensuring that their progress is good. At the end of Year 11, they take the full range of GCSE examinations and do well in relation to their prior attainment. A high number of pupils with special educational needs, for example, achieve 5+ A*-G GCSE grades.
8. There is much good practice in meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils and they achieve very well. Subjects such as English, mathematics, drama, geography, history, music physical education and Spanish make very good provision through extension work for these pupils who succeed in achieving significantly higher levels of A* /A grades in GCSE examinations. Pupils participate enthusiastically in such demanding extra-curricular activities as entries to national mathematics competitions and specialist sports coaching. Able musicians, for example, take part in a variety of concerts and musical productions within school and some benefit from participation in county ensembles.

Sixth form

9. In 2003, standards achieved in GCE/VCE A- and AS-level examinations were above the national average, which was an improvement on the results in previous years. Performance at the higher grades A and B, 47 per cent of all entries, was well above the national average. Female students did better than the male students. Compared with all sixth forms, male students performed above average and female students well above. This year 21 subjects out of 24 returned 100 per cent pass rates and standards were well above average in English literature, mathematics and physical education. Standards were above average in history and average in English language and literature. They were below average in chemistry. The provisional results for 2004, show significant improvement in the average point scores, overall pass rate and performance at A and B grades. The value-added analysis indicates clearly that students' attainment was considerably better than expectations based on GCSE results.

10. The sixth form is growing in size. It is not an open access sixth form but for appropriate courses the school will admit students who have not fully met the entry requirements of 5+ GCSE grades A*-C. As a result, standards on entry to the sixth form vary from year to year and from course to course. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, French, history and physical education, and were above average in chemistry, health and social care and theatre studies. Students' achievement is very good in English, French, history, physical education and health and social care, and good in chemistry and theatre studies, confirming the picture of rising standards. Inspection evidence indicates that standards overall were well above average and achievement is very good. As in the main school, there is rigorous analysis of performance data and minimum individual targets for students are very challenging. The most important factor in this level of achievement, however, is the very good quality of teaching that students receive.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	98.4 (91.4)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	47.0 (30.5)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	271.0 (240.0)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 68 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance are a strength of the school. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work and behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.
- There are very strong relationships between pupils and their teachers, creating a strong positive feeling of belonging to the school community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very well promoted.
- Sixth form students are very willing to take responsibility and provide excellent role models for younger pupils.

Commentary

11. The school's ethos provides a secure, supportive, moral and respectful working atmosphere. Pupils respond well to the high expectations in terms of work and behaviour. They show very good attitudes to work and are keen to learn. The staff provide very good role models for pupils because of their dedication and enthusiasm. The very good relationships between pupils and with most staff encourage pupils to respond very well to the high expectations of the staff and to collaborate productively with other pupils. This results in their learning being enjoyable and successful and taking place in a stimulating and supportive atmosphere, which helps pupils gain confidence and maturity. Parents report a great sense of belonging, which is very apparent.
12. Pupils' very good behaviour helps to create a very good climate for learning. Year 11 pupils are involved in a buddy scheme with younger pupils and sixth form students support younger pupils. Other pupils volunteer to participate in drama opportunities with visiting pupils from a neighbouring special school. Pupils behave very well in most lessons, showing respect for the teacher and other pupils. Pupils behave very well around the school, needing little supervision. Surveys reveal that pupils and parents are satisfied that, whilst some bullying does occur, it is dealt with appropriately.
13. Pupils adopt a caring, supportive attitude towards each other and enjoy very good relationships with teachers. Pupils spoke of their high regard for the commitment of the staff, particularly in enrichment opportunities which promote their personal development. The school organises an extensive range of enrichment activities, including residential camps, expeditions, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and a host of sporting, musical, theatrical and practical events. Pupils respond well to these opportunities.
14. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural promotion is very well embedded in some curriculum areas. The school's commitment to Catholic values permeates all of the central activities. Pupils are helped to grow spiritually through the care and support they are given. Pupils of other faiths are well integrated and well supported within the family of the school. Through carefully planned year group assemblies, pupils are encouraged to consider spiritual issues, as in a Year 11 assembly where pupils considered the theme of accountability. This was well supported by an opportunity for liturgy, with a particularly thought-provoking example relating to remembrance organised in the school chapel. Further opportunities occurred through spiritual

tutor group reflection during registrations and in history. Opportunities for spiritual development are occasionally missed in some areas.

15. Pupils very readily volunteer to take on positions of responsibility and to help others, both within school, for example, as prefects, buddies, librarians and class representatives, and in the wider community, such as the support they give to pupils from the Rachel Madocks Special School, who visit regularly. The support given to a large number of charities is impressive, as is the keenness of pupils to participate in the vast number of extra-curricular activities and visits the school provides.
16. Moral and social issues are well addressed in many subjects. In English and drama there were very well-structured opportunities to consider moral and social issues such as smoking and drug abuse. In design technology, a Japanese influence was used in textile design. In geography, good opportunities are offered to consider other cultures, particularly in third world development. Pupils raise considerable sums of money for charities, often also planning the fundraising. They give good support for charities such as a local hospice and Catholic Aid for Overseas Development and Operation Christmas Child.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2004

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.7
National data	6.93	National data	1.14

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

17. Pupils like being at the school and their attendance is very good. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' achievement since it means that they can consolidate their learning over a sustained, uninterrupted period. The education welfare officer supports effectively pupils with attendance problems. However, holidays in term time are not recorded correctly. Punctuality is very good, even though this may involve traveling some distance because of the large site. The number of exclusions is low.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1060	19	0
Mixed – Any other background	16	1	0
Chinese	2	1	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	135	10	0

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

Sixth form

18. There are excellent relationships between staff and students in the sixth form, which, coupled with students displaying excellent attitudes to their studies and excellent behaviour in lessons, make a big contribution to helping them to do well. Well-motivated students approach their studies with maturity and interest. They are developing the skills to become effective independent learners. Students respect each other's views and listen attentively as they discuss issues in a thoughtful, balanced way.
19. Students' personal development is very good. They rate the school highly. In return they play an active part in promoting the school's ethos of care, for example, by organizing charity events. They provide excellent role models for pupils in the main school, particularly in respect of service to the community and care for others. They serve their peers as mentors and as members of sixth form committee. They are exceptionally good at helping younger pupils and leading the school council. Students' attendance at lessons is good. They take pride in their achievement and almost all complete their courses.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **good** quality education in the main school, **very good** in the sixth form. Teaching is **good** overall, although in the sixth form it is **very good**. The curriculum is very good throughout the school. Extra-curricular provision is excellent. The school has good links with the wider community and other schools, and the partnership with parents is very good. Some aspects of accommodation are good but there are deficiencies which require action.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in Years 7-11 and **very good** in the sixth form. Assessment is **satisfactory** in the main school but **very good** in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use very good subject knowledge to provide a range of well-planned activities to interest and motivate the pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Gifted and talented pupils are well supported in most subjects.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always tell pupils what they do well and how they can improve.
- In the sixth form, very good teaching leads to well-above-average standards and very good achievement.
- Very effective assessment and challenging targets stimulate sixth form students to do their best.

Commentary

20. The quality of teaching is **good** and makes a major contribution to effective learning and to the well-above-average standards achieved. In views expressed before the inspection, parents and pupils showed great confidence in the good quality of teaching and commended the school on its high expectations. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The proportion of good and very good teaching has increased. This reflects the time and effort the school has invested in monitoring and evaluating its own performance. Staff have received very good guidance on effective teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 168 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (2%)	55 (33%)	74 (44%)	31 (19%)	4 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

21. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects are strong and they use this to plan lessons effectively and present work clearly. High expectations of staff and pupils are evident in the very good and excellent lessons. In the best lessons teachers show enthusiasm for their subjects and this motivates the pupils. In English, mathematics, history, geography and art and design, teachers make good use of

- open and thoughtful questioning to encourage thinking and test out pupils' understanding. There is strong emphasis on challenging pupils to think through problems and so improve conceptual understanding - a strong feature, particularly of the teaching of mathematics and business education.
22. Teachers have good control and management skills and good relationships with pupils who benefit from the purposeful and effective atmosphere for learning. In most lessons, good planning and preparation are supported by very good use of time and resources, for example in geography, history and physical education. In the most effective lessons teachers use a good variety of strategies to promote learning and maintain interest. In mathematics, accurate, competent and well-informed teachers' expositions are used effectively to enable pupils to learn new concepts which they apply to solve complex problems. There is good use of both teacher demonstrations and class investigations in science and food and textile technology. In physical education, careful preparation, effective teacher demonstrations and opportunities for peer evaluation ensure that pupils learn new sporting skills and techniques.
 23. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good and provides a solid base for achievement across all subjects. In good and very good lessons, pupils are encouraged to practise new techniques and to acquire knowledge and understanding of concepts and ideas. Key words and structures are identified on the board in a number of subjects and pupils are asked routinely to make connections, which increases their range of English vocabulary and helps them to understand unfamiliar words. Work is marked carefully so that pupils understand the assessment criteria and know what they need to do to improve their grades. In many mathematics lessons, detailed lesson planning usually includes an effective 'warm up' of mental arithmetic sessions and a review at the end, which clarifies the main points and consolidates learning. Pupils use their ICT skills in geography and to a lesser extent in science, design and technology and modern foreign languages for research and to reinforce learning. However, in several subjects, pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT.
 24. Teachers are very sensitive to different learning needs and cater for them very skilfully, enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and encouragement. Teachers cater well for pupils' individual needs by providing simplified texts, storyboards or planned activities. Provision is very good in English, mathematics, science, music, history and physical education, where teachers' planning and classroom support ensure that all needs are met fully. In Years 7-9, skilled teaching assistants provide good in-class support, forming good relationships with pupils, who respond well to extra help. They discuss their progress and achievements, and pupils know what they must do to improve. In Year 9, pupils benefit from booster classes for extra English. Well-balanced lessons are structured to include good use of videos, discussion and writing frames, which gives pupils a better understanding of works such as *Of Mice and Men*. This raises their confidence and self-esteem.
 25. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged effectively in most, but not all, lessons. In English, mathematics, drama, geography, history, music and physical education, teachers provide very good extra enrichment activities to extend the learning

experience. Where teachers set more complex challenges involving the application of wider thinking skills, these pupils learn far more effectively. In some lessons, pupils are given simply more of the same task to complete, as, for example, in science, ICT and design and technology where the repetition leads to a degree of monotony and learning is less effective.

26. In a small number of satisfactory lessons, the teacher tended to direct too much of the work and to provide the same work for all pupils, regardless of their different capabilities. This was evident in some of the science, ICT, French, design and technology and physical education classes, where opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and show initiative were missed. In a few unsatisfactory lessons, mundane tasks, repetitive worksheets and slow pace, together with missed opportunities to explain underlying concepts, resulted in unsatisfactory learning.
27. Pupils confirm that homework is set regularly to consolidate and extend learning. An interesting range of tasks set in English, mathematics, history and geography requires much use of Internet research. There are, however, occasions when pupils are requested to complete, for homework, the topics on which they were working in class, which meant that those who had made less progress in the lesson had a higher work load than their quicker peers. Homework diaries are a well-established and effectively monitored feature of the school.
28. A broad range of assessment strategies is used satisfactorily in most subjects to consolidate pupils' learning and help track their progress against individual targets. Teachers provide good feedback, orally and in writing, so that pupils can assess their own progress. Target-setting has been introduced and teachers and pupils are beginning to think in terms of added value. Coursework assignments are assessed carefully so that pupils understand the assessment criteria and know how to improve their grades. Homework is usually marked but the quality of marking varies considerably. Marking is used well in English, mathematics, geography and history, where pupils are given much helpful advice and feedback on how to improve and are set learning targets which are reviewed regularly. Not all teachers, however, mark in a way that guides pupils' learning. At times, teachers' comments are often too brief, targets for progress are not set clearly and pupils are not always given clear help about how they can improve.

Sixth form

29. The quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. In the eight subjects inspected in detail, teaching and learning are very good in English, French, health and social care, history and theatre studies. An excellent lesson was observed in health and social care. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Particular strengths of teaching are very good subject expertise and a total familiarity with examination expectations, both of which lead to students being prepared thoroughly. Teachers know the students very well and, accordingly, provide work of considerable challenge and difficulty. Teachers have very high expectations, and they employ very good strategies for involving all students in whole-group discussions. In English they pose and answer questions which challenge the students' thinking. Confident and extensive use of fluent French by teachers sets an appropriate challenge for students. Enthusiasm for the subject enables teachers to interest and motivate students in

physical education. Students acquire good investigational skills to solve problems in chemistry. Students demonstrate very good levels of communication skills which are developed further by opportunities to engage in analytical discussions in psychology. In chemistry, students are not given enough opportunities to discuss and debate chemistry concepts.

30. In some subjects students are encouraged to become independent learners and to use ICT to research coursework. In physical education, students are encouraged to use ICT to produce personal programmes. ICT is not used effectively to enhance teaching and learning in French, mathematics and chemistry. The quality of homework set is very good; it is always appropriate, challenging and monitored closely. Teachers use highly effective strategies to support learning and they expect students to undertake extensive independent learning. Very good teaching, together with the very good, and often excellent, attitudes of the students leads to overall very good achievement.

Assessment

31. Assessment and marking are very good and make an important contribution to students' very good achievement. The very good practice of setting minimum targets for students, based on baseline information and GCSE results, motivates them to work hard and enthusiastically. Departmental records indicate a high level of accuracy in their predictions. Performance data are used effectively to inform curriculum planning and to match activities to students' individual needs. Students' ongoing progress is monitored closely through tutorial discussions and self-evaluation to highlight any possible difficulties and possible pathways to success. Helpful tutor reports are sent home twice a year. The detailed subject reports provide much useful information to ensure that parents know how well the students are progressing and what they must do to improve their performance.

The curriculum

The curricular provision is good in Years 7-11 and very good in the sixth form. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, although there are some deficiencies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a very good curriculum that meets its aims and the needs of all pupils.
- The range of A-level courses offered in the sixth form is very good.
- Many pupils benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is insufficiently developed.
- Well-planned tutorial programme.
- The new vocational courses that motivate and provide good learning experiences for the small groups of pupils involved.

Commentary

32. The school provides all pupils with a broad and relevant curriculum which fulfils its aims and provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn and to experience achievement and success. The school senior managers and the governing body carefully review these on an annual basis. Since the last inspection the school has changed to a two-week timetable that has given greater flexibility for planning the curriculum and ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Curricular time has increased, although for Years 10 and 11 it remains slightly below the nationally recommended time. However, when pastoral and liturgical activities are included, the amount of teaching time is 26 hours and forty minutes. This is sufficient and the tutorial programme is well planned.
33. All subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and drama, are taught. Most pupils continue studying the same curriculum, with the exception of pupils in the top two sets for French in each half of Year 9 who study Spanish as a second language. Citizenship is taught as part of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. ICT is taught as a discrete subject in Years 7-9 but the provision of one ICT lesson a fortnight in Years 7-8 is not enough to cover all elements adequately. Most curriculum subjects have responded well to national developments, such as in English where enhanced delivery of reading is leading to improved standards.
34. In Years 10 and 11 the school has taken advantage of the increased flexibility of the national curriculum to provide a wide range of courses. In design and technology, for example, five specialisms are offered at GCSE, plus child development. In modern foreign languages there is a need for further curriculum development to resolve the issues of underachievement in French. The school has made good arrangements for a small number of Year 10 and 11 pupils through the introduction of a link course with South Downs College. This is having a positive impact on their motivation and achievement. From this year the school also offers a vocational BTEC course in Hospitality, Travel and Tourism to a small group of pupils. Curricular provision for citizenship is now well established.

35. Students' learning and personal development benefit from an outstanding programme of enrichment activities. It gives students numerous opportunities to excel in both academic and sporting activities. Provision for gifted and talented pupils and students is very good. For example, the 2004 GCSE results indicate that one pupil gained the highest marks in the United Kingdom for French and another pupil in mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to participate in master classes and they engage in national challenges in mathematics and English. Residential camps, master classes, musical and dramatic performances and after-school clubs further extend pupils' abilities. The school has recently introduced an able pupil visit to Portsmouth University.
36. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. There are 93 different weekly activities enabling large numbers of pupils to participate in sport, the arts, curriculum-related and recreational activities, as well as to take on social and spiritual responsibilities within the school community. These show an outstanding commitment on the part of a very large proportion of the staff to the education of children beyond the classroom.
37. The expertise and experience of both teaching and non-teaching staff are well matched to the demands of the curriculum. Teaching assistants are especially effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The academic staff are well supported by warm, friendly and competent administrative staff. Staff development is well matched to the needs highlighted in the school's strategic plan. There is growing use of selected and experienced support staff to help cover lessons where there is staff absence. This is part of the school's commitment to support the workforce remodelling agenda. A range of visiting speakers and trips is used to support learning.
38. Accommodation is adequate for the current curriculum. A new sixth form block has been built since the last inspection and provides a stimulating learning environment. The sports hall and fitness suite is also an asset to the school and the assembly hall provides seating for the whole school. The chapel is well used for school and communal purposes. The main library and resource area provides good study and research spaces. However, in some subjects, such as humanities, textiles and design and technology, accommodation is inflexible and restricts the teaching styles. The security fencing around the site is almost complete. Disabled access to many upper floors is not provided.
39. Resources are satisfactory. Most departments have enough equipment and textbooks. There has been significant investment in ICT equipment to support teaching and learning. The school has made good use of external funding sources to support the use of ICT including e-learning credits, laptops for teachers and interactive whiteboards. An attractive and well-managed library does much to promote reading for pleasure and information, as does an ambitious series of extra-curricular events and activities which takes place over the year.

Sixth form

40. The curriculum is very good. The school senior managers and the governing body review the curriculum on an annual basis to ensure that the needs of every learner can be met. The school provides a broad range of subjects, 24 GCE A-levels, plus a vocational course in health and social care. This is very good and has helped in the expansion of the sixth form. Students are expected to have gained at least five GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, but exceptions can be and are made for some students. All students follow a general studies programme of religious education, ICT, key skills and sport but the school needs to broaden this programme in response to students' needs.
41. Provision for able students in the sixth form is very good and contributes to their development as responsible citizens. For example, they are encouraged to engage in global activities, and in 2003 and 2004 three students joined with students from around the world to attend The Young Leaders Conference in the USA. In addition to competing in county sporting activities, some students also compete at national and international levels in gymnastics, sailing and badminton. Able students are entered early for AS- and A-level examinations. Mathematics and physics students attend engineering courses at Surrey University whilst some students attend Eton Summer School or theology courses at Oxford University.
42. Students enjoy and learn from the excellent range and the quality of extra-curricular activities available, including a 1st XV rugby team and a netball team competing in a local adult evening league. These opportunities also enhance the skills and knowledge of those students competing at county and national level in their chosen sports.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare of pupils is a very strong aspect of the school and central to its ethos. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice and guidance about their work and future careers and their views and suggestions are valued and acted upon.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is very good and supports pupils' learning and personal development very effectively.
- Provision for child protection is very good.
- Pupils receive very good advice about careers.
- The school's provision for work-related learning is good and well co-ordinated.
- Pupils' views are actively sought, listened to and acted upon.
- Sixth form students receive very good support and guidance from staff.

Commentary

43. The school provides a very welcoming environment. The very caring ethos permeates all areas of the school's work. Parents are happy with the quality of support and guidance. The pastoral care of pupils continues to be very strong, with good induction procedures for all pupils who join the school. Heads of year and tutors know the pupils in their care very well and are diligent and sensitive in dealing with their diverse needs, both personal and academic. Good systems, such

as target grades in subjects and from the marking of pupils' work, enable pupils to know how well they are doing in their lessons but the pupils need to be more involved in setting their own targets. There is good provision to help individuals improve their work through, for example, workshops at lunchtime and mentoring by the senior management team. There are also very good systems in place to help pupils with any personal concerns, which may involve the school chaplain and other counsellors.

44. The monitoring and response to any incidents of child protection are very good and involve very good links with social services and the police. The governors' oversight of health and safety is good, with a very clear and comprehensive policy with a full range of checks to ensure the safety of equipment and the site. Sick and injured pupils are well cared for. The school follows the very good LEA procedures on school visits and has appropriate risk assessments. Use of the Internet is well regulated. A few health and safety issues were reported to the school.
45. The school values pupils' opinions, as shown by its prompt response to a recent pupil questionnaire showing there were some concerns about bullying. A clear new anti-bullying policy was produced to encourage any bullying to be reported so that the school could deal with it, which it continues to do effectively. Similarly, the long-established school council continues to voice pupils' views effectively and persuade the school to make changes, for example, to the style of girls' trousers.
46. Procedures for induction into Year 7 and for pupils joining the school at other times are well established. Through a programme of meetings and visits both by pupils and their parents, they quickly feel part of the school community. The special needs co-ordinator liaises well with primary feeder schools, attending Annual Reviews of future statemented pupils from Year 5 upwards.
47. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are excellent and well implemented. The co-ordinator liaises effectively with primary feeder schools to identify possible needs of future pupils and attends their annual reviews. Meticulously detailed screening tests clearly identify all pupils' ability levels and health needs when they join the school. Assessment together with information from the annual reviews and transition plans of statemented pupils is used very well to develop clear and unambiguous individual education and behaviour plans. These are, discussed with the pupil and parents. Well-trained support staff provide very effective help and guidance to teachers and pupils.

Sixth form

48. All students' questionnaire returns showed a very positive view of the support and guidance they receive. There are good induction procedures for all students joining the sixth form. Students in the sixth form receive very good support from tutors and the head of year, in liaison with subject teachers, to ensure they know how well they are doing and to help and encourage them to achieve their full potential. The sixth form library and computer room in the new sixth form block provide very good facilities to encourage students to become independent learners. Students receive very good careers advice about where and what to study when they leave school. Those applying to university, for example, appreciate the advice about compiling

their personal statements. The sixth form leads the school council well. The views of students are regularly sought, listened to and their concerns are acted upon.

Work-related learning

49. The school's provision for work-related learning (WRL) is good overall and well coordinated. Arrangements for work experience are very good. Preparation, monitoring and record keeping are very thorough. The Army residential option is a particular strength. Each year, many pupils qualify for their Trident Gold Award. Pupils' reactions are very positive.
50. There are some courses that offer very good opportunities for pupils in the work-related curriculum. The Year 10 BTEC Course in tourism and travel involves good links with local firms as well as an 'Aspiring Chef' element. Pupil response was very enthusiastic for this very well organised course. The Trailblazer Course for lower-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 is another very good provision. It has strong link with primary schools, where pupils support work in classes, as well as offering environmental education opportunities in collaboration with the Community Park Ranger. A range of speakers from the local business community makes good contributions to the GCSE business studies course. There are further good examples in art, where the strong links between graphic art and the world of commerce is well made through the teaching and the use of video. The school is currently planning to develop more vocational courses for suitable pupils in Years 10 and 11. The range of activities within the very well planned careers education and guidance programme also makes a strong contribution, augmented by the school's very good careers library.

Sixth form

51. Work-related learning is good. The health and social care and the business studies courses are very well managed and have very good links with a range of local organisations. The ICT course also benefits through good business connections. All students undertake a careers education unit in their tutorial time and this has a strong emphasis on preparation for higher education. Opportunities to contribute to the Year 9 residential experience, as helpers or as instructors, to work as school cleaners or technicians, or to be involved in the business arrangements for maintaining the Green Vending machine initiative are further good examples.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and carers are very good. Links with the local community and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good information for parents and carers.
- Parents' views are strongly supportive of the school.
- Links with the local community are good and with Catholic and other churches, they are very good.
- There are good links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

52. The school has established close links with parents. It values the contribution that they make in being active partners in their children's learning. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care that it provides. They are kept well informed about the progress of their children from the very high quality interim and full reports they receive. Parents also value other documents, such as the comprehensive prospectus, newsletters and governors' report that provide a very useful source of information about the school's procedures and activities. However, the school prospectus does not contain any national results for tests at the end of Year 9, as it should. Communications with parents are very good, with parents reporting that teachers are very accessible if there are problems.
53. Parents support the school well. The Oaklands Parents' Association makes a very good contribution to the school through its fund-raising and provision of refreshments at school events. Parents' encouragement of their children's learning at home makes a good contribution to the standards they achieve. In addition, most governors are parents or ex-parents.
54. There are very strong links with the Catholic and other churches that support the Christian nature of the school. Good links with the business community result in additional benefit for the school, such as sponsorship, pupil placements for work experience and opportunities for pupils to go into apprenticeships and employment.
55. There are good links with the feeder schools and good procedures to provide an efficient transfer of pupils into Year 7. Additional links with the four main Catholic feeder schools include helpful links with some subject departments. Good links with South Downs College are enabling a few pupils to benefit from a work-related curriculum.

Sixth form

56. The school provides very good information for parents, in particular, through students' interim and full reports and the sixth form prospectus. In addition there are very good communications with parents and support from them to help students reach their potential. Links with the community are strong and all students benefit from a wide range of opportunities to be involved in life beyond the school. There

are good links with a variety of local businesses to extend students' experiences, and opportunities to attend university and college open days to enable them to make informed decisions about their future.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is **very good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and is very well supported by his senior staff who also provide **very good leadership**. The quality of leadership of other key staff is **good**, as is the effectiveness of management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Led by the headteacher and governors, the school community has created an extremely clear vision for the school with a strong focus on high quality teaching and learning.
- Under the leadership of the headteacher, highly effective, cohesive teams are being built at all levels in the school.
- The governing body has made a very strong contribution to the success of the school by fully carrying out their role as a critical friend.
- Middle managers are effective and most have created a strong ethos for sustained improvement in their subjects.
- The highly effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and intelligent use of assessment information have contributed greatly to the school's high standards.
- The strong linkage between the school's development plan and its financial planning enables the school to evaluate fully its spending.

Commentary

57. The headteacher, who was in post at the time of the last inspection, continues to provide enterprising and inspirational leadership. He has an extremely clear vision for the school which is driven by a clear focus on the individual student and an appreciation of the pivotal importance of teaching and learning as the motor that drives up standards. The headteacher has succeeded entirely in sharing this vision with the entire school community and has won their total support in helping him to realise it. This vision is very well expressed in the school's improvement plan. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, the school is developing into an ambitious, open, yet self-critical institution. It is completely devoid of complacency and sets itself adventurous targets. Staff have a great belief in themselves and what they can achieve for the school. One of the great strengths of the headteacher is his ability to build highly effective teams, delegating real authority to them and so empowering them to reach their goals. The senior management team is one such example. Their skills and experience complement each other very well and they give very good support to the headteacher. Parents and pupils recognise how well the school is run: 93 per cent of parents and 90 per cent of pupils who replied to the questionnaire said that the school is well run and many commented on the approachability and responsiveness of the headteacher and other senior staff.
58. The governing body is highly supportive, but also asks critical questions and so holds the school to account. It is involved actively in overseeing the work of the school and shares the senior management team's desire for the standards in all aspects of school life to be as high as possible. Its committee structure works well

and governors have developed very strong links with individual departments in the school and so are well aware of the school's strengths and any areas that need improvement. The governors have made a very strong contribution to the success of the school. They play a central role in shaping the overall strategic direction of the school and by actively formulating and reviewing the school's improvement and financial planning which flows from their exemplary strategy document.

59. The school's management systems are also very good and form the basis for improvement. Effective ways of carrying out self-reviews, using a range of performance measures, have been developed. All staff have been involved in a systematic review of job descriptions and staff have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The senior management team have a good understanding of the school's strengths and has taken effective steps to eliminate weaknesses. Members of the leadership group, supported by the LEA officers, participate with staff in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, standards and aspects of other provision. Reviews of standards in individual departments are particularly rigorous and well organised. Effective arrangements exist to review, monitor and track pupils' progress and achievement.
60. Most subject departments are well led and managed effectively. Leadership and management are very good in English, geography and history. These highly effective subject leaders have taken their lead from the headteacher and created a very real ethos for improvement in their subjects. This is particularly the case in geography where standards have improved considerably over the last two years. These departments have led the way in developing innovative approaches to teaching and learning, imaginative use of assessment data and sensitive yet highly effective methods of ensuring high quality in their subject areas. In all other subjects, leadership and management are good, with the exception of design and technology and ICT, where it is satisfactory for design and technology but unsatisfactory in ICT. The special needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership to the well-managed department. Effective and efficient procedures are in place to ensure that the needs of pupils are appropriately and adequately met.
61. The day-to-day administration is highly effective and efficient and there are clear lines of communication both within the school, between the school and parents, and with the wider community. An excellent staff handbook offers much useful information on staff roles, policies, procedures and practices, which helps to create an atmosphere of high expectations and to ensure that there is consistency in monitoring and evaluating pupils' attainment, progress and behaviour.
62. Procedures for financial management and control are very good. One of the strengths of the school is the way it manages its modest financial resources. There is a strong link between the school's development plan and its financial planning. With its strong focus on developing high quality learning programmes, the school's development plan looks forward to identify future priorities which are carefully costed and presented to the governing body for scrutiny. The school is therefore able to allocate its resources in a way that has the most direct bearing on pupils' achievement and also to evaluate how effective those spending decisions have been. The school has a secure understanding of the principles of best value. The latest available auditors' report indicates that financial systems operate well. Overall,

the school provides good value for money in terms of the well-above-average educational standards attained and the good quality of education provided, all within average expenditure per pupil.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,666,984	Balance from previous year	102,378
Total expenditure	4,487,481	Balance carried forward to the next year	263,289*
Expenditure per pupil	3,587.12		

** It included a commitment of £180K for various works and improvements around the school.*

Sixth form

63. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. Very clear direction is given for the work and direction of the sixth form, to meet the expectations of parents and students. Governors take their responsibility for developing the sixth form very seriously, having a governor to chair a sub-committee specifically addressing sixth form matters. The acquisition of a brand new sixth form centre, which gives added status, represents the governors' views about the importance of order in having a very good sixth form.
64. The head of sixth form gives very good leadership, supported strongly by the headteacher and governors. She enjoys the confidence and respect of students. She works very effectively with subject teachers and sixth form tutors, both formally and informally. All are chosen very carefully in order to provide the very best quality education and support for the students. Monitoring and evaluation of students' progress are very thorough, tracing students' progress through each year, and documenting the courses they take up after the sixth form. Leadership and management are very good in English, French, history, theatre studies, physical education and health and social care, and good in chemistry and mathematics. In all subjects observed during the inspection, evidence reveals that sixth form teachers build strongly upon the work students have covered earlier in the school, demonstrating very good links between the sixth form and the rest of the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Very good leadership and management result in improved teaching and learning.
- Very good teaching deploys a stimulating variety of methods to bring about very good achievement.
- Very good guidance is given to pupils on how to improve their work.
- Inconsistent spelling skills and sentence construction from lower-attaining pupils.

Commentary

65. In 2003, results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were very high, with a high proportion of pupils attaining Levels 6, 7 and above. Girls did better than boys, following national trends, but both attained above girls and boys nationally. Compared with similar schools, results demonstrate very high achievement. In 2004, results fell slightly.
66. GCSE English results in 2003 were well above national averages both overall and for the proportion gaining higher grades (A*-C). Girls did better than boys, but boys achieved better than boys nationally. GCSE English literature results followed a similar very high pattern, where boys and girls both exceeded equally the national trends for girls and boys nationally. Very high levels of attainment have been maintained since the previous inspection. Results rose in 2004. Standards were better than those found in mathematics and science.
67. Achievement is very good throughout the school. In Years 7-9, standards are currently well above average. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are very good where they explain their views sensibly and frame questions clearly and precisely. Standards of reading are good where pupils are guided well to recognise and analyse persuasive techniques, for instance, in the texts of inspirational speeches. Standards of writing are very good. High-attaining pupils write fluently and entertainingly in a wide range of styles, including letters, summaries of arguments and mystery stories. Middle-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs use computers well to organize their thoughts logically and to communicate them to the reader. At the same time their spelling of more difficult words is inconsistent and the variety of sentence structure restricted because teachers have not sufficiently planned work to improve these skills. Boys' standards are better than in previous test results as a result of work which engages and stimulates them.

68. Standards in work seen in Years 10-11 are well above average. Pupils understand very well the way in which literature reflects deeper social and historical issues because assignments are set carefully and teacher questioning and well-planned discussions focus their thinking pertinently. For example, one group discussed sensitively and understood astutely the issues of ageing because they were well directed in discussion, and their understanding was further consolidated by judicious teacher illustrations with a video example. In a few lessons, pupils' listening skills are not sufficiently developed. Lower-attaining pupils' ability to organise and structure their ideas in writing is limited because opportunities are missed to guide them at the initial drafting stage of written exercises. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers because their requirements are recorded carefully and teachers mark their work to ensure their full involvement and understanding of what they do.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Very good use is made of national initiatives to improve the planning of lessons. Teachers interest pupils well through a stimulating variety of activities and resources, which include well-directed whole-class and small group discussions and a wide range of written exercises. They expect a lot of their pupils and encourage them with well-judged prompts. Extended questioning underpins very good learning because pupils are consistently expected to think of the next stage. Written assignments are marked very well and pupils benefit from helpful guidance on how to improve their work.
70. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The subject benefits from a very good vision of its future development. This is translated very well into practical action, enabling specialist staff to collaborate productively as a team to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement. In consequence, the content and approach of lessons have been enriched, leading to better teaching and pupil performance and improved standards of boys. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are good. Pupils discuss ideas sensibly to improve their understanding in history, geography and art, but in science, opportunities are missed to promote discussion to analyse ideas and processes and to consolidate learning. Pupils benefit from teachers' insistence on emphasising technical language in design and technology and music. Pupils' reading for pleasure and personal enrichment is fostered well in English where a well-planned programme ensures that all receive warm personal guidance and encouragement. In modern foreign languages, pupils acquire a good grasp of grammatical terms to analyse and explain linguistic structures. In addition, written work is well laid out, with proper concern for logical communication to the reader. Standards of writing are very good in English and are supported beneficially in subjects such as history and geography. Here, pupils benefit from very good guidance on how to develop and extend and organize their own thoughts in writing to communicate to the reader and to assist their own learning. In science, on the other hand, standards of writing are average, but writing activities are rarely used to extend or develop understanding of specialist information.

Drama

72. The subject was sampled during the inspection. Standards in examinations and in work seen were well above average by Year 11. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' speech is clearly articulated and well modulated in tone. They explain accurately the key events and dramatic devices in the plays they study. In addition, in response to well-directed teacher questioning, they discern perceptively the moral issues underlying dramatic action. In well-arranged practical acting exercises, pupils work productively in teams to take decisions, and to devise short, thoughtful presentations. In some acting exercises, physical control and characterisation are underdeveloped because teacher expectations are not high enough. In their first three years, pupils' ability to understand character and convey it in mime is well developed. In response to good teaching, they perform well and learn from each other as they work together in small groups. Provision for extra-curricular drama is very good.
73. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their wide-ranging subject knowledge to plan lessons very well. They balance practical activity with whole-class teaching and involve pupils in evaluation, which leads to very good learning. Positive and supportive assessment, particularly through boys' self-evaluation, identifies key learning points for improvement.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in Spanish across the school.
- The departmental practices are well embedded to support improvement.
- There is continuing underachievement in French at Year 11.
- The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is underdeveloped.
- In Years 10 and 11, some pupils' speaking skills in French are poor.

Commentary

74. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 9 are slightly above national expectations. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 11 in French are not high enough. GCSE results in French are below national averages. Standards attained by pupils in Spanish are well above average.
75. In French in Years 7-9, standards are above national expectations. Achievement at the end of Year 9 is good in French. Pupils make good progress in reading, listening, speaking and writing. They can describe their houses and families and have recently used the Internet for research on tourist towns in France. This has effectively supported an extended writing activity for more able pupils in Year 9. Pupils in Year 8 can use a range of tenses. At the end of Year 11, standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' speaking ability in some groups remains weak, but overall pupils are trying hard in French.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good in French throughout the school and good in Spanish in Years 10-11. Pupils seen in both languages were able to demonstrate that they have good understanding of language skills, appreciating the importance of adding adjectives to verbs and embellishing their descriptions with a range of vocabulary. There is a clear focus in all sessions on the importance of improving speaking skills, linked in part to the departmental action plan. In one unsatisfactory lesson, teacher's planning did not take sufficient account of the needs of groups of differing ability; a small number of pupils showed negative attitudes towards their learning and lacked confidence to engage in oral work.
77. Use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is underdeveloped. A few examples of relevant websites were signposted during teaching and pupils make use of websites as part of their own study time to support course work, but many opportunities are missed for using ICT to enhance the quality of teaching. The department has identified this as an area for improvement in its plans. Assessment of pupils' work could be improved. At Key Stage 3, some teacher comments are brief and do not allow pupils to understand clearly what they need to do to improve.
78. Overall, leadership and management are good. Management of the department has been effective in implementing whole-departmental policies such as the work layout policy. Spanish as a second language is well planned and well taught. Leadership and management of Spanish are good. However, insufficient curriculum opportunities currently exist within French to allow lower-ability pupils to achieve as they should. The department is aware of this and is investigating strategies for

improvement. Curriculum enrichment opportunities are good. Lunchtime revision classes are offered and the department supports a number of visits and exchanges. Resources in the main school are satisfactory for modern languages.

79. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. There has been a clear focus on strategies to raise standards in speaking and this is beginning to have an effect, with some improvements in GCSE results in French in 2004, and some good speaking ability emerging in Years 7-9. The poor speaking ability of some pupils and the underperformance of a significant number of pupils were highlighted. Although there have been improvements in both these areas, there is still more which needs to be done to address both of these issues. More improvements are needed to achieve consistency in the quality of French.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards in the National Curriculum tests and at GCSE are well above average.
- Teachers with good command of the subject teach the subject very well.
- Pupils are well motivated and classroom behaviour by pupils is very good.
- Assessment data are well used to track individual pupils' progress and inform target setting.

Commentary

80. Pupils' results in the 2003 tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average, and their performance compares favourably with pupils in similar schools. Results have improved further in 2004. GCSE Mathematics results for 2003 and 2004 were significantly better than the national average for both boys and girls, with a higher-than-average proportion of pupils gaining A and A* grades. The standards of work seen in classes and pupils' work were consistent with these attainments, indicating standards well above average in both key stages.
81. Pupils' achievement is very good throughout all years, as a result of the very good standards of teaching and learning. Pupils contribute actively to the development of concepts, rules and procedures, and are able to demonstrate success in practising and applying what they have learned. In Years 7-9, pupils draw accurate statistical diagrams and use mathematical language very well, for example, in the use of inequality signs. They reach well-above-average levels of algebraic skill. In Years 10-11, pupils learn to undertake investigations, explain what they are doing and why and solve problems involving, for example, moving averages. In a Year 11 class pupils demonstrated good mathematical skills to solve graphically linear equations. Pupils show good motivation to learn, and concentrate and behave well in class. Both boys and girls learn well because all pupils are effectively monitored and supported as individuals. Those pupils with special educational needs achieve well because their needs are well assessed, documented and communicated, enabling appropriate lesson planning, with good monitoring and support through

effective co-operation between teachers and assistants. There is very good achievement by gifted and talented pupils because they are identified by data analysis, and appropriate activities and challenges are provided to extend them in class, in homework and in extra-curricular activities.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. All lessons observed were good or very good. Teaching is characterised by good planning, clear objectives, varied tasks, high expectations and good pace. Tasks are well matched to pupils' prior attainment. Teachers interact very well with pupils, and engage them in actively developing understanding and skills. They monitor pupils' progress closely during lessons and through consistent marking of work, and offer appropriate support and encouragement. Homework is set regularly to consolidate and extend class learning. Lessons are well managed, with good behaviour by pupils firmly established, so that they concentrate on their work.
83. The leadership and management of the department are both good. The good practice resulting from department policies and procedures is monitored and sustained. Performance data are used proficiently to monitor progress and to establish and agree targets and priorities for development. There is commitment and support from the department staff and senior management to further raise levels of attainment. There has been good progress since the last inspection, through development of assessment procedures to inform day-to-day planning and to ensure that the curriculum addresses individual needs at all levels of ability. The attainment of girls has progressed to well above average, and a high proportion of the more able pupils are attaining higher A*/A GCSE grades.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. Numeracy standards are now good throughout the school and continue to be a strength of the mathematics department. Mathematics lessons include regular and frequent activities to develop and ensure pupils' handling of number and measures, through oral and written tasks. Calculators are used accurately and appropriately and checks on reasonableness promoted. Following appointment of the head of geography as numeracy co-ordinator, the school has developed a policy for numeracy. Through staff training and curriculum development, a range of numeracy applications now occurs in science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and ICT, and a documented mapping of numeracy activities across the Years 7-9 curriculum is now displayed prominently in the staff room to support developing practice.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the National Curriculum tests at 14 and in GCSE are well above average.
- Good teaching and learning lead to good achievement.
- Very good relationships and classroom management ensure a positive learning ethos.

- Checks on the quality of teaching are not frequent or rigorous enough.
- The use of ICT to enhance the teaching of science is underdeveloped.
- Marking of written work does not give pupils sufficient information on how to improve their work.

Commentary

85. In 2003 and in the preceding few years, results in the national tests at age 14 were well above average. When compared to pupils' prior attainment, this represents very good achievement. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 or higher fell slightly in 2004. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average. This means that these pupils made satisfactory progress from Year 9 to Year 11. Standards were maintained in 2004.
86. Standards in Years 7-9 are above average. Pupils make good progress during these years and achieve well. Carefully structured teaching enables all pupils to develop their understanding of scientific concepts and of the contribution science makes to society. Pupils have a good knowledge of energy transfers and most pupils understand the difference between heat and temperature. Pupils can describe the states of matter in terms of the particle theory and can apply this knowledge to explain changes of state. Most pupils know the functions of the organs involved in digestion and breathing. Higher-attaining pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between breathing and respiration.
87. In Years 10-11, pupils' standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils' investigative skills are good and are developed in a systematic way. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 can describe and interpret patterns in their results and evaluate their reliability. Year 11 pupils can deduce patterns from the periodic table, know about the need for energy efficiency, and understand adaptation and variation in the natural world. Higher-attaining pupils can explain the difference between the chemical reactions involved in photosynthesis and respiration. Lower-attaining pupils find it difficult to use their scientific knowledge to explain the patterns and lack accuracy when recording measurements. They learn key scientific facts in lessons, but often their understanding is incomplete, which hinders their long-term recall.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the age range. Teaching was good or better in about two thirds of the lessons seen. Teachers use their subject expertise to good effect in communicating scientific concepts clearly in language pupils can understand easily. Teachers generally manage their classes very well and insist on high standards of work and behaviour. They are encouraging and supportive, boosting pupils' confidence. As a result, pupils have a positive attitude to science and want to do well. In spite of teachers' encouragement, pupils are often not as responsive as they could be in volunteering answers to teachers' questions. This has a negative effect on their progress. This is particularly true of girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make the same progress as other pupils.
89. In the good lessons, teaching is enthusiastic, capturing pupils' interest well. In a Year 8 lesson on the transfer of energy, pupils were engrossed in the teacher's lively commentary as they watched demonstrations. They then used role-play to

model the different methods of transfer. Pupils were very motivated, worked hard and achieved well. Where pupils are challenged to think about their science, learning is enhanced. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson when pupils were asked to judge whether various experiments were 'fair tests'. Throughout the lesson the teacher's skilful questioning made pupils formulate hypotheses, discuss variables and build on their previous knowledge. They gained a deeper understanding of the scientific method of working. Learning was unsatisfactory in two lessons because pupils were not required to think about their science and their interest was not engaged.

90. Assessment is good, with effective target setting. However, marking of written work does not motivate pupils since there are few comments showing where more depth or detail is required. The new national teaching and learning initiative in Years 7 - 9 is underdeveloped. Sometimes the aims of the lesson are not shared with pupils, resulting in an initial lack of focus. Opportunities are often missed for reviewing the lesson objectives at the end of the lesson to give both teacher and pupils an assessment of what has been learnt. The use of ICT to enhance learning is insufficiently developed by some teachers.
91. The new head of department is committed to improving pupil achievement and is beginning to implement strategies to this end. Her positive impact indicates good leadership. The management of the science department and improvement in provision since the previous inspection are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained but several issues raised in that report have not yet been addressed adequately. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are still weak and the quality of teaching has not improved. Technician hours and science resources in the library are still inadequate. There is insufficient sharing of good practice, leading to inconsistency across the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong commitment to improve ICT within the school.
- Good teaching and learning resources have been created.
- An innovative online learning project has been developed to meet the needs of some pupils in Year 9 more readily.
- There are deficiencies in the leadership of this subject.
- Overall standards at the end of Year 9 and 11 are below average.
- There is a strong commitment to improve ICT within the school.

Commentary

92. By the end of Years 9 and 11, standards are below national expectations. Achievement is satisfactory across all years because most pupils entered the school with below-average ICT capability. The current Year 7 is far more competent than previous years. One in ten pupils fails to achieve targets set by the local authority. In Years 7-9, all pupils are proficient in word processing. Most can relate the use of

ICT to real-world situations and recognise the importance of the customer when designing spreadsheets and databases. Some readily employ flow charts to model computer control systems. Very few pay sufficient attention to the quality of layout when working on desktop publishing. Although there are some examples of expansive thinking, the majority of the work is unadventurous.

93. GCSE examination results have improved consistently over the previous three years. However, they were still below the national average in 2003. The majority of pupils are heavily dependent on guidance from their teachers and struggle to cope with the need for reflection at all stages of projects. A few high-attaining pupils reveal a deep understanding of how to review, moderate and evaluate their work fully. The number of boys far exceeds girls on the GCSE programme. Overall, numbers, already low relative to similar subjects, are declining.
94. In the very small sixth form group studying ICT, results match predictions of performance. Special educational needs pupils achieve well when aided by learning support assistants. The team is particularly adept at meeting the training needs of these helpers and briefing them prior to lessons.
95. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is a result of hard work and suitable teacher knowledge of ICT. Lessons start promptly and are based on nationally developed resources in Years 7-9. One of the modules has been put online to address some of the limitations of the time allocated for ICT in the lower school. Pupils in Year 9 who wish to voluntarily undertake it can do so, either in lunchtimes or after school. It represents a major development. In Years 10-11, some innovative starter activities are employed to provide a focus for learning. Marking is generally thorough and contains statements about the quality of the work and hints on how to improve it. Most pupils respond to the teaching in a positive way but lack of challenge in some lessons has a negative bearing on overall attitudes towards ICT.
96. Leadership is unsatisfactory. The difficulties the department faces have been honestly recognised. There is a lack of decisiveness. Satisfactory progress has been made in resolving issues raised in the previous inspection although the major investment in resources by the school is not matched by a corresponding development in the subject. Key strategic actions have not been implemented and elements of good practise are not universally shared across the teaching team. The management is satisfactory. Documentation is kept up to date, meetings are held regularly and resources are well managed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

97. Information and communication technology is **satisfactory**. ICT skills are used extensively in geography. There is evidence of the use of ICT in business studies, design and technology, mathematics, English and physical education. It is an area under development in science and modern foreign languages. The introduction of the key skills programme in Years 10-11 has given more pupils access to ICT specialist teaching.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work are well above average and students' achievement is very good.
- Pupils achieve very well because teaching and learning are very good.
- Highly effective leadership and management of the department provide a clear vision for continued success and future development.
- Fieldwork, investigative activities and the frequent use of ICT enhance pupils' enjoyment of geography and promote independent learning.
- The department produces high quality resources for teaching.
- Some teaching rooms are cramped and make some approaches to teaching difficult.

Commentary

98. In the 2003 GCSE examination, results were average: a sharp drop compared with the previous years, when standards were well above average. Boys did much better than girls and all did less well in geography than in their other subjects. The 2004 examination results, however, showed a remarkable improvement. For instance, the proportion of pupils gaining grade C at GCSE increased substantially and the difference between boys and girls was much smaller than in the previous year.
99. This strong improvement has continued into the current year. Standards of work seen in Years 7 - 9 are well above national expectations. Pupils enter the school with average levels of geographical knowledge and skills. Throughout the first three years in this school they make rapid progress and achieve very well, reaching well-above-average standards by the end of Year 9. Pupils are quickly introduced to essential map, computer and investigative skills that increase their self-confidence and their ability to work independently. Good use of the local environment ensures that pupils develop good investigative skills which enhance their understanding of more complicated geographic processes. Pupils write fluently and accurately about geographical issues, ranging from possible improvements to the school environment to the impact of deforestation in the tropical rainforest. Pupils have a keen sense of exploration and enjoy active participation in lessons and fieldwork. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve equally very well when they have sensitive support in lessons and resources that are adapted appropriately for them. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls, a tribute to the effort the department has made to raise the achievement of girls.
100. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are also well above average. Geography is a very popular optional subject, attracting a large number of pupils with a wide range of prior attainment. Most achieve very well, reaching standards that are well above their predicted performance. Pupils are able to take responsibility for their own learning and know how to improve because the department has established very thorough systems for assessing work and setting targets. Many pupils produce

detailed, sophisticated course-work. This, together with access to very good revision lessons, enables them to make very effective use of their knowledge in examinations.

101. Teaching and learning are very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have expert subject knowledge which they share very readily in a wide variety of teaching and learning styles. Most lessons proceed at a very rapid pace and with extremely high expectations of pupils. Exciting ventures using ICT in lessons are underway, with further developments planned, so that constantly changing geographical ideas and information are available to engage pupils. The department produces many high quality resource booklets and worksheets and there are plenty of recent textbooks which create opportunities for wider reading in lessons.
102. The department is very well led and managed. Individual expertise within the team is celebrated and there is a strong focus on continued development of teaching and learning through shared expertise and supportive monitoring of lessons. The department maintains a high profile within the school with an energetic vision for future success. Its detailed response to the last inspection report has resulted in very good improvement.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards are high at GCSE.
- Very good teaching ensures pupils achieve very well.
- The subject is very popular at GCSE.
- The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

103. In 2003, GCSE results were well above the national average and, at the very highest grades A*/A, were double the national average. This represents very good achievement for pupils of all abilities. In 2004, results were again very high.
104. Standards in the current Years 10 and 11 are equally high and achievement is very good. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of events such as the reasons for the Liberal government's reforms before the First World War. The vast majority of pupils are compiling very good notes that will be valuable for revision purposes. Pupils enjoy studying history and it is a very popular option choice. Standards in the current Year 9 are above national expectations. This represents very good achievement for all pupils from where they start in Year 7. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate increasing understanding of events and people in the past, such as where Year 9 pupils were able to empathise, in an informed way, with the motives of young men enlisting in the British army at the beginning of the First World War. Pupils also show good written communication skills. The relative weakness in their work is in their evaluation of historical sources.

105. The quality of teaching overall is very good in Years 7-11. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils are interested by the wide variety of activities in lessons and work hard. The efforts of teachers to improve pupils' written communication are proving very effective, with Year 7 pupils, for example, writing well-structured paragraphs describing Caesar and Pompey. At GCSE, teaching prepares pupils very well for the demands of the examination whilst at the same time providing a lively and rewarding course. In a very good Year 10 lesson the teacher structured the note-making task so that pupils built up a well-supported understanding of the successes and failures of the League of Nations in the 1920s. Pupils were then helped to structure and prioritise their notes into a form that left them ready to write for homework a conclusion to the question, 'Was the League a success or a failure?' Throughout the teacher created the conditions in which the pupils had to think for themselves, ensuring a depth to their learning. Teacher assessment is very thorough and relates to the national curriculum in Years 7-9 and to the syllabus requirements at GCSE. Pupils know what they have to do to improve in history.
106. The leadership and management of history are very good. The teachers of history are a strong team and very committed to their work. Overall improvement is good since the last inspection. An extensive range of assessment information is used to chart pupil progress. The stresses placed upon the department as a result of staffing issues in the last academic year were very well managed to ensure that examination standards were not affected too adversely. The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in history is an area that requires further development, as does the coverage of local history. In contrast to the post-16 history course there are no opportunities for pupils to undertake site work in Years 7- 11. Teachers work very hard to minimise the negative impact on learning of the poor quality teaching accommodation for history.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards overall are above average and consistently well above average in textiles.
- Good relationships contribute to positive pupil response.
- Good standards of practical work in all areas.
- Teaching and learning needs to be monitored with more rigour across all areas of the department and good practice shared.
- Number of pupils taking the subject to examination level is inconsistent and often low.
- Design thinking skills are not developed in depth.
- The use of ICT and computer-aided design (CAD) is underdeveloped.

Commentary

107. In 2003 the GCSE results were average overall. Boys' results were above average for A* grades, with girls' results above average for A and B grades. Results in textiles were well above average and above average in graphic products. Food technology and electronics were well below average. The 2004 GCSE results show improvement in all specialisms, with textiles again showing very good performance and much improvement in food technology. In 2003, boys performed less well in this subject than in their others whilst girls' performance was better. Child development results were well below average in 2003 and 2004 but commensurate with their prior attainment.
108. Attainment on entry is average. Standards in Years 7-9 are above national expectations and this represents good achievement. Good work was seen in the pop-up card project in graphics where good annotated drawings, good use of colour, good modelling of ideas and good evaluation were used effectively. In food technology, pupils used their own ideas very well to adapt a recipe for scones. Pupils investigating Celtic cultures in textiles used ICT to good effect. Weaker work is often untidy, with the use of felt tip pens for colouring, poor shading, weak handwriting and pupils lacking confidence in evaluating their work.
109. Standards in Year 10-11 are above average and achievement is good. Standards in textiles are well above average. Good work was seen in the children's nightwear project in textiles where the Japanese influence in design was used when generating ideas and looking at decorative techniques. In the point of sale project in graphics, good standards of graphical presentation, good research and analysis were seen. Where the work is weaker, it is mainly due to poorer presentation, lack of depth in developing ideas, over-reliance on commercial material for ideas and weak evaluations. Literacy skills are usually good and technical language is used well in most lessons. Numeracy skills are satisfactory. The use of ICT is not featured strongly in pupils' work, including insufficient use of CAD. Standards of work in child development are improving and folder work is presented neatly.
110. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a proportion of satisfactory and very good teaching seen. Teachers use good questioning skills to reinforce learning. In the very good lessons, learning is enhanced because of the varied teaching styles used. Good subject knowledge, good planning and good use of resources engage pupils in their learning. A Year 9 lesson was delivered enthusiastically and stimulated learning considerably in a pop-up card mechanisms project. In a Year 11 lesson pupils made very good progress with their coursework and developed high standards of design folder work and demonstrated good practical skills. In only satisfactory lessons, slow pace, teacher-led activities and low-level noisy behaviour hamper pupils' progress. In most lessons teachers make good use of support assistants who enable pupils with special educational needs to succeed. Marking is usually helpful and supportive but at times is over generous. Homework is set and marked regularly. High-attaining pupils are given limited opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. Performance data and target setting are used satisfactorily to track pupils' progress. Girls usually perform better than boys and there is some boys' underachievement which is not monitored closely, particularly coursework completion.

111. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The head of faculty has addressed some issues from the last inspection but progress is insufficient. Assessment procedures have improved but teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are too generous. ICT is still an area for development, including the use of CAD. The range of material experiences is restrictive and does not include sufficient work in plastics, metal or natural materials. Display is not used to enhance the learning environment in the hard technology areas. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not formally implemented across the department. Accommodation is inflexible in two areas of the school. One workshop is in need of upgrading and modernising. A much-needed extraction system is soon to be upgraded. Resources are satisfactory. All staff are well qualified and give their time generously for the benefit of pupils. Technician support is good. Pupils benefit from a 'Young Engineers' club which meets regularly.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE standards are well above average.
- Standards in Years 7-9 are above average.
- There is good teaching and learning.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Expectations in some classes are insufficiently challenging.
- Evaluation of learning outcomes lacks rigour in some lessons.

Commentary

112. GCSE results in 2003 were well above average. Results in 2004 showed further good improvement. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in Year 11 learn to develop and sustain a chosen theme in their work. They can demonstrate personal interests, ideas and responses to their own and other cultures, working successfully in a good range of two- and three-dimensional materials. They learn to work effectively as individuals. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are well motivated by teachers' enthusiasm and good preparation. As a result, they achieve well in reaching above average-standards.

113. Standards in Year 9 are above the national average. This represents good achievement as the result of good teaching and planning, as pupils enter the school with average standards. Pupils learn to draw, use colour and manipulate a range of other media, including information and communication technology, with confidence, because of the strong emphases the department places on developing these skills. Those with special educational needs make similarly good progress. Opportunities to challenge appropriately gifted and talented pupils need more detailed planning. Homework, supporting classwork, is set and marked regularly in all years.

114. Teaching and learning are good in all years. On occasions teaching is very good and outstanding. The most successful lessons have brisk pace, a high level of challenge, learning is strongly reinforced by direct questioning and there are very high expectations of pupils' active involvement. On occasions, the pace set is less demanding and learning outcomes are only satisfactory. Lesson outcomes are not often rigorously evaluated against clearly stated aims as a strategy for raising standards. Assessment in all years is regular, thorough and particularly helpful in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are involved in evaluating their own and others' work. Literacy and oracy skills are well developed in art. Attitudes are very positive and relationships are very good.
115. The department is well led and managed by an enthusiastic and experienced specialist who has maintained high standards and a fertile environment for learning. There is a strong team spirit and there have been good improvements since the last inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The variety, quality and impact of extra-curricular activities are very good.
- The leadership and management of a committed team are good.
- Good teaching and very good relationships result in high standards.
- Teachers and pupils should become more aware of the skills and knowledge they are teaching and learning.
- The department should develop cross-curricular themes, including ICT, to enhance learning.

Commentary

116. When pupils join the school at the beginning of Year 7 most of them have not achieved the expected National Curriculum level in music but, for the last three years, teacher assessments show that standards at the end of Year 9 are well above national expectations.
117. In 2002 and 2003, GCSE results were well above average but in 2004, because the head of department left the school, GCSE results declined significantly. Pupils in the current Year 11 are expected to return to high standards in the 2005 examination and observations during the inspection support this view.
118. Standards of work seen in Years 7-9 are above expectations and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress. Most pupils sing with confidence and enthusiasm, learning new musical skills and knowledge, listening to a variety of music and increasing their knowledge. They make good use of keyboards and percussion instruments and apply confidently musical skills learned in extra-curricular lessons. This continues in Years 10 and 11 where, increasingly, learning inside, and outside, the classroom is moulded into a single educational experience. Standards are above average by the end of Year 11 and pupils' achievement is

- good. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls; pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by their peers and their teachers; work is tailored to meet their needs. In some lessons the gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to tackle more challenging work and for those pupils who have not mastered the importance of correct fingering, supplementary learning materials are given to help them make progress.
119. Overall, the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good; none of the lessons seen were less than satisfactory. Teachers' good planning, preparation, lesson delivery, modular assessments clearly linked with National Curriculum and targets for improvement contribute to good achievement. In some lessons learning is not as effective as it could be because pupils do not clearly understand what skills and knowledge they are trying to acquire. Pupils behave well and carry out the tasks they are set but they are sometimes passive learners rather than active ones. Relationships are very good.
120. The leadership and management of music are good; much has been achieved by the new head of department since her appointment but there has not yet been sufficient time for systems of support, monitoring and curriculum development to make a full impact. Class teachers, peripatetic teachers and colleagues from outside the music department work very well as a team.
121. The high quality, variety and number of extra-curricular instrumental lessons, voice lessons and music making activities provide enrichment for a significant number of pupils. Each week many pupils benefit from 278 peripatetic lessons, which is well above the national average. The number of teachers from other departments in the school that support or lead musical ensembles is notable and effective. The departmental ethos creates a very supportive environment where achievement flourishes and is celebrated. Resources and accommodation support learning well, with the exception of ICT. There are not enough computers in the department to teach the requirements of the music National Curriculum.
122. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory; accommodation has been improved, high standards maintained, modular assessment developed and the older pupils make more use of computers to help their music learning. The issue of ICT, however, has not yet been fully addressed for younger pupils and the department has identified further developments in assessment for learning and cross-curricular themes that will continue to raise standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE examinations are well above the national average.
- Teachers' subject knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm are good.
- The head of department offers good leadership and a clear direction for future development.
- Pupils benefit from an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

- An emphasis on games in Years 7-9 reduces the amount of time spent on other areas of activity.

Commentary

123. GCSE results in physical education are well above the national average. The provisional results for 2004 show further improvement. Pupils' attainment in this examination compares very favourably with their attainment in other subjects. Focused and effective teaching, along with the continuous monitoring of pupils' work, underpins these results.
124. Standards on entry to the school are variable. The baseline assessment is used effectively to identify pupils' achievement and highlight their needs. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. Teachers' high expectations and encouragement along with good use of assessment and monitoring ensure that pupils achieve well. Boys' achievement is slightly better than girls' by Year 9. In Year 8 boys and girls are skilful in hockey and the majority of them can pass and stop a ball accurately. In Year 7 most pupils can plan a simple group sequence in dance and work with others to perform their movements and can highlight an area which they need to improve. In Years 7 - 9, teachers do not always promote deep understanding of fitness in activities or give pupils enough opportunities to work independently.
125. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress and achieve very well in reaching well-above-average standards. Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak very positively of the contribution that the subject makes to their learning. Pupils in the examination groups are developing a very good understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. More generally, pupils are developing good skills in performance and evaluation in a range of games and sporting activities. In a Year 10 netball lesson, girls were very successful in applying tactics to beat a defender in conditioned skill practices and were then able to apply these to very good effect in competitive game situations. In gymnastics, pupils can identify which areas of vaulting they need to improve, but their standards of performance are not as high as those seen in games-based activities.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The overall planning and structure of both practical and theory lessons are indicative of teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding. Where teaching was very good, as in a Year 9 badminton lesson, all pupils performed a clear shot with control and accuracy. In the best lessons a variety of resources are used and activities are well chosen to sustain pupils' interests and involvement. There is an expectancy that all pupils will work well and generally these expectations are met. Pupils are taught to evaluate their own performance in some lessons. In practical lessons skills are clearly demonstrated and effective and realistic skills drills are taught. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils' involvement was assured by worksheets which matched pupils' needs. They were involved in all aspects of planning, performing and evaluating as well as in peer coaching and evaluation. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Pace was slow, there was lack of challenge and tasks set did not match the needs of all pupils. Relationships in lessons are very good and all pupils work in a safe environment which is conducive to learning.

127. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress, using a wide range of tasks and resources. Talented pupils are encouraged to extend their skills through the wide range of extra-curricular activities that the department offers. Many pupils compete at county, regional, national and international levels, with a range of informal support from the staff. Implementation has also been made of the 'Trailblazer' award which uses outdoor education and leadership opportunities to develop those pupils whom the school has identified as being lower achievers. This has had a good impact on the pupils' learning and has enabled them to make links with other curriculum areas, including work-related learning, and to start to work towards accredited awards.
128. Leadership of the subject is very good, with a head of department who has a clear vision of future development. The development of ICT, the use of baseline assessment, the contribution of leadership awards and re-writing of schemes of work should all contribute to the development of the subject. The day-to-day management of the subject is good, with a very good feature being the use of data to analyse performance and achievement. The strong curriculum focus on games does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to study, in depth, other areas of the curriculum including gymnastics and dance. A good range of indoor facilities is available including a specialist health and fitness suite. Outdoor accommodation is good although some of the hard-court areas used for hockey are slippery and a potential hazard. Since the previous inspection, there has been good progress.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Provision in business studies is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching and learning are good; teachers have good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well.
- Pupils use readily available computers well in lessons.
- Some boys' written work is not as good as it should be.
- Links with local businesses are insufficiently developed.

COMMENTARY

129. Pupils gained GCSE examination grades that, in 2004, were above the national average, as over two-thirds of pupils gained A*-C grades and all passed. The attainment of girls and boys was similar. The consistently high trend from previous years was maintained, results continuing to be slightly above the school average. Pupils' achievement was good in relation to their standard of attainment on entry to the GCSE course.
130. In lessons and coursework seen, the standards of current pupils are above national average, and girls and boys are achieving well. Year 10 pupils are beginning to understand the importance of business topics such as the internal and external influences on businesses growth. Higher-attaining pupils can link economies of scale effectively to topical examples of multi-national companies. Year 11 pupils discuss enterprising ideas for starting their own local businesses for coursework projects. They use ICT effectively to draw graphs of consumer surveys based on marketing questionnaires. Their numeracy skills, shown in neat break-even graphs, are above average as they can interpret graphs well. They are well motivated by tasks connected with real businesses and show good attitudes overall. The standards of some boys' written notes and homework in Year 10 were too low when compared with their good oral skills.
131. Teaching and learning are good overall, with some very good features. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and their very good subject expertise helps pupils, including those with special educational needs, to understand concepts such as stakeholders' interests and balance sheets. Homework is set regularly but not enough tasks are given to higher-attaining pupils to extend written evaluation skills. Tasks are matched to pupils' needs in most, but not all lessons, for example, where difficult financial concepts are studied. Pupils' work is marked consistently and regularly. They know how they are progressing in relation to targets set.
132. Leadership and management by an experienced teacher are good overall. The close-knit department organises effective schemes of work and plans to develop more links with local businesses, as existing links are insufficient. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; the subject has good potential for further improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- Tutorial lessons are well planned in all years.
- There is very good extra-curriculum provision, enriching what is taught within the curriculum.
- Restricted use of work in books or files in all years limits teachers' ability to judge and assess pupils' progress.

COMMENTARY

133. Standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Citizenship is central to the whole ethos of this school, having its own mission statement of commitment to the community. Pupils across the school have very positive attitudes towards citizenship and regard it as a natural part of the total curriculum. From Years 7-13, key elements of the citizenship course, such as contemporary social and political issues, are taught well within tutorials through the personal, social and health programme. They are also implicit in the programmes of study in most curriculum areas, particularly in history and geography.
134. It was not possible for any discrete lessons, in which citizenship is mainly taught, to be observed during the course of the inspection. Elements of the subject were noted in tutorials, in English, geography and history lessons, and in a sixth form general studies lesson. Appropriate citizenship references were made in an English lesson on the currently controversial social issue of smoking. In a geography lesson, Year 9 pupils discussed the social and political elements of land ownership, regarding National Parks. In a history lesson, Year 8 pupils prayed for Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, who was mortally ill, and considered his place in global terms. In a sixth form general studies lesson, dealing with cults in society, pupils had firm views about the nature of religious cults and the sort of people attracted to them. In the sixth form weekly assembly, students presented a moving service comprising appropriate Remembrance Day music, readings of World War I and World War II poets and relevant prayers.
135. Very good enrichment activities contribute very strongly to the citizenship programme in the school and there are very close links with the local community. The Mayor of Havant, for example, has visited the school and students have made a return visit to the Mayor's Parlour. Two of the governors are magistrates and through them, students have visited the local Crown Courts. Students are involved with Havant Youth Council and the National Youth Council. There are close links with the local police force: a retired police officer recently spoke to sixth form students studying law. Very good links with the media are maintained through the programme "Portsmouth People." Residents of a local Cheshire Home visit the school, and are entertained by the students. There are outstanding links with the local church communities. Students are developing very good attitudes towards

community responsibility, by raising money for charity: members of the sixth form recently raised over £700 for a local hospice. All of these examples of very good enrichment demonstrate the commitment the school has to the raising of awareness of citizenship with students.

136. A little evidence of work done was obtained through a scrutiny of folders. Teaching tends to be more of an oral nature through the tutorials, and little work is stored. This practice of not systematically recording work makes the assessment of progress by pupils difficult for teachers to judge. In the little work scrutinised, teaching, learning and achievement appeared to be at least satisfactory, and standards at least average.
137. The leadership and management are good. The citizenship co-ordinator liaises effectively with heads of year and, with them, evaluates the effectiveness of modules of work as an on going process. Very full programmes of study have been produced for all years. These are reviewed regularly and the co-ordinator observes frequently how lessons covering citizenship matters are taught within tutorials. He also monitors the quality of visiting speakers who contribute very strongly towards extra-curricular elements of citizenship. Assessment procedures are in hand, and subject reports were produced for all pupils in the school last summer. Work is currently in progress for levels of attainment to be added to all reports next summer.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

<i>Level 3 GCE AS-level and VCE courses</i>					
Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B	
		School	England	School	England
Biology	12	84.6	65.2	22.2	11.1
Business studies	9	88.8	76.4	25.0	16.3
Chemistry	5	100.0	72.7	20.0	13.9
Drama	5	100.0	86.5	0.0	19.6
Economics	4	100	75.0	0.0	20.1
English literature	16	93.7	85.9	62.5	19.1
Design and technology	5	80.0	74.9	25.0	15.1
Geography	14	92.8	74.3	42.8	19.8
History	32	96.8	80.7	50.0	19.5
ICT	12	75.0	67.0	0.0	10.9
Mathematics	14	100.0	61.9	42.8	17.1
Music	8	75.0	86.5	0.0	21.4
Psychology	27	85.1	69.7	51.8	16.7
Physics	5	100	68.6	40.0	14.4
Religious studies	6	100	80.2	83.0	22.6

Sociology	12	100.0	71.8	42.8	11.4
Physical education	7	100.0	73.2	14.3	11.4

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	2	100	98.6	50	50.2	90.0	87.5
Biology	11	100	96.4	9.1	39.2	70.9	78.6
Business studies	6	100	98.7	50	36.8	80.0	80.1
Chemistry	7	100	97.6	28.6	49.0	74.3	84.9
Drama	6	100	99.5	33.3	40.1	76.7	83.6
Economics	3	100	98.9	66.7	52.0	86.7	88.3
English/English language	15	100	99.4	33.3	36.3	77.3	80.9
English literature	8	100	99.5	87.5	46.5	102.5	86.5
French	3	100	98.8	66.7	51.5	100.0	87.6
Design and technology	8	100	97.8	12.5	35.0	77.5	77.9
Geography	11	100	98.7	90.9	44.5	101.8	84.0
History	16	100	99.0	50.0	44.6	87.5	84.6
ICT	6	100	95.6	16.7	24.6	63.3	69.5
Mathematics	17	100	96.7	70.6	55.6	97.6	88.8
Music	3	100	98.8	33.3	38.9	93.3	81.1
Other Social studies	30	96.7	97.4	40.0	42.7	75.3	81.8
Physics	7	100	96.7	28.6	44.6	85.7	81.7
Religious studies	6	100	98.8	83.3	46.7	100.0	85.6
Sociology	8	100	98.2	37.5	44.3	80.0	83.6
Spanish	3	100	98.3	33.3	50.2	86.7	86.9
Sports/PE studies	11	100	98.0	54.5	30.9	85.5	75.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The inspection focus was on English literature and French but one Year 13 English literature and language lesson was seen in which teaching and learning were very good; students achieved very well and they gained average standards.

English

Overall, the quality of provision in English literature is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good achievement, underpinned by the very good advice students receive on how they are doing, and what they should do in order to improve.
- Well-above-average standards in examinations and in work seen.
- Very good teaching, deploying excellent subject knowledge and a variety of methods which promote very good independent learning.
- Very good leadership and management, which have expanded the range of learning opportunities available to engage student enthusiasm and commitment.

Commentary

138. 2003 results in English literature were well above the national average, both overall and for those reaching higher grades (A/B). They rose from the time of the previous inspection and the previous year, but fell slightly in 2004.
139. Standards of work seen are well above average. In Year 12, students acquire a very good working knowledge of the various forms of narrative technique, following on from very well informed teacher questioning and interrogation. They explore perceptively underlying themes in novels and plays, understanding both character development and the use of satire to explore wider issues in society. In Year 13, students' grasp of poetry demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of its technical and structural devices, balanced with a very well developed ability to consider, respond to and express its emotional impact. Students reflect on their own and each others' learning very well because teachers ensure that they make presentations and work together in teams. They supplement this with shrewd interrogation using excellent subject knowledge. As a result, very good achievement is sustained throughout lessons, coupled with a sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject.
140. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers deploy excellent subject knowledge to extend and consolidate student knowledge through highly focused questioning. In addition, very well set homework and classroom exercises make students study independently and reflect industriously on their own learning, alongside that of their peers. Students' work is marked sensitively and supportively, complemented by very good individual written advice on how to improve.
141. Achievement is very good because teachers sustain constantly a very high level of expectation and nurture students' enthusiasm through encouragement and detailed

suggestions as they answer questions, or report back on their independent research.

142. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. They have ensured the maintenance of unfailing standards of very good teaching. They have also expanded the range of learning opportunities available outside the school day for students to see performances, benefit from study days and take part in focused revision sessions. In consequence, well-above-average standards and very high levels of achievement have been sustained. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection to develop students' confidence and fluency in developing arguments in discussion.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good and contribute to students' very good achievement.
- Very good language laboratory facilities to enhance teaching and learning.
- Relationships are very good and students are well motivated.
- Insufficient use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

143. Results in French at GCE A- and AS-level over recent years have been consistently well above average but the number of students entered has been small. Standards of high grades achieved are well above average, with 100 per cent pass rates achieved at A-level and AS-level in 2003 and 2004.
144. Standards seen in lessons are well above national expectations, which represents very good achievement. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are well developed. Students, fluently using the French language, are able to express opinions on why young people start smoking and why they should stop. They are also able to clearly express views and present arguments for and against stem cell research. Grasp of vocabulary is good and students are able to manipulate tenses effectively, including the subjunctive. Study skills are well developed, with students being able to correct each other's errors and support each other in finding synonyms. Some very good coursework, presenting relevant arguments and opinions, was seen. Good use of Internet resources was evident from students' coursework preparation done outside of class.
145. Teaching and learning are very good. Schemes of work are comprehensive and lessons are well planned to allow a range of activities. Some excellent features of teaching were seen. Constant use of the language by teachers, for example, contributes positively to the students' level of ability. Assessment of students' work in study folders is supportive, and enables them to see how they can further improve their work.

146. Leadership and management of languages are very good. Strategies to focus on improvement of speaking skills lower down the school have also been deployed in the sixth form. There is strong emphasis on individual coaching from teachers, and skilful use of carefully prepared activities, which enhance students' speaking skills. Students appreciate the support from teachers. Resources for languages are very good, with dedicated rooms and a language laboratory, which is well used.
147. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. In the last inspection, students' performance was above average. It was noted that written work contained basic errors. Students' work seen during the inspection was well above average and writing, scrutinised in folders, was at least good.

In Spanish, one excellent lesson was observed.

The lesson was carefully planned, with clear and wide-ranging objectives which ensured maximum fluency, and sensitive and imaginative discussion of contemporary issues.

Students confidently discussed the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones in Spanish. This included intelligent and informed discussion on the inconvenience of ring tones in public places and the burden of the cost of such a fashion accessory. The whole session was managed skilfully by the teacher and included an extensive range of activities supporting the theme. There were demanding tasks to challenge three gifted and talented students, including one native speaker. Teaching and learning were excellent and contributed to students' outstanding achievement. Students were highly stimulated by the cut and thrust of the debate and made substantial gains in knowledge, understanding and oral skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, gaining well-above-average standards.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and the management of students are very good, resulting in good learning opportunities.
- The relationships between teachers and students are very good, leading to very mature attitudes to study amongst students.
- The use of modern technologies is underdeveloped.

Commentary

148. Results in the A-level courses over the last few years have been well above average. In 2003, standards in A-level were well above average and the proportion of students who obtained the highest grades A/B are significantly above average. Provisional figures for 2004 are nearly as impressive. Successes in the further mathematics A-level courses have also been very good. The AS level results in 2003 were well above the national average, but in 2004 were not as good.
149. Examination results are confirmed by the well-above-average standard of work seen in classes and in students' work. Students' algebraic skills, especially those of the further mathematics students, are of a very high level. In a very good lesson on polynomials, students showed very good understanding of types of roots of equations, and manipulated algebraic terms quickly and efficiently. Progression in mathematical topics is good, with new modules building on work previously covered. The evidence from work seen in lessons and in students' folders shows an increasing difficulty of examples and good achievement. Students display very good

skills in solving mathematical problems, but some students demonstrate poor standards of presentation and do not give enough attention to detail in their setting out.

150. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and contributes to students' good achievement. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the requirements of the various courses are very good. Teachers present their lessons extremely fluently; they show a very good command of the subject and are able to deal very confidently with students' questions. Teachers help students in a very caring manner and relationships with students are very good. Often, students present their ideas to the rest of the class. They do this with considerable confidence and high quality learning takes place because of the interaction between the students and the teacher. Students' achievement is good, with students showing great interest in their studies and wishing to develop their mathematical skills. Students concentrate very hard in lessons and show a willingness to participate fully in discussion. The marking of students' work is good. The use of new technologies is underdeveloped.

151. The leadership and management are good. The head of department and the second in charge of mathematics are both new appointments from September 2004. The leadership and management of mathematics have been very good and there has been good progress since the previous inspection. The signs are that the previous successes should be maintained. The new head of department understands the developments that are required. Ideas and resources are shared among members of the department. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning take place, and data on students' attainment are available. The match of staffing to the curriculum is very good. Good features of the department referred to in the last inspection report have been maintained.

SCIENCE

Chemistry was the focus subject for the inspection, but physics and biology were also sampled. In both biology and physics, standards were above average, teaching and learning were very good and students were achieving very well in relation to predictions based on their GCSE results. Evidence suggests that Year 12 students showed good understanding of biological concepts such as transpiration and the transport system in plants. In physics, Year 13 students are given good opportunities to plan and design investigations to test hypotheses.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject are shown in clear explanations of chemical concepts.
- Students' positive attitudes to work are in response to supportive teacher-student relationships.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance learning.
- There are not enough opportunities for the development of independent learning skills in some lessons.

Commentary

152. In 2003 the GCE A-level results were below the national average. Although the pass rate at grades A-E was 100 per cent, the percentage of the higher A and B grades was below the national average. Some students underachieved as their results were lower than those expected from their GCSE performance. In 2004, all the four students entered attained A or B grades. Their achievement was very good.
153. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average and students' achievement is good. Knowledge and understanding of chemistry and students' practical skills are being developed through some effective teaching. In a Year 12 lesson students investigating the relative solubility of compounds of Group Two elements demonstrated good practical skills and developed a good knowledge and understanding of periodicity. Students show good understanding of the significance of enthalpy change and how to interpret enthalpy level diagrams. They are developing an awareness of how Hess' Law can be used to calculate a reaction enthalpy. In Year 13, students understand why titration curves have different equivalence points, depending on their constituents. They can calculate confidently the pH of solutions and plot the shape of titration curves. Most students are able to interpret observation in terms of trends, but sometimes have difficulty in explaining reasons for the trends. They learn well from first-hand experience, the investigative work reinforcing the theory.
154. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' very good command of the subject allows them to explain new topics clearly to develop students' understanding. In the more effective lessons, teachers focus students' learning on

the lesson objectives and how they fit in with previous and future work. In a Year 12 lesson on energetics, the teacher made good use of a PowerPoint presentation to explain enthalpy changes in language the students could clearly understand. Students were given their own copies of the slides on which they were able to add their own notes and benefited through being actively involved in their learning. The visual stimulus reinforced the teacher's oral explanation and enhanced learning. The teaching built on the students' GCSE knowledge in structured small steps enabling all students to make good progress. In some lessons, not enough opportunities are provided for students to discuss and debate topics to increase their scientific curiosity and improve their learning. The use of ICT to enhance learning is underdeveloped. Homework is well used to reinforce learning. Students speak very highly of their teachers and of the extra help they receive. Teachers' encouraging and supportive attitudes boost students' confidence, enabling them to persevere when they meet difficulties.

155. The subject is well led and managed. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. Student performance is analysed carefully and good use is made of assessment data. Written course materials are of a high quality and marking is diagnostic and helpful to students. They know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

HUMANITIES

The focus was on history. Work in geography, psychology and law was sampled during this inspection. Two Year 13 geography lessons were observed and the work of a sample of Year 12 and 13 students was looked at. Teaching and learning were excellent in one of the lessons seen and very good in the other. A very high level of challenge and expectation from teachers is ensuring that students are achieving very well and are working at a standard that is well above average. Two Year 12 psychology lessons were observed. In one lesson, teaching and learning were good and students achieved satisfactorily, gaining average standards. In the other lesson, teaching and learning were very good; the students achieved very well and they gained well-above-average standards. A Year 12 law lesson was observed. Teaching and learning were good; students made good progress in the lesson and they gained average standards. As they have not studied law prior to this year, and are fairly early in the course, achievement was not judged.

History

Overall the quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards attained by students.
- Very good teaching, which is leading to very good learning.
- The large numbers of students choosing to study history.

Commentary

156. Results at A-level are well above the national average. In 2003, the pass rate was 100 per cent, with 50 per cent gaining the highest A or B grades. This was a good achievement for these students. In 2004, results were equally impressive. At AS-level in 2003, all but one of the 32 students gained a pass grade, with 66 per cent achieving the highest A or B grades. This represented very good achievement by these students. In 2004, results were equally good. Three students scored full marks on the document paper. Nineteen of these students continued to study history in Year 13. History is a very popular subject.
157. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of work in the current Years 12 and 13 confirm that the standards students are attaining are very good and that this represents very good achievement for them all. They demonstrate an increasing ability to analyse the past, such as the Year 13 students who reached well-reasoned assessments of why the Petrograd Soviet supported the provisional Russian government in 1917. Students are very committed, work very well independently and speak with enthusiasm about the different history topics. They clearly enjoy history and learn very well.
158. The teaching of history is very good and is based on a strong command of both the subject and of the assessment demands of the syllabus. Prominent features of teaching are very good planning and questioning. For example, in a very good Year 12 lesson, the teacher skilfully set up a range of different questions and sources that allowed students to understand some of the complex ideas within Lenin's April theses. The breaking down of complex ideas and events into manageable pieces is a real strength. Marking gives students very good guidance on their strengths and weaknesses, and the students themselves show an increasing ability to accurately assess their own work. This is clearly contributing to their high standards. Relationships between students and teachers are very good, characterised by good humour and mutual respect. Teachers have created an atmosphere where good historical thinking is highly valued by all and students are confident to test out their own ideas and to take risks. The recent study visit to Berlin has plainly contributed to this.
159. Leadership and management of history are very good. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Very good resources and the planning in the schemes of work underpin teaching. Opportunities for overlap between different options are being well exploited, such as where comparisons were made between Lenin and Hitler.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on theatre studies, but one art lesson and two music lessons were observed. In the Year 12 art lesson, teaching and learning were very good, and students achieved very well, gaining above-average standards. In a lesson combining Year 12 and 13 music students, teaching and learning were good and students achieved well. They gained below-average standards because the technical demand of the subject was not embedded. In a second music lesson, with Year 13 students only, teaching and learning were very good, students achieved very well and they gained well-above-average standards.

Theatre studies

Provision in theatre studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of practical work in lessons are above average and students achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with effective methods used to develop the strengths of the students.
- Excellent provision is made for students to attend live theatre performances, leading to a sharper awareness of theatre conventions.
- Students' approach to written work and theory is underdeveloped.

Commentary

160. Standards are above average and students' achievement is good. In the 2003 A-level examinations, results were below average. In the 2003 AS-level examinations, there were only four entries. These numbers were too few to make a comparative judgment. These results reflect the fact that many of the students take up theatre studies as a third or fourth choice at AS-level, that some have not taken GCSE drama in Year 11, and that, for all, the gap between GCSE drama and AS theatre studies is very wide. Although all students have at least good practical skills, most of them find written work difficult. The head of department has put in place some carefully considered strategies to raise the quality of students' written work.
161. Students achieve well largely as a result of the expert methods of the teachers, who demonstrate features of the subject in practical terms and link these features closely to theory. In practical work seen during the inspection, standards are above average. Students have a good knowledge of elements of Stanislavski and Brecht theatre and are developing a secure awareness of Greek tragedy. All are developing very good analytical skills, largely due to the fact that they visit live theatre very regularly. In one Year 12 lesson students made some very perceptive comments on production and direction techniques of *Antigone* which they had recently attended. Year 13 students have a secure knowledge of Restoration Drama. Written work is satisfactory. Students often have good ideas, but have difficulty organising these ideas and writing them down. This may be due to the fact that in their enthusiasm to state their views, both to the teachers and to each other, they miss important points being made by teachers.
162. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. Lessons are very carefully prepared and are taught at an appropriate pace. Teachers insist on students thinking for themselves and working out their own solutions. Students are reminded constantly about the sort of questions that are likely to be set in examinations and how they should tackle such questions.
163. Leadership and management are very good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The head of department is constantly striving to add value to students' achievement and to develop their interest in the academic side of the course. Excellent provision is made to take groups of sixth form students to live theatre productions and they are encouraged to be involved in the many live school

productions. These enriching experiences contribute very positively to the quality of discussion and debate in lessons. The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, enabling better facilities for group work and improvisation. Good numbers, including male students, are attracted to the course.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average and represent good achievement.
- Use of assessment and how it informs student understanding aids students' learning.
- Students' attitudes to learning, to their teachers and each other are very good.
- Very good teaching leads to well-focused learning.
- There are good opportunities for all students in the sixth form to participate in sport as part of general studies.

Commentary

164. Standards are well above the national average and represent good achievement. In 2003 all students achieved a pass A-E and the percentage of students gaining grades A and B at A-level was well above the national average. The AS-level results were slightly above the national average. The course is becoming very popular with male and female students.
165. For current Year 13 students, standards are above average and they are achieving well. They have a good knowledge of theory and can make links to different parts of the course. In a lesson focusing on practical assessments, students were able to speak about a range of factors which impact on performance in a sport, including the physiological and psychological effects. The students were able to comment critically on how they could improve their performance through watching a video of themselves being interviewed. They are a well motivated group who show a determination to improve on their Year 12 work. In Year 12, students build on previous knowledge and understanding from GCSE as well as the linkages that are made between practical application and theoretical understanding. In a lesson focusing on muscles, staff encouraged students to think about how racial stereotyping could influence participation in sport and how muscles work in pairs whilst performing a practical task.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Staff are knowledgeable and have an enthusiasm for the subject which stimulates interest and motivates students. Teachers are aware of the ways in which students learn and what best meets their needs. As a consequence of surveying student opinion, staff have changed some of their approaches, including the use of handout notes and appropriately challenging worksheets and tasks. Students' learning is firmly rooted in the very good relationships which teachers establish and the use made of assessment and

monitoring to ensure that they are working at or near their capacity. Teachers make full use of their ICT skills using PowerPoint presentations. Students are encouraged to enhance their personal skills by using computers to produce their personal exercise programmes. The development of an ICT suite and the purchase of video analysis tools should develop further students' understanding of the subject.

167. Leadership and management are very good. There are a number of good developments, including the use of ICT and data analysis. The implementation of the Community Sports Leaders Award has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. Opportunities to participate in sport are available to all students in the sixth form as part of a general studies lesson. Better provision needs to be made to match the students' needs to a structured programme which will motivate and challenge them to understand the importance of health and fitness as part of their sixth form experience.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Provision in health and social care is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Very good teaching helps students achieve very well.
- Students use local care settings very effectively to enrich their work.
- Students do not use ICT enough in lessons.
- Numeracy skills are under-developed.

COMMENTARY

168. Standards in the Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) examination are above average overall. Students come on to the course with below-average GCSE results and achieve very well in examinations and coursework. In 2004, the three students gained A/B grades, achieving well above the predictions based on their GCSE results. In lessons and work seen, current Year 13 AVCE students, who gained above-average results at the end of Year 12, continue to achieve very well. The subject is gaining in popularity and the number of students in Year 12 has increased to 12 this year.
169. Standards of work seen in lessons and students' folders are above average and achievement is very good. Students have a very good understanding of how health promotion campaigns are organised. Year 13 students effectively try out pilot questionnaires on each other. They show a mature appreciation of the ways of creating attractive learning materials for infants observed in local nurseries. Projects show an above-average understanding of children's intellectual stages. Students use ICT well to present coursework assignments, researching job roles. They do not use ICT enough to analyse health statistics, as computers are not readily available in some lessons. Numeracy skills are underdeveloped. Students' literacy skills are above average, they summarise reports efficiently and present findings fluently.

170. Teaching and learning are very good, with some excellent features. The relationship between teachers and student groups is very close and supportive, helping students to gain excellent attitudes to work. They see tasks as relevant to future careers. Teachers' lessons plans are very detailed, fully involving students in critical discussion. Activities are very interesting and challenging, as in an excellent lesson where students took the role of infants, and through that learned how such pupils could be helped to make witches' hats for Halloween. They are given ample opportunity to offer their own ideas, which they are keen to do. They willingly find placements in local nurseries for up to one day a week. Students gain above-average knowledge and acquire good team-working skills through teachers' very good support. They enjoy the course very much. Teachers monitor individual students' progress very effectively. Students' work is marked regularly, giving them targets for improvement.
171. The course is very well led and managed. Teachers are very experienced. They have a very good understanding of AVCE assessment requirements and act as excellent role models. Schemes of work are very good. The subject was not previously inspected. There is good potential for further improvement by students using ICT more, and developing numeracy skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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