

INSPECTION REPORT

PRINCES RISBOROUGH SCHOOL

Princes Risborough

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110489

Acting Headteacher: Mrs S Gates

Lead inspector: Mrs J Greenfield

Dates of inspection: 27th - 30th September 2004

Inspection number: 268881

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	949
School address:	Merton Road Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire
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Telephone number:	(01844) 345 496
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Rogerson

Date of previous 28th September 1998 inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Princes Risborough School is a Specialist Technology College. With 949 pupils on roll, it is similar in size to most secondary schools. The school is a secondary modern (non-selective) school within a selective authority. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there are fewer higher-attaining pupils than normally found in other schools as a high proportion of these pupils pass the selection criteria for entry into grammar schools. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, which is not particularly advantaged or disadvantaged overall. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Nearly all pupils are of white British origin. A very small number of pupils are from black Caribbean, Asian or other mixed heritages. There are seven pupils from traveller families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average and the proportion with a statement is well above average as the school has an attached unit for pupils with social and communication disorders on the autistic spectrum. The range of special needs includes moderate and specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, hearing impairment and speech and communication difficulties. The school gained Investor in People status in 2001, which was renewed in 2004. Last year, more pupils left, rather than entered, the school at times other than the normal transfer times.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7070	Mrs J Greenfield	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
20709	Mr D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English and drama
30553	Mr R Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
30433	Dr C Corp	Team inspector	Science
15127	Mr W Goodall	Team inspector	Art and design
10894	Mr P Reynolds	Team inspector	Design and technology
19530	Ms J Bray	Team inspector	Geography
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	History
2521	Mrs S Killman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
16042	Ms P Haes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31660	Mrs M Young	Team inspector	Music Performing arts
4647	Mrs J Evans	Team inspector	Physical education
10759	Dr L Bappa	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
16227	Mr J Phillips	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8 - 14
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	14 - 22
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	22 - 24
WORK-RELATED LEARNING	24
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25
	- 48
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	49

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Princes Risborough School provides a satisfactory standard of education for most of its pupils but **is not fully effective**. This school has serious weaknesses. Pupils do not do well enough in national tests and public examinations. Teaching is satisfactory but does not always challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the provision for their personal development, are unsatisfactory. In the short time since her appointment, the acting headteacher has taken firm steps to tackle the unsatisfactory behaviour and to improve leadership and management in the school. At present, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- pupils are not achieving as well as they might;
- the acting headteacher, with the support of senior staff, is providing good leadership;
- the attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, both in lessons and around the school, are unsatisfactory;
- the school lacks an ethos in which all pupils are valued and their views taken into account;
- provision is good in English, science, design and technology and French and very good in performing arts, but is unsatisfactory in mathematics and citizenship;
- the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, but there is no clear strategy to ensure that pupils in the Communication Base are fully included in all aspects of school life; and
- not enough use is made of performance data and assessment information to monitor pupils' progress and their achievements in order to raise standards.

The school was last inspected in 1998. Its rate of improvement since that time has been variable and overall is unsatisfactory. Standards have improved and teaching and learning are better. Satisfactory progress has been made in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), providing religious education in the sixth form and improving communication throughout the school. Insufficient progress has been made in improving the standard of pupils' behaviour, developing the role of middle managers in monitoring lessons and using data to aid planning and in raising standards in mathematics.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in national tests and public examinations are broadly average but are not high enough when account is taken of pupils' earlier attainment. In 2004, the GCSE examination results were much lower than in 2003. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the overall results were average and were broadly similar in 2004. However, when compared with their performance at the end of Year 6, pupils

did far less well than expected. Current standards are broadly average overall and are above average in science, design and technology and music by Year 11. They are below average in mathematics and citizenship. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons but despite improvements in the quality of teaching, subject leadership and recent action taken by senior managers, the evidence is not yet strong enough to have confidence that the underachievement of pupils has been eradicated. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but the higher attaining pupils underachieve. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are unsatisfactory.** Attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory. Attendance, although it has improved since the last inspection, remains unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is generally satisfactory, although it has a number of weaknesses. **Teaching is satisfactory** overall, but good in the sixth form. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, but the higher attainers are not challenged enough. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching in Years 9 and 10. The best lessons are lively and stimulating, but learning is often affected by the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some pupils, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory but its use to inform teaching and learning is inconsistent. The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in a number of subjects and weaknesses in citizenship, work-related learning, physical education in Years 7 - 9 and in the use of ICT to support learning in some subjects. Pupils receive satisfactory support and guidance but arrangements to ensure their health and safety are unsatisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory but, although improving, those with parents are unsatisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in aspects of management. The acting headteacher is providing good leadership and tackling very firmly areas of weakness in the school's provision. The leadership provided by other senior and middle managers, some of whom have good potential, is satisfactory. Strategic planning has been unsatisfactory and the school's priorities have not been clearly defined or acted upon with sufficient vigour. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Governors have not received key information to enable them to contribute fully to shaping the strategic direction of the school and to challenge senior managers sufficiently. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough and performance data are not used systematically to raise standards and achievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Some parents have expressed a number of concerns about behaviour, bullying, homework and reports on their child's progress, and feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their views. Most pupils consider that they are expected to work hard and do their best and are taught well, but a significant majority have concerns about behaviour and bullying. A significant minority do not believe that staff treat all pupils fairly or that the school is interested in their views. Inspectors judge that behaviour in the school is unsatisfactory, but recognise that the acting headteacher is tackling this issue firmly. The quality of reports to parents and the way the school takes account of the pupils' views and involves them are also unsatisfactory. There is no evidence to indicate that staff treat all pupils unfairly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in mathematics by improving the quality of subject leadership and management;
- tackle more robustly the unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes of pupils in some lessons and especially around the school;
- enhance the ethos in the school, by improving the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their personal, social and health education;
- sharpen the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work by senior and middle managers and the governing body to tackle areas of weakness more effectively;
- make better use of assessment information, including data, to monitor pupils' progress;

AND, TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:

- modify the physical education curriculum in Years 7 - 9 to cover all the required elements;
- ensure that the content of pupils' annual reports includes the required information;
- improve the provision for citizenship and work-related learning; and
- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Although smaller than most other sixth forms, it is cost-effective. Standards are improving, although they remain below average overall. Students do better in the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses than they do in the General Certificate in Education (GCE) AS and A-level courses. Standards in AVCE science and performing arts are above average. Teaching and learning are good and students are achieving satisfactorily overall and well in some subjects.

THE MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- the good quality of the teaching enables students to achieve well in English, science and physical education and very well in performing arts;
- students have good attitudes to their work and behave in a mature and responsible manner;
- teachers give good levels of support and helpful guidance to students, especially to those with special educational needs, enabling them to enter higher education to pursue their studies; and
- students' achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory as their progress is not monitored carefully enough.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	<p>Good in English. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and thorough assessment give students confidence and enable them to achieve well.</p> <p>The small amount of teaching seen in Spanish was good.</p>
Mathematics	<p>Unsatisfactory in mathematics. Standards are well below average. Teaching is satisfactory but inadequate monitoring of individual students' progress results in unsatisfactory achievement.</p>
Science	<p>Good in AVCE science. Standards are above the national averages and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are good and teachers prepare relevant and interesting lessons.</p> <p>The small amount of teaching seen in human biology was good.</p>
Information and communication technology	<p>The small amount of teaching seen in ICT was unsatisfactory as the work did not challenge students sufficiently.</p>
Humanities	<p>Satisfactory in geography. Teaching is consistently good. Students' achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with course expectations.</p> <p>The small amount of teaching seen in classical civilisation and psychology was good.</p>

Engineering, technology and manufacturing	The small amount of teaching seen in design and technology was good. The quality of students' practical work is also good.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in performing arts . Teaching is very good and students are highly motivated. As a result, they achieve very well. The small amount of teaching seen in art and design and in media studies was satisfactory.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Good in physical education . Teaching and learning are good. Students are highly motivated by the commitment and enthusiasm of the specialist teachers and achieve well. The small amount of teaching seen in leisure and recreation was satisfactory.
Business	The small amount of teaching seen in business was good.
Health and social care	The small amount of teaching seen in health and social care was good.
General education	The small amount of teaching seen in personal, social and health education was satisfactory.

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

Relationships with staff are good and students feel well supported by their teachers. The arrangements for the induction of students into the sixth form are good and they receive good advice on managing the demands of sixth form courses. Their progress is carefully monitored by tutors and subject teachers, although this is not done effectively in mathematics. The involvement of students in contributing to the work and life of the school is satisfactory but not extensive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form is satisfactory. Performance data are analysed thoroughly and there are good systems for tracking students' progress and their achievements and for setting targets for improvement. Subject leadership and management are mostly good but are unsatisfactory in mathematics.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are positive about most aspects of the sixth form and find it rewarding and enjoyable. They find teachers accessible and helpful and consider that their work is assessed constructively and carefully. Many would like a wider range of enrichment activities to be provided. Their concerns that they are not well known by staff in the school are not borne out by the evidence of the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall but is satisfactory in the sixth form. There are undue variations in achievement between subjects and across the year groups. Standards are broadly in line with expectations overall by Year 9 and Year 11, with weaknesses in mathematics and citizenship and strengths in science and aspects of design and technology. Standards are variable in the sixth form and are below average overall by Year 13. Students in the sixth form attain far better standards in the vocational courses than in the academic courses. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout. The achievement of pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is unsatisfactory in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they might when account is taken of their earlier attainment.
- By Year 11, standards are above average in science, most aspects of design and technology and music.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics and citizenship is unsatisfactory and standards are below the level expected nationally.
- Students achieve well in the AVCE courses and attain above average standards in science and performing arts.
- Not enough is done to challenge the higher attaining pupils, with the result that their achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well as a result of the support they are given.

Commentary

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school, based on their performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 and on their verbal reasoning scores, is broadly average, although it fluctuates from year to year. However, there are fewer pupils at the lower end of the ability range than would normally be found in similar non-selective schools and fewer higher attaining pupils than would usually be found in comprehensive schools. This makes meaningful comparisons with other non-selective schools very difficult. Inspection evidence shows that standards overall are broadly average by Year 9 and Year 11 and that pupils' achievement, on the basis of their current and most recent work, is mostly satisfactory. However, there are variations between the different year groups. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are achieving better than those in Years 9 and 10 and in these latter year groups, achievement is unsatisfactory overall. It is also less assured in Year 11, although it remains broadly satisfactory overall. Despite the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, subject leadership and recent action taken by senior managers, the evidence is not yet strong enough to have confidence that the underachievement of pupils in the national tests and GCSE examinations over the past two years has been eradicated. Weaknesses in the school's approach to pupils' personal development, in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the lack of a systematic approach across the school to monitoring their progress and using data effectively, are hindering the task of raising standards and having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Although there

are signs that improvements in teaching and learning are beginning to raise achievement, pupils do not do as well in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examinations as might be expected when account is taken of their earlier attainment. Most pupils are capable of doing better than they currently do. This applies particularly to the higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented. Difficulties in recruiting staff in some areas over the past two years have contributed to this underachievement.

2. The school's overall results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 (the latest year for which national data are available) were in line with the national average. The results in mathematics and science were similar to the national averages but were below average in English, especially in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 6 or above. When compared with the results in schools whose pupils had performed similarly in the national tests at the end of Year 6, the school's results in 2003 were well below average and were very low when compared with the pupils' earlier attainment in these tests. This indicates that these pupils did not do as well as expected and underachieved in relation to their earlier attainment. The picture is similar in 2004, although there are no national data available as yet against which the results can be compared. Between 1999 and 2003, the improvement in the school's performance has been at a faster rate than that found nationally but this rate is unlikely to be sustained in light of the results in 2004. In 2004, the school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics, but did not reach its target in science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.4 (30.2)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	35.1 (33.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.4 (32.9)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 176 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Over the past few years, the school's GCSE examination results have been close to the national averages and between 1999 and 2003 have improved at a similar rate to the national trend. In 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C was above average, showing a sizeable jump of 14 percentage points from the results of the previous year. However, the results at five or more grades A*-G and one or more grades A*-G in 2003 were below average. When compared with the results of schools with a similar level of performance in the national tests at the end of Year 9, the results were well below average on all measures other than at five or more grades A*-C, where they were average. The figures show that pupils have not done as well as might be expected in their GCSE examinations when account is taken of their own performance in the tests at the end of Year 9. In 2004, although there are as yet no national data against which they can be compared, the results showed a marked drop at five or more grades A*-C to a marginally lower level than the figures for 2002. This is a considerable decline in the school's performance and is likely to result in a downward trend against the national picture.

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	58 (44)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86 (95)	91 (91)

Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.5 (35.0)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 146 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. There have been considerable variations in the different subjects at grades A*-C. In 2003, the results were well above the national averages in English language, French and science and above the national averages in aspects of design and technology, including food and textiles, English literature, music, physical education, religious education and business studies. The results were below average in mathematics, art and design and drama and well below average in history, resistant materials and graphics. In the remaining subjects, the results were in line with the national averages. In 2004, the results in nearly all subjects were lower than in the previous year and in the case of English literature, French, music, resistant materials and physical education, were much lower. The results remained broadly similar in geography, but improved considerably in history and graphics.

5. From the small amount of evidence available at the beginning of the academic year, current standards of work by Year 9 are in line with expectations in nearly all subjects. In the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, standards are as expected nationally. In English, current standards show an improvement over the results for 2003, when they were below average. From work seen in lessons and in pupils' books, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English and science but is unsatisfactory in mathematics, as pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills to more demanding applications. In most of the remaining subjects, standards are at the expected level and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Achievement is good in art and design, history and religious education as pupils' attainment in these subjects on entry to the school is below average. Standards in citizenship and personal, social and health education are below average, as the provision in these areas is unsatisfactory and does not ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed systematically. As a result, their achievement is unsatisfactory. There is undue variation in the school's own assessments of pupils' performance in the foundation subjects at the end of Year 9 in 2003 and 2004 and the evidence shows that teachers are not applying the level descriptions accurately enough in all subjects.

6. By Year 11, pupils achieve well in science and standards are in line with the national expectation. In English, pupils achieve well from their below average standards at the end of Year 9 and their attainment is in line with expectations by Year 11. In mathematics, standards are below the level expected and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. In other subjects, standards are above the national expectation in music and in most aspects of design and technology, with the exception of resistant materials. Standards are in line with expectations in most of the remaining subjects, other than citizenship and personal, social and health education, where they are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in most subjects and is good in design and technology, French and music. Achievement is unsatisfactory in citizenship and personal, social and health education.

7. There is little difference in the achievements of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages in comparison with their peers. These pupils are fluent in English. The differences seen in the respective performances of boys and girls in the national tests and GCSE examinations in 2003 and 2004 are not so evident in pupils' current work. The most capable pupils, including those who are identified as gifted and talented, are underachieving. as in most subjects they do not receive work that extends them sufficiently.

8. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with learning difficulties, with communication and social difficulties, and with specific learning difficulties, is good. They make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and communication skills through individual and small group specialist teaching, as well as mainly good progress in main school lessons with the good support of learning support assistants. The majority of pupils with special educational needs achieved well in their GCSE examinations, although a small minority did less well than expected. However, many higher attaining pupils with potential gifts and talents, particularly boys, did not attain the levels expected of them and consequently underachieved.

9. Pupils' language and literacy skills are sufficient to enable them to contribute satisfactorily to class and group discussions in all subjects. However, not all subjects are sufficiently clear about the particular contribution they can make to developing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils use their mathematical skills satisfactorily in most subjects and use them well in geography. In some subjects, including ICT, art and design, design and technology, music and religious education, there are insufficient planned opportunities provided for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills. Pupils use their ICT skills appropriately to support their learning in other subjects where opportunities are provided but subject planning is patchy, particularly in English, mathematics, science, music, French and art and design.

Sixth form

10. Only a comparatively small number of students were entered for the A-level and AVCE examinations in 2003 and 2004 and comparisons with the national figures for some subjects are inappropriate. The A-level examination results overall were well below the national average in 2003 but showed a slight improvement over the results for the previous two years. The performance of the female students, which was better than that of the male students, was below average. Very few students gained the highest grades of A or B but all students gained at least a pass grade in art, human biology, English and physical education, although the numbers in most of these subjects were very small. The results in mathematics and geography were well below average. In 2004, the results were not as high in several subjects, but were better in geography. Three pupils with communication and social difficulties gained particular success in their A-level courses in 2004, which enabled them to gain a university place. Students' performance in the AVCE courses in both 2003 and 2004 was much better than their performance in the A-level examinations. The AVCE results were well above average in science and business, above average in performing arts, but below average in leisure and recreation and health and social care. In the AVCE examinations, a much higher proportion of students gained the higher grades of A and B than in the A-level examinations. The AS examination results were well below average in 2003 and were broadly similar in 2004.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	82.7 (69.4)	89.4 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	20.4 (5.6)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	174.6 (110.3)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

11. Six subjects in the sixth form were inspected in depth during the inspection. Other subjects were sampled but there is insufficient evidence to make clear judgments about standards in these subjects. The work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are improving. By the end of Year 13, standards are in line with the expectations of an A-level course in English, geography and physical education but are below expectations in mathematics, as students' knowledge of topics studied previously is insecure. In the AVCE courses, standards are above average in science and performing arts. Students' achievement is very good in performing arts as a result of the very good teaching and their own enthusiasm for the subject, good in English, science and physical education and satisfactory in geography. Achievement is unsatisfactory in mathematics when account is taken of students' earlier attainment in their GCSE examinations.

12. In the small number of lessons sampled in other subjects, students' achievements are mostly satisfactory and occasionally good. Students use their literacy skills adequately in their other subjects, although weaknesses in reading and writing affect their progress in geography and art and design. They use their mathematical skills appropriately to support their learning in their chosen subjects. Students do not have enough planned opportunities in lessons to develop and apply their ICT skills, although they make good use of computers available in school and at home.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are unsatisfactory, as is pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance levels are unsatisfactory and the school's procedures for monitoring attendance are inconsistent.
- Many pupils demonstrate an uncaring and disrespectful attitude towards the school environment.
- Pupils' behaviour is often noisy and boisterous, particularly when moving around the school and some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour, which affects the learning of others.
- Students in the sixth form behave in a mature and responsible manner and show commitment to their studies.
- The lack of systematic planning to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness has an adverse effect on their personal development.

Commentary

13. Most pupils are positive about the school and are keen to be involved in the activities provided, which include a range of sports and productions. Pupils are generally happy at school, but there is a culture of disrespect for the environment and many pupils show a distinct lack of pride in being members of the school community. Relationships between pupils and with staff are sometimes disrespectful and some pupils lack self-discipline and a sense of care for others. As a result, the school lacks a positive ethos and work ethic.

14. Behaviour overall is unsatisfactory and the school's expectations of pupils are too low. The school's policy and procedures for managing behaviour are applied inconsistently and there is no whole-school approach to ensuring high standards of good behaviour. Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons that are well managed and where the teaching is good. In other lessons, pupils often become very noisy and inattentive, which seriously disrupts teaching and learning. In corridors and on the staircases, pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory and incidents of anti-social conduct often go unchecked by staff. The school has very recently set up an isolation room for disruptive pupils removed from lessons, but it is not yet a well-established facility in the school. Behaviour is managed well in the Communications Base, which helps pupils to develop confidence and self-control. However, they are not always welcomed or treated considerately by pupils in the main school, which adds to their difficulties in integrating successfully into the general life of the school. Pupils recognise that there is bullying in the school, but they feel confident that staff deal effectively with all forms of harassment. Exclusions are used appropriately to reflect the gravity of the offences that have taken place, but according to the school's records, the number of fixed-term exclusions has risen considerably in the last school year (2003/04), well exceeding the figures shown in the table below which relate to 2002/03.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Number of pupils on roll
497

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
45	0

White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	4	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	393	0	0

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

15. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning. In the Communication Base, the good management of pupils makes them think about their behaviour and encourages them to improve their effort and attitude to activity. This helps them to learn to control their inappropriate autistic traits. When supported in main-school lessons, they are helped to cope with the educational tasks but do not have sufficiently focused targets for working with other pupils to improve their social skills. During sessions in the Learning Support Unit, pupils with learning difficulties respond well to the close support provided and there is a prevailing atmosphere of effort, achievement and positive attitudes.

16. Pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory. Pupils from each year group contribute to the school council, but, at present, the council is not sufficiently well established for pupils take full responsibility. The school has recognised the need for pupils to play a more active role in the school and has appointed a number of pupils in Year 11 as prefects and a small group of pupils as members of the spiritual development team. These pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are keen to develop their leading role.

17. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory. At times, some subjects make a good contribution. For example, during a Year 10 geography lesson pupils thoughtfully reflected on the magnitude of an earthquake and considered the effects of bereavement and loss. However, in most lessons, the contribution is incidental as there is insufficient planning and monitoring within subject areas to ensure a full integration into the curriculum and to provide consistency of pupils' experience. The school has recently introduced a system of 'Thought for the Week'. Members of the spiritual development team, who visit tutor groups to discuss the issue with other pupils, monitor this. During the inspection, pupils were encouraged to reflect in assembly on the theme of *Trust* in relation to their own lives.

18. The development of pupils' social skills and moral awareness is unsatisfactory and during lessons and other activities, opportunities are often missed to raise pupils' understanding of the effect of their actions on others. The school does not prepare pupils well enough for life in a multi-cultural society and there is very little use of display to stimulate interest in cultural or social issues.

19. Attendance is unsatisfactory. A significant number of pupils take holidays during term time. There are inconsistencies between classes in applying the school's procedures for the daily monitoring of attendance and the prompt follow-up of absence, both from school and from lessons. The school has a well-established routine of truancy checks on pupils in Years 10 and

11 and has very recently introduced the system across the rest of the school. However, an analysis of the number of pupils present in lessons during the inspection shows a significant rate of absence, much higher than the overall figures for the year would indicate. The majority of pupils are punctual to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.4
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.3
National data	1.1

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

Sixth form

20. Students enjoy life in the sixth form and find it rewarding. Their level of attendance and punctuality is satisfactory. Students have good attitudes towards their work and they value the opportunity to set their own targets through regular discussions with teachers. Students behave well and they concentrate and work hard during lessons. They have good and constructive relationships with their teachers and with one another. This makes a strong contribution to developing their confidence and for open dialogue to take place.

21. Students take part in Young Enterprise activities, adopt a charity each year for special fund-raising projects and respond willingly to maintaining an 'enrichment log'. They act successfully as peer mentors to support the induction of pupils into Year 7. Students taking the performing arts course are particularly enthusiastic and committed to the subject. During lessons, students demonstrate a sensible and purposeful approach in order to achieve the best possible results. Students are proud of the sixth form council; they feel it gives them a strong voice, which is listened to. With the support of the school, they have recently organised additional fund-raising activities, which have helped them to refurbish their common room. Students are fully aware of the impact of their actions on others and they act as good role models for younger pupils. Students have confidence and trust in their teachers, as well as a clear understanding of what is expected of them in the sixth form.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory although there are areas of weaknesses in aspects of the curriculum. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although good in the sixth form. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Opportunities for pupils to participate in music and drama are good. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance for its pupils although their progress is not monitored systematically and rigorously enough and not enough attention is paid to health and safety. Pupils are not involved sufficiently in contributing to the work of the school. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are satisfactory but those with parents are unsatisfactory, although improving.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but is good in the sixth form. The assessment of pupils' work is generally satisfactory although its quality and effectiveness are

inconsistent across subjects. Assessment is not always used well enough to plan future learning or to give pupils enough information about what they need to do to improve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well in most lessons to plan suitable activities to interest and motivate pupils.
- Higher attaining pupils do not always receive work that provides them with enough challenge.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress because of the good teaching.
- The learning and achievement of pupils in some lessons is hampered by the unsatisfactory behaviour of small groups of pupils, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the support they receive from the learning support assistants.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of citizenship and in personal, social and health education, especially in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 154 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (2%)	24 (16%)	76 (49%)	42 (27%)	7 (5%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

22. The table above indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. The teaching is better in Years 7 - 9 than in Years 10 and 11, as there is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching. In Years 9 and 10, there is too high a proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, which affects the rate of learning and pupils' achievement in these years.

23. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with an increase in the proportion of good or better teaching and a reduction in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching. As part of its approach to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, the school has implemented the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Most teachers have introduced the three-part structure to lessons, which includes a starter activity, some focused individual, paired or group activities to meet the intentions of the lesson and a concluding whole-class activity to check what pupils have learned and to outline what is to follow in subsequent lessons. Not all teachers identify clearly enough the learning intentions of the lesson, which makes it more difficult to check at the end of the lesson what learning has taken place.

24. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and in most lessons, they use this knowledge effectively to plan work that motivates and engages pupils. Much of the planned work is appropriate to the majority of pupils in the class, especially to meet the needs of the average and lower attaining pupils. However, there are too many lessons where the tasks do not challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently and, consequently, they do not achieve as well as they might.

25. There are examples of some very good and occasionally excellent teaching in several subjects in Years 7 - 11, including English, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design, drama,

design and technology, French, geography and history. In these lessons, pupils work hard and learn very effectively. Features of these lessons include a prompt start, clear explanations, sharp questioning and skilful management of the time available and interesting tasks presented in a challenging way to ensure that all pupils are fully involved and contributing well to the lesson. In such lessons, teachers manage pupils well and do not give pupils any opportunity to misbehave. As a result, pupils' attitudes, response and involvement are of a high order and lead to productive learning and a great sense of achievement.

26. In a minority of lessons, including lessons in English, mathematics, science, ICT, design and technology, French and personal, social and health education, the teaching is unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. The weaknesses in these lessons relate mainly to difficulties in managing pupils' behaviour and ensuring that they remain focused, a lack of challenge to the work and variety in the activities and poorly organised resources. As a result, pupils make unsatisfactory and occasionally poor progress in consolidating their learning.

27. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Lessons in the Communication Base are planned and structured very well and carefully targeted questions involve and challenge all pupils. In individual or small group sessions in the Learning Support Unit, pupils' work is well matched to their learning needs and good strategies are used to engage and encourage them. Effective support meets pupils' social and emotional needs and behaviour is well managed through the very good relationships that are developed. Good use is made of computer software to help pupils practise and improve their basic reading, spelling and number skills. Generally, teachers in the main school and the learning support assistants work together well to plan and support these pupils in lessons. Learning targets are matched to pupils' attainments and appropriate support is provided for them in their tasks. In a minority of lessons, insufficient planning or attention to the learning materials used, result in these pupils struggling with the text or the demands of a task.

28. Relationships between teachers and their classes are mostly satisfactory and are often good. Most pupils work satisfactorily in pairs and small groups, sharing ideas and helping one another. They apply themselves satisfactorily in most lessons, although not always with a great deal of enthusiasm. Even in otherwise satisfactory lessons, there is not always a clear work ethic or great enthusiasm for learning. Homework supports the work covered in lessons satisfactorily.

29. In general, subject teaching does not do enough to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are examples where these elements of pupils' personal development are raised and enhanced well, for example in some lessons in English, geography, history, music and religious education, but often they are incidental rather than explicitly planned for. Similarly, aspects of citizenship are not identified well enough or covered explicitly.

30. Most teachers regularly mark pupils' work undertaken in class and at home, although in several subjects, such as English, French, geography, religious education, the marking fails to give pupils sufficient guidance on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Some of the marking is largely concerned with effort rather than giving specific pointers to pupils on how to improve their work. Many pupils, particularly in music in Years 7 - 9 and in mathematics, do not have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. There is insufficient consistency in the approaches to assessment across the subjects. Although there is some good practice in design and technology and science, assessment procedures are unsatisfactory in mathematics, citizenship and personal, social and health education.

Insufficient use is made of data to track pupils' progress on a regular basis and to set clear targets for improvement.

31. The use of assessment information to plan the next stage of learning and to meet pupils' needs is broadly satisfactory, although it varies across subjects. On the whole, it is slightly stronger in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 - 9 as teachers are more confident in applying the GCSE criteria rather than the National Curriculum level descriptions. Senior managers do not do enough to ensure that all subjects use assessment data rigorously and consistently.

Sixth form

32. Teaching in the sixth form shares many of the features of those in Years 7 - 11, although it has a greater proportion of good or better teaching and very little less than satisfactory teaching. More than three-quarters of the teaching is at least good and just under a fifth is very good and occasionally excellent. Students respond well to the good teaching and make good progress as a result. Some of the most effective teaching occurs in performing arts, where a large proportion of the teaching is very good and in business and classical civilisation in Year 12 and design and technology in Year 13.

33. Lessons are carefully planned and structured and teachers use their very good subject knowledge to provide work that motivates and challenges students. Most teachers have high expectations of their students, who show good commitment and a keen desire to do well. Students enjoy the practical aspects of the vocational courses, in particular and respond well to the variety of teaching and learning approaches used. Relationships between staff and students are positive and purposeful and students' contributions are valued and respected. Occasionally, as in geography, students are a little too passive and are reluctant to contribute to the lesson. Students appreciate the guidance and support they receive from their teachers in helping them to learn and achieve.

34. Most teachers mark students' work carefully and constructively. For example, portfolios in science are marked in detail and marking in English enables students to develop their critical skills. In mathematics, however, teachers do not give enough guidance on what students need to do to improve and assessment in this subject is unsatisfactory. Assessment information is used very well in performing arts to monitor and track progress but it is not used sufficiently in geography or in mathematics. The overall good quality of assessment in the sixth form is helping to raise standards.

The curriculum

The curriculum, including opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities, is broadly satisfactory, but has some weaknesses. The number of teachers with appropriate qualifications to match the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good match of support staff. Accommodation and resources meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum and are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Statutory requirements are not met in citizenship, work-related learning, physical education at Key Stage 3 and in the provision of a daily act of collective worship.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory.
- Participation in music and drama activities is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Work experience in Years 10 and 11 is well planned and pupils receive good support.
- Provision for vocational courses in the sixth form is good.

Commentary

35. The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory. In Years 7 - 9, pupils are taught all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. However, 26 pupils, many of whom have a statement of special educational need, do not follow the full programme, as they receive additional support to develop their literacy, numeracy and social skills. This time is mostly taken from modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, the school provides an appropriate range of GCSE and vocational courses. Pupils have opportunities to choose subjects that meet their own aspirations and keep their pathways open for the future. An alternative course, Pathway 2, has been introduced this term for some pupils in Year 10 for whom the full GCSE provision of ten subjects is deemed unsuitable. This course supports the development of basic skills that benefit pupils' other studies, as well as a range of social skills in preparation for later study and employment. In Years 7 - 9, ICT is taught as a separate subject and in Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to select a vocational course in ICT as one of their optional subjects. In all years, ICT is also used to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Whilst this is satisfactory in many subjects, coverage is limited in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music, art and design and in ICT at Key Stage 4 for those pupils not taking an examination course in ICT.

36. Pupils are prepared thoroughly for work experience in Year 10. They exercise responsibility for arranging their own placements or through the school working with the local Education Business Partnership scheme. Teachers use pupils' work experience in the careers lessons in Year 11, for example, in the preparation of a curriculum vitae (CV). Consideration of careers starts early and in Year 9, teachers and specialist careers advisers highlight career pathways in relation to their subject choices in Year 10. The Key Stage 4 coordinator arranges extended work experience in Year 11 for pupils who are not coping with the demands of all their subjects.

37. Curriculum time is well above the level recommended at both key stages but the additional time available is not used as effectively as it might be. The organisation of the curriculum, whilst satisfactory for most subjects, creates difficulties in science in Year 9, where split teaching leads to a lack of continuity in pupils' learning. Poor timetabling for physical education in Year 11 means that there is inadequate supervision of the boys' changing rooms. The curriculum does not fully meet statutory requirements. Insufficient time is spent on the physical education curriculum in Years 7 - 9 to cover gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activity because of the overemphasis placed on games, with the result that the requirements of the programme of study are not met. The curriculum for citizenship does not meet requirements as insufficient progress has been made in ensuring that all the required elements are covered adequately. A planned programme of work-related learning has not yet been implemented. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

38. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. In the Communication Base, there is good provision for teaching subjects such as English and mathematics that pupils are unable to follow with their mainstream peers. Effective alternatives, such as extra English or modules from an accredited life-skills course, are arranged in those instances where pupils are disapplied from an area of the National Curriculum. Pupils receive support to enable them to participate in a good range of enrichment activities, such as visits to a residential activity centre and on school trips. Suitable curriculum modifications enable pupils with learning difficulties to benefit from withdrawal sessions for extra or alternative lessons and to be disapplied from some subject areas. The school provides a range of accredited courses for pupils with special educational needs, including GCSE, Certificate of Achievement and The Awards Scheme, Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). At present, there are insufficient opportunities provided to extend and enhance the learning and achievement of gifted and talented pupils.

39. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. Although there have been some improvements since the last inspection in terms of some of the content of the programme and in the quality of teaching, the school's personal development programme has yet to have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The coordinator has a clear understanding of how to improve the programme, but she does not have sufficient time or seniority to be able to monitor and evaluate its impact effectively.

40. The school provides a satisfactory programme of activities to enrich the curriculum for pupils. However, Specialist Technology College status has made little impact on enrichment and extra-curricular provision. Most extra-curricular activities take place at lunchtime, through a number of subject departments. They include sport, drama and music activities in the main, with a number of textiles, humanities, computer and coursework clubs. The provision of activities is limited by the short school lunchtime break and by the high proportion of pupils travelling to and from school by bus.

41. The range and provision of music and drama activities are good and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils benefit from a variety of instrumental and choral clubs. For example, there is a junior and senior orchestra, wind ensembles, choirs and clubs for supporting the GCSE course. Levels of involvement in the performing arts are good, especially in the school productions. During the inspection, 165 pupils auditioned in singing, drama and dance for the school's production of *Grease*. Regular concerts and school performances give pupils the opportunity to share their achievements within the school, with parents and the wider community.

42. The provision for sport and levels of participation have improved since the last inspection. Activities take place at lunchtimes and after school, with opportunities for pupils to represent their school in local leagues and competitions in football, basketball, tag rugby and athletics. Fixtures in the autumn term calendar relate only to football, however.

43. A limited number of visits are arranged outside school and include a planned programme in humanities for all year groups, two visits to Oxford and London in art, a trip to Futuroscope, Poitiers in Year 8 and a tour of the Globe Theatre in Year 9. Pupils have achieved a number of successes in extra awards such as the Young Enterprise Award 2003/4, the Rotary Club ICT Award 2003, Rotary Young Chef 2004 and the Crest Awards.

44. The school provides sufficient staff to teach the curriculum and there is good provision of both learning assistants and technical support. Despite repeated efforts by senior managers to resolve

the issue, the recruitment of a subject specialist to lead in ICT has been difficult for some time. The accommodation has some weaknesses. It is good in design and technology, geography, English and music, where recent refurbishment provides good teaching areas. However, serious problems currently exist in science where there are insufficient laboratories for the size of the school, although plans are already in hand to increase the number next year. The size of teaching areas is limited in art and design. The availability of indoor space is restricted in physical education although outdoor provision is being enhanced. Equipment and accommodation for ICT are not always used efficiently. These deficiencies affect the provision and the teaching of a rich and broad curriculum in these subjects.

Sixth form

45. The school provides a satisfactory range of academic and vocational subjects for a below average size of sixth form. The range of courses available is sufficiently broad to enable more able pupils with particular special educational needs, such as dyslexia or Asperger's Syndrome, to continue their education at the school beyond of the age of 16. Students are able to choose from nine subjects at AS and A-level, including a new subject, classical civilisation. Five AVCE subjects, which include business, science, leisure and recreation, health and social care and performing arts, add to students' choice. Provision in these vocational subjects is matched well to students' learning needs. It is very good in performing arts, where the syllabus has been creatively developed to give students experience of diverse areas, enriched by visits and workshops. Most students choose a combination of academic and vocational subjects. All students follow a programme of personal, social and health education and religious education. Most students consider that the courses provided suit their abilities and career plans. However, examination success in academic subjects is well below that in vocational subjects. In the past, work experience has only been provided for students following the AVCE health and social care course. The school intends to arrange for all students to have work experience this year, provided through the local Education Business Partnership. There was insufficient evidence to judge this provision at the time of the inspection.

46. Provision for extra-curricular activities in the sixth form continues to be very limited. However, the provision for the performing arts is good and students benefit from a range of trips to London, local theatres and workshops.

47. Staffing is well matched to course requirements and teachers in the AVCE performing arts course provide a particularly good curriculum experience for students. Accommodation in other areas is satisfactory and there are no major weaknesses impinging on the teaching of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are unsatisfactory. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance from their teachers. Advice and guidance for students in the sixth form are good. Pupils with special needs are cared for well. The arrangements for involving pupils in the school's work and development are unsatisfactory. Satisfactory provision is made for students in the sixth form to have a voice in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for the induction of pupils are good.

- Procedures to ensure that the school is a healthy and safe environment are not well implemented and the supervision and management of behaviour in central areas is inconsistent.
- The school takes prompt action to deal with bullying or harassment.
- The school council does not have a strong leading role in the life of the school.
- The assessment and tracking of pupils' work is inconsistent and learning targets are not sufficiently focused on academic progress.
- Students in the sixth form receive well-informed support and guidance.
- Pupils with special needs are well cared for in the Communication Base and receive very good support from learning support assistants in lessons.

Commentary

48. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are inconsistently implemented by staff. The level of supervision of pupils in corridors and on the staircases is inadequate to discipline effectively those pupils who show poor self-control and use inappropriate language. There is insufficient supervision of outside areas at breaks and lunchtime. Many groups of pupils remain well away from direct supervision, with a risk to discipline and opportunities for anti-social behaviour. Not enough is being done to encourage pupils to take a pride in their surroundings by reducing the large amount of litter on the site. During the inspection, some items of cleaning equipment were left in the narrow corridors, causing additional hazards for large numbers of pupils moving around the school.

49. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the head of student development ensures that all staff are made fully aware of the procedures to follow in the case of concerns. Pupils generally feel that issues of bullying and harassment are dealt with promptly and effectively by the school.

50. The school makes good arrangements for the induction of pupils. The Year 7 coordinator and the head of student development visit the primary schools and organise a link day when pupils have the opportunity to visit the secondary school and take part in some activities. Pupils and their parents attend an information evening and the school takes care in placing pupils into their tutor groups.

51. Pupils receive satisfactory pastoral advice and support through the form tutor, who is usually the first point of contact with parents and through the year coordinators. Although most pupils feel that there is an adult in the school to whom they can talk, a significant minority of pupils and parents do not feel confident that they are treated fairly. The systems for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development across the school are insufficiently robust, systematic or consistent. The quality of assessment of pupils' work and progress varies unduly between subjects. Where it is good, pupils understand what they have to do to improve and are fully involved in target setting. In some subjects, learning targets are not focused sufficiently on academic progress. The support provided for careers education is satisfactory and pupils attend interviews with the Connexions service and undertake work experience in Year 10.

52. Pupils with special educational needs receive good care in the Communication Base. In main school lessons, the learning support assistants provide very good support for individual pupils. The principles of the Code of Practice are implemented effectively and appropriate support is provided by relevant external agencies. Meetings each half term ensure good communication between staff in relation to pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs,

with input from specialist support services such as an 'outreach' teacher from a local pupil referral unit and a Connexions officer.

53. Individual education plans are good and provide all staff with essential information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses, general performance targets and guidance on appropriate teaching approaches to meet their learning and personal needs. These are effectively 'tailored' for pupils with communication and social difficulties, learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties and give all teachers the information needed to enable them to set appropriate learning targets and tasks within their planned programmes. However, there are few specific targets listed for pupils with special educational needs in each subject that reflect the needs as stated on their individual education plans. Additionally, the termly National Curriculum grades recorded by subject teachers on these pupils' tracking sheets are too inconsistent to provide useful data on their progress over time. Consequently, it is not possible to evaluate the progress pupils make in what they know, understand and can do. This impedes effective planning of pupils' programmes of study and restricts the extent of feedback to pupils and the guidance that can be given to help them to improve. This aspect of the school's provision is unsatisfactory.

54. The procedures which support the transfer of new pupils with special educational needs from their previous schools are very good. Clear criteria are set for the admission of new pupils with communication and social difficulties within the spectrum of autism. The placement of pupils in the Communication Base is restricted to those with sufficient educational and communication skills for them to cope with supported integration into mainstream classes for most of their education. At present, the lack of positive whole-school acceptance and encouragement of these pupils by other pupils and the unsatisfactory ethos within the school, restrict placements being extended to pupils who are less socially and educationally secure. This is a considerable weakness in the school's provision for these pupils.

55. A significant minority of pupils do not feel that the school listens to their views. The school council, with representatives from each tutor group, involves a large number of pupils but does not have a high profile in the school. At present, the council is not well organised to encourage pupils' to be enterprising and take a strong leading role in shaping the school environment.

SIXTH FORM

56. Students are happy in the sixth form and they have a good relationship with their teachers. Form tutors support them well through regular progress interviews. Students receive good and up-to-date guidance on managing the demands of A-level and AVCE courses. Teachers make thorough use of assessment data and GCSE examination results to set targets for students and these are constantly monitored and discussed. The school is very concerned that students fulfil their potential and has achieved a good record of students going on higher education.

57. Students feel that the school values their views and listens to their suggestions. They are proud of the sixth form council, which has made great improvements to the common room facilities and the environment in which they work. A number of students have very recently volunteered to act as peer mentors for pupils in Year 7. Although in the very early stages, this is helping to improve relationships and establish their role as senior students in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are unsatisfactory but are improving. Community links and partnerships with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are supportive and have a positive view of the school, although a minority of parents do not feel the school seeks their views enough.
- The school involves parents promptly about issues relating to poor behaviour.
- Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well and consulted regularly.
- Homework diaries are not used well as a means of communication between home and school.
- Reports are unsatisfactory and do not meet the statutory requirements.
- Partnerships with the community and other schools provide only limited enrichment to the curriculum.

Commentary

58. The school is striving to improve its partnership with parents and is beginning to act upon a number of their concerns. Parents feel that communication between them and the school has improved recently. The school is prompt in involving parents with pupils' specific problems and when dealing with poor behaviour. Parents welcome the half-termly newsletters, which contain helpful information about activities and changes in organisation. A small group of supportive parents regularly organises social events in support of the school. Their efforts have raised considerable additional funds and enabled the school to purchase extra resources to support learning.

59. Good partnerships are being established with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are effectively involved in the annual review of their child's statement. There are good consultations with parents regarding concerns as to the way special needs are being met, which enable misunderstandings to be overcome and agreements to be reached as to the support to be provided. However, in the case of pupils with communication and social difficulties within the spectrum of autism, there are insufficient opportunities for key workers and parents to meet and discuss pupils' educational and social development in order to address their needs. Reports to parents for the annual review of a statement or the annual reports on pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers usually report in general terms and focus mostly on the pupil's attitude and effort. The reports do not contain clear enough information about pupils' achievements and targets.

60. Parents have the opportunity to attend the academic review day held each year, as well as subject consultation evenings. A few parents feel that these meetings are not particularly helpful and do not provide sufficient information about target setting and their child's progress. They also express concern about the quality of the reports and the limited information they receive about their child's progress and achievements. Inspectors judge that the reports are unsatisfactory and do not meet requirements. They are inconsistent and do not provide sufficient clear information about progress and academic targets to help pupils to improve. Inconsistencies in the use of homework diaries limit their use as a means of effective communication between home and school.

61. The school's links with the community are satisfactory, but they make only a limited contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum. The town's youth club, which is located on the

school site, provides a shared facility. The local Women's Institute group uses the school's ICT facilities during the evening. A national furniture supplier supports pupils in Year 12 with Young Enterprise projects and local industry provides work experience for pupils in Year 10. As yet, the school has not capitalised on these opportunities to link them into a planned and coordinated programme of work-related learning. The school works in close partnership with local primary schools as part of pupils' induction into Year 7. Pupils in Year 6 have worked with older pupils during a recent technology day and they also take part in sporting activities on the school site.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, including that of the sixth form, is satisfactory. The leadership provided by the newly appointed acting headteacher is good. Management of the sixth form is satisfactory, but across the school as a whole, it is unsatisfactory. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory, as governors have been unable to carry out the full range of their responsibilities and have failed to ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including provision for a daily act of collective worship, citizenship, work-related learning, the curriculum for physical education in Year 7 - 9 and the annual reports on pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for the development of the school is poor.
- The functioning of management teams and of the governing body has been hindered by a lack of information and has prevented the governing body from providing direction and constructive criticism to the school.
- The acting headteacher provides good, intelligent leadership.
- The use of performance data and the evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses are unsatisfactory.
- The induction of staff and the contribution to initial teacher training are good.

Commentary

62. The acting headteacher, who has only been in post for three weeks, has a very clear vision of the priorities for developing the school and has already begun the work of restructuring the leadership and management systems. She is supported by many strong senior and middle managers, who currently offer satisfactory leadership, but whose good potential and capacity have not been fully developed. The current school improvement plan is far too broad and has no clear, manageable priorities. The school does not monitor its performance realistically and has assumed that developments are better rooted than they are. Whilst some good teams exist at departmental level, for example in performing arts, in general the effectiveness of the teams and the management structures has been hindered in the past by poor communication and insufficient information. Poor communication, the need to develop management expertise and to use performance data purposefully to raise standards were all issues that caused concern at the time of the last inspection and remain issues for the school now. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and arrangements for holding middle managers to account for the performance of their subjects are inconsistent and insufficiently robust and systematic.

63. Overall, the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The Code of Practice is followed effectively. The special needs register is well maintained and a well-considered programme is in place for the annual review of a pupil's statement. The

individual education plans of pupils on the register are reviewed termly and the systems for communicating pupils' particular needs to staff are good. Leadership is satisfactory. Effective teams of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and learning support assistants work well together to meet pupils' needs within the Communications Base and the Learning Support Unit. However, there has been a lack of leadership in establishing a positive whole-school ethos for welcoming and supporting pupils with autistic spectrum disorders within the school. A good vision for 'inclusion' is being implemented to improve the present unsatisfactory provision for gifted and talented pupils and for those disaffected pupils who need alternatives to meet their needs and so reduce the disruption their behaviour has on the learning of others.

64. Good procedures are in place for the performance management of special needs staff, including appraisal of learning support assistants. Appropriate training needs are identified and provided. New staff receive a good induction into the Communication Base and Learning Support Unit. Procedures for evaluating the quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. Good feedback from the specialist teachers and learning support assistants suitably inform the special needs coordinator and the teacher in charge of the Communications Base about the strengths and weaknesses of provision for pupils at an individual level. However, there are no systems in place for the collation and evaluation of assessment data across the range of curriculum subjects or of the available standardised test data such as reading and spelling ages. Consequently, the school is not able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in overall provision in relation to pupils' diverse needs, which is unsatisfactory.

65. The governing body has many dedicated and talented members. The governing body has worked hard and effectively in the past to secure better accommodation and sponsorship for technology college status. The new chair of governors has a very clear view of the need now to refocus the work of the governing body on issues relating to raising standards. Until this term, the governing body was not sufficiently party to key information in order to carry out its function of shaping the direction of the school in the areas of standards and achievement. Governors have provided strong support for senior managers but have not been able to challenge them effectively. However, there have been some radical changes in staffing recently, which, combined with the successful work of the professional development group of staff, have raised the quality of teaching and learning overall. The induction of new staff is carried out well and the school makes a good contribution to the initial training of teachers. There are a number of areas where provision does not meet statutory requirements. They include the imbalance in the curriculum in physical education in Years 7 - 9, unsatisfactory provision for citizenship and work-related learning, the lack of provision of a daily act of collective worship and weaknesses in the content of pupils' annual reports.

66. Financial management is satisfactory. On a day-to-day basis, the school's finances are managed well. The budget is administered correctly and is up to date and detailed records are maintained. The information is analysed well to establish the costs of various elements of the school's provision, such as the sixth form and the Communications Base. The business and finance manager ensures that the principles of best value apply in all spending proposals. The last auditor's report identified no issues for the school. Budget surpluses over recent years have created a significant balance in the school's finances. Of this surplus, £230,000 is committed this year to planned building works. However, a significant amount remains with no clear plans for its use, which is a cause of concern. Overall, based on the pupils' personal and academic achievements, together with the weaknesses in governance and management, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,408,005
Total expenditure	3,225,168
Expenditure per pupil	3,692

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	372,989
Balance carried forward to the next	555,826

SIXTH FORM

67. The coordinator of the sixth form has a clear vision for its development, including the expansion of the curriculum and enrichment programmes. Through marketing, he has increased the numbers on roll so that the additional income can be used to strengthen and broaden the curriculum. He undertakes a thorough analysis of all the available data on students' performance and ensures that good guidance and support are provided to students on entry to the sixth form, throughout the courses and in preparation for the students' next stage of education. He has high aspirations for students and each year a large proportion goes on to higher education. In 2004, all students gained a place at their first choice institution without the need to go through 'clearing'. The coordinator monitors the performance of the staff in academic and pastoral matters and calls them to account when necessary. He has built strong teams and delegates sensibly to his assistant. His approach to attendance is reasonable and pragmatic. Students show respect for the coordinator and respond well to his leadership. Although comparatively small, the sixth form is cost-effective and meets the needs of its students well.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

68. Very little evidence was available to allow clear judgements to be made about standards, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning in work-related learning (WRL). Little progress has been made in implementing the statutory requirement to provide a programme of WRL, although there are aspects of the school's work that are capable of contributing effectively to this area. Pupils gain insights into the demands and responsibilities of work through placements made independently or through the Education Business Partnership. Preparation for these placements is good, as is the quality of diaries kept by pupils. Pupils' experiences of work are used in Year 11 lessons on careers. In one lesson, good use was made of pupils' knowledge in deciding what should be included in a curriculum vitae. No coordinator has been appointed to identify what curriculum areas are contributing to WRL and where the school is deficient, so that a policy can be discussed and written. The provision for WRL does not meet statutory requirements and the effectiveness of what the school is doing is diminished by a lack of coherence and coordination.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations have improved over time, especially for boys in literature.
- Teachers are committed to raising standards, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Good teaching and learning in most lessons lead to good achievement.
- Marking in Years 7 to 9 does not give enough specific advice on how to improve.
- More opportunities are needed for whole classes to enhance their work with ICT.
- The department provides a good environment for learning.

Commentary

69. In the tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards were below the national averages and well below average when compared with schools whose pupils performed at a similar level in the tests at the end of Year 6. Broadly similar standards were attained in the tests in 2004. Over time, the results have been variable. In the work seen during the inspection, standards were in line with national expectations by Year 9. Since these pupils had average scores on entry to Year 7, their achievement has been satisfactory. Most pupils are articulate and the length and complexity of their spoken English increases from Year 7 to Year 9. They listen well to their teachers and increasingly well to each other. They respond with interest to the books they study, the most able showing good understanding of themes and the impact of language in books such as *Stone Cold* and *Macbeth*. Their original writing for a variety of purposes improves in style and accuracy and most pupils present their work neatly. The most talented pupils write pieces of exceptional maturity and depth. Little whole-class use of ICT was seen, but when pupils use it to enhance their work their skills are at least satisfactory and sometimes good.

70. In the GCSE examinations in English language and English literature in 2003, the overall standard was in line with the national average, with girls attaining above average standards in language and boys above their national counterparts in literature. The department enters a higher proportion for both subjects than other schools, reflecting their inclusive approach. Over time, results in both subjects have improved, although they fell below the previous year's results in 2004. Pupils in Year 11 attained below average standards in their Year 9 tests but they are currently performing in line with national expectations, indicating good achievement during the GCSE course. Most pupils listen with good concentration and follow instructions, making good use of discussion in pairs and groups. Their spoken contributions are usually clear and relevant. They develop sound understanding of poetry and the writers' attitude; for example, a group of pupils with special educational needs grasped a challenging set of poems by Carol-Ann Duffy. The most capable pupils write with confidence about character, motivation and themes in the writing of Shakespeare and William Golding. Little original writing for different

purposes was seen as the department has a policy of concentrating on this skill nearer the examination.

71. In nearly all lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 7 to 11. They arrive punctually and are soon ready to work. Many are willing to offer answers and they are pleased when they succeed. In a small number of lessons, however, a minority of pupils can be disruptive and impede the learning of others. Through a rich diet of literature, media and non-fiction texts, the department makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.

72. The overall standard of teaching and learning is good from Years 7 to 11. Teachers plan lessons so that pupils can build on previous knowledge and understanding. Objectives are usually shared with classes, although they are sometimes expressed as tasks rather than things to learn. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and maintains interest and their good subject knowledge gives pupils confidence in them. Firm but friendly management in most lessons keeps them involved. Expressive reading holds their attention and conveys the quality of the text they are studying. Careful questioning encourages them to think for themselves and, because their suggestions are usually treated with respect, they are willing to take risks. The lesson pattern recommended by the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been adopted and starter activities give lessons a purposeful beginning. Homework effectively reinforces learning or prepares for the next lesson. Marking is regular and encouraging, although in Years 7 to 9 there is rarely specific advice on how to improve. Classes make less use of ICT to enhance their work than would be expected.

73. The curriculum includes a broad range of literature from different ages and cultures, media and non-fiction texts. Pupils are given a variety of written tasks for different purposes, often related to the literature studied. Staff are well qualified and, when support is available, the level of teamwork is very good. During the last school year, a high turnover of staff affected some pupils' learning, but there is now a stable team. The curriculum is enriched by poetry days and theatre visits. English is taught in a suite of well-furnished rooms and very good use is made of display in rooms and corridors.

74. The English department is well led and management is effective. Teachers have a shared commitment to improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The subject's performance is regularly evaluated in an objective and candid way and appropriate strategies have been used to raise boys' performance and overall standards at both key stages. The links with primary schools to secure the transfer of information about pupils are not sufficiently developed. Schemes of work are clearly set out and include good quality resources. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored through lesson observation and sampling pupils' work. The main positive features identified in the last inspection have been maintained and improvement since that time has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. The school has a clear policy for developing the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum and this is borne out by the good opportunities available in most subjects. In several subject departments, however, there is a need to define more clearly the particular contribution that they can make to literacy. For the great majority of pupils, in no subject was a lack of literacy skills identified as a barrier to learning and progress.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching and learning, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils are prepared very well for the GCSE examinations and they achieve well.
- Very good relationships and good management of behaviour lead to productive learning in the classroom.
- Pupils are not sufficiently active in their learning, which limits the achievement of the higher attainers.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in the curriculum.
- A minority of pupils are careless in the presentation and accuracy of their written work.

Commentary

76. Standards in French are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9, according to teachers' own assessments and in the work seen. Pupils listen to and understand French well. Pupils do not receive enough intense practice in the skills of speaking and writing, which limits the achievement of the higher attaining pupils. Overall, achievement is satisfactory and the pupils identified as having special educational needs do better than expected, because of work targeted at their needs and the strong support of the learning assistants, who are fully involved in the lessons.

77. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was significantly above the national average and pupils did far better in French than in their other GCSE subjects. All pupils gained a pass grade and the proportion attaining the highest grades of A* and A was close to the national average. In 2004, there was a fall in all these areas, as there was in the majority of subjects in the school. The attendance levels of pupils were a major factor in this decline in performance. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 11 are in line with national expectations. Listening skills remain strong. Higher attaining pupils possess an above average range of vocabulary and their written work is mainly accurate. Careful preparation for the examinations results in good achievement.

78. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have a very good mastery of French, which they use well to promote the acquisition of good listening skills. Very good relationships and good classroom management motivate most pupils to learn diligently and with enthusiasm. The best lessons are very well planned, with a wide variety of appropriate methods and resources and a brisk pace. However, many lessons are not planned as thoroughly. In each activity, it is not always clear which language skill is the focus and at what level of difficulty. Teachers sometimes dominate the lessons, with the result that pupils are not always active enough in their own learning and do not progress as well as they could in speaking and writing. Although learning is good overall, weaker planning and assessment in Years 7 to 9, combined with pupils' more careless attitude generally to their work, result in only satisfactory learning. There is insufficient practice in applying the skills of ICT to the learning of French.

79. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department monitors the performance of staff and pupils well and has created a strong team which regularly shares good practice. Her firm line on discipline has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The department now benefits from good accommodation and resources. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The GCSE examination results have generally risen, as have standards at the end of Year 11. Behaviour has improved and the good quality of teaching and learning has been maintained.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, as the work is not always sufficiently demanding.
- Pupils' attainment in GCSE mathematics examinations is lower than in their other subjects.
- Pupils work productively when engaged in challenging tasks set in interesting contexts.
- Ineffective management results in the lack of systematic approaches to raise standards.

- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are inadequate to secure improvement.

Commentary

80. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the results were in line with the national average, but with fewer of the highest and lowest levels. Pupils attained higher overall standards in mathematics, with a greater proportion gaining Level 6 and above than in English or science. However, results were below the average for similar schools. The test results in 2004 were similar to the previous year and reflect the standards of work seen in pupils' books, which are in line with the national expectations. Pupils are good at routine calculations but too few are engaged in more demanding applications and consequently their achievement is unsatisfactory. Written work from the summer term lacks the structured, well-reasoned explanations evident in pupils' oral work.

81. Pupils' attainment in the GCSE examinations in 2003 was close to the national average. However, no pupil gained the highest grade of A* and few pupils gained grades A or B. Standards were below expectations, based on these pupils' earlier attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9. The GCSE examination results were significantly lower in 2004. Although the standard of pupils' work overall is below national expectations, a significant proportion present their solutions logically and with clear explanation. Although more pupils are now successfully engaged in topics that will give them access to the higher grades, overall achievement remains unsatisfactory.

82. Teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages and ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Lessons are structured well and include an introductory activity, the main topic and an appropriate review. Interactive whiteboards are used advantageously by some teachers. Pupils reflect teachers' clear explanations, using precise mathematical terminology. Generally, teachers are good at modifying lessons in the light of pupils' responses. The absence of assessment, target-setting and monitoring of standards of written work is, however, to the detriment of pupils' achievement. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 respond well to teachers' encouragement to set out working clearly and logically but the lack of informative marking reduces the potential for effective revision. Pupils with special educational needs relate well to the help provided by learning support assistants, often resulting in enthusiasm for mathematics.

83. Learning is satisfactory but pupils' experiences vary widely from class to class. Learning in a Year 9 high attaining class was unsatisfactory because pupils merely rehearsed line-graph skills, which they had acquired at primary school. In contrast, two Year 7 classes enjoyed the challenge of analysing and interpreting data, which they had collected about themselves. Poor behaviour, together with confusing directions from the teacher, prevented effective learning in a Year 10 class. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 enjoyed studying circles and made very good progress because the teacher set the topic in interesting contexts.

84. Management and leadership of the department are unsatisfactory. Teachers are given insufficient guidance to ensure common practice in assessment and to raise their expectations of pupils. Documentation is very poor and departmental meetings do not focus on raising standards. Teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed but their work is insufficiently monitored and directed to secure shared and informed good practice. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship, together with social and cultural issues, are not structured and hence provision for developing these aspects is poor.

85. Little improvement has taken place since the last inspection when a key issue for the school was to 'improve the quality of planning and curriculum delivery in mathematics, in order to raise standards'. The proportion of satisfactory teaching has risen from 75 to 85 per cent. The setting policy and more collaborative working are helping to develop pupils' engagement. However, a lack of investigative work, insufficient use of ICT, dependence on repetitive exercises and the absence of structured assessment and target-setting remain among issues to be addressed in order to secure improvement. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

86. Pupils have satisfactory mathematical skills required for their study of other subjects. There is very little contribution to the development or use of pupils' numeracy skills in ICT, art and design, music and religious education. Teachers of some subjects attend the numeracy working party meetings and, consequently, employ interesting applications, for example, comparison of the ages of applicants for the throne in 1066 and discussion about money used in slave auctions in history. Pupils have well planned opportunities to use mathematics in science but not in design and technology. Good standards are evident in geography, with good use of applications involving map skills and data handling.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The team of teachers is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge.
- The achievement of pupils is good in Year 11 due to the good teaching and learning.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good, especially in Year 11.
- There is insufficient coordination of some aspects of teaching and learning to ensure all teachers are following agreed procedures.
- Teachers and pupils receive very good support from a very effective team of science technicians.
- There is insufficient laboratory accommodation, which restricts the range of teaching styles offered, including the use of computers.

Commentary

87. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 was in line with the national average, although well below average when compared with schools whose pupils performed at a similar level in the tests at the end of Year 6. These standards were maintained in 2004. The trend has been upwards, in general, since the last inspection. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C as well above the national average. The trend has been upwards over the past few years. However, the results were lower in 2004 and in line with the national average figure for 2003.

88. Pupils' work shows that standards are at the nationally expected level by Year 9 and above national expectations by Year 11. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is broadly average and their achievement is good overall especially in Year 11. The achievement of higher attaining pupils in the GCSE examinations is good, with many pupils gaining the

highest grades of A* and A. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both teachers and teaching assistants and achieve well.

89. Teaching and learning are good. In the most successful lessons, effective planning ensures that pupils are fully engaged and challenged by the setting of a range of suitable activities. Pupils' attitudes to science are good and they are confident to ask and answer questions. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, which leads to a pleasant cooperative atmosphere where pupils learn well. Not all teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning styles, including the use of computers and this is partially due to the restrictions placed upon them by the limited availability of the laboratories. The proposed addition of two further laboratories next year should improve this situation. The introduction of computer-linked projectors in some laboratories has enlivened the lessons by allowing teachers to demonstrate diagrams and data handling of high quality.

90. Leadership and management of the department are good. The team of enthusiastic, well-qualified teachers have a cooperative approach and a shared vision of raising standards. The departmental handbook, guidance and development plans are detailed and give good support to the many new teachers. The team of very effective science technicians supports teachers very well, ensuring that all the required equipment is available when required. The introduction of a new course in Years 7 to 9 has been successful, as topics are more relevant and engaging. The detailed development plan addresses all the major issues but the agreed procedures and strategies are not fully monitored to ensure that all staff follow a consistent approach. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards are higher throughout, the teaching has improved and the higher attaining pupils achieve better in examinations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The GCSE examination results in 2003 were above average and were close to this level in 2004.
- Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 because of good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes towards learning.
- Teaching is good and some is excellent, due to effective lesson planning and very good management of pupils.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is no designated specialist to monitor standards and the use of equipment across the school.
- Planned use of ICT within English, mathematics, science, music, French and art and design is very patchy.
- Data handling using computers is weak, both in specialist lessons and in mathematics.

Commentary

91. There has been a satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection and a greater proportion of pupils are reaching the required standard by the end of Year 9. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were above the national average. The unvalidated results for 2004 indicate that standards were slightly lower than those for 2003 but are likely to remain above average. Achievement across the school is satisfactory, with some good gains made

by individual pupils. Standards of work in Years 7 - 9 are largely in line with the national expectation. Overall, they are also in line with the national expectation by Year 11 although they are above this in Years 10 and 11 for those taking the GCSE examination. Pupils who do not take GCSE ICT or business studies make much slower progress because they only receive the bare minimum statutory entitlement. However, the majority of pupils improve their individual competence, achieve satisfactorily and show good attitudes towards learning.

92. In Years 7 - 9, there are good examples of pupils making effective use of computers in specialist ICT lessons and in other lessons where there has been a good steer by subject leaders. In Year 9, for example, pupils work well at designing and testing diagrammatic models containing circuits and sensors as part of the planned Key Stage 3 Strategy. In history, pupils write interesting newspaper articles on events such as the Black Death and produce colourful reports in geography on the effects of the recent cluster of tornadoes. In design and technology, pupils in Year 7 are developing skills in computer-aided design. To ensure their work is as good as possible, many pupils e-mail their work to teachers for feedback and comment. However, the school over-estimates their level of attainment at the end of Year 9. While pupils' competence improves over time in many aspects of ICT, work in handling and manipulating data is below that expected. Pupils' achievement in the use of ICT in English, mathematics, science, French, music and art and design is patchy, often relying on the initiative of individual teachers to include ICT in their lessons. This results in some pupils getting a better experience than others.

93. In Years 10 and 11, pupils following one of the GCSE courses make good headway in applying their computer skills to solve problems and present their ideas in a coherent way. For example, they evaluate the benefits and costs of local business expansions on the environment and employment opportunities, using different applications to present their ideas. Many pupils use the computers regularly to complete their coursework at lunchtime and after school, thereby building on the skills learned in classrooms.

94. Teaching is mostly good, and a few lessons are very good and occasionally excellent. The considerable improvement in resources and training is helping to raise teachers' confidence in using the equipment and software. Pupils learn well in lessons where teachers have prepared well and ensure clear guidelines for the use and evaluation of the software. For example, in one outstanding Year 9 lesson, the teacher asked pupils to write a program to control the heat and light in a greenhouse. Expert use of the interactive whiteboard, fast pace, focused questioning, well-chosen resources and the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher sustained the pupils' concentration and enjoyment throughout the lesson. Good use of time ensured that all pupils saved and printed their diagrams in readiness for a lively concluding discussion, enabling them to evaluate constructively their own and others' work. The homework set for this lesson supported and extended pupils' ideas and there were clear deadlines for its completion. Good teamwork with a support assistant ensured full participation by a pupil with a statement of special educational need.

95. Despite the best efforts of senior managers, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. This is largely because of great difficulties in recruiting a subject specialist to drive the ICT curriculum forward. This has resulted in a lack of coherent planning and monitoring of standards, as well as some inaccurate, inflated assessments of pupils' work across subjects. There is also some inefficient use of the computer rooms and small banks of computers based in classrooms. Teaching throughout the school is considerably helped by the excellent support from the IT technician, who ensures the smooth running of the networks and proper use of the Internet by pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

96. Although the school has improved the provision for teaching and learning since the last inspection, the quality of cross-curricular planning for ICT is uneven. Good strides have been made in geography, history, religious education and design and technology and within timetabled computer lessons across Years 7 - 9. However, planning is patchy in other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics, science, music, French and art and design. In many classrooms, small banks of computers remain idle for much of the time.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond with enthusiasm to consistently good teaching.
- Leadership and management of the department are both good and are clearly directed towards raising standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of individual support.
- Assessment is not rigorously used to track and monitor pupils' progress.
- There is insufficient extended writing and research to challenge the higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

97. In 2003, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that standards were as expected for the pupils' age, although there was a fall in attainment in 2004. A higher percentage of girls than boys reached the top levels. Current standards are in line with national expectations by Year 9. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C and A*-G in the GCSE examinations in 2003 was broadly in line with the national averages and these standards were maintained in 2004. There were no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys.

98. Pupils enter the school with widely differing levels of geographical skills and their achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. They use technical vocabulary well and have a good understanding of the impact of climate on human activity. Standards of work by the end of Year 11 are in line with national expectations. Pupils can explain the devastation caused by natural and man-made disasters and suggest preventive measures. The GCSE projects, based on local fieldwork, are particularly good. Overall, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.

99. Boys generally achieve as well as girls in class in response to the variety of practical activities. In some classes, the boisterous behaviour of a few boys impedes their progress. The achievement of higher attaining pupils is satisfactory but they are not always given sufficiently challenging extension tasks. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, as a result of the support of learning assistants and the individual attention they receive.

100. Teaching is consistently good. In all years, pupils benefit from teachers who have good subject knowledge and who plan well-structured lessons with varied activities and resources. As a result, pupils learn well. Pupils are interested in the subject, work well in pairs and respond to the encouragement of their teachers. Lessons start briskly with recall activities and questioning techniques are used well to encourage discussion. Homework is also used well to extend learning, but assessment is not effective in setting specific targets for improvement and in tracking pupils' progress.

101. Pupils develop satisfactory literacy skills through constant reinforcement of key words and the many discussion activities, but there are few opportunities for reading and extended writing. Good teaching of numeracy skills results in the accurate presentation and interpretation of graphs. The use of ICT and the Internet to develop research skills is not yet integrated into all units of work. Pupils' extraction of evidence from world-wide case studies contributes to their good cultural development. They reflect sensitively on the human tragedy of the San Francisco and Turkish earthquakes.

102. Leadership of the department and the faculty is good. There is a shared vision for raising standards and a development plan with clear priorities. Staff work very well as a team and are good role models for the pupils. Management of the department is good. Monitoring of the impact of teaching and learning strategies is effective and there is consistency in approach. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Schemes of work and assessments have been completely revised, resources have been updated and electronic whiteboards are used interactively.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 because a high proportion of teaching and learning is consistently good or better.
- Good attitudes make a positive contribution to good learning because teachers relate well to pupils and they manage classes skilfully.
- Assessment procedures are good, but assessment information is not used sufficiently to analyse how to increase attainment of groups of pupils and improve their achievement.

Commentary

103. Pupils start in Year 7 with weaknesses in knowledge and understanding of history and in their ability to express themselves accurately in writing. By the end of Year 9 in 2003, the assessments undertaken by teachers showed that pupils' attainment was in line with national expectations, but well below expectations at the higher levels. Work seen confirms similar standards. Pupils' achievement is good because they improve their knowledge and understanding of history by using new skills. Pupils know the many events that contributed to the outbreak of World War 1 because they simplify the information on a diagram and explain it. Opportunities to use language in different forms extend their literacy skills, as for example, writing letters as World War 1 soldiers from the trenches to their homes. Weaker pupils provide less detail, tend to ignore given key words and avoid the use of paragraphs.

104. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were significantly worse than the national average at grades A*-C, and boys' performance was much lower than that of girls. However, all pupils gained grades A*-G. In 2004, the results at grades A*-C were much better and closer to the national average figure for 2003. Analysis of individual pupils' performance indicates that achievement was below expectations overall, although better than in 2003. Pupils' current work confirms that standards are close to the average and that achievement is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils have good skills of analysing and interpreting a range of historical sources and writing balanced reports on the evidence. For example, they undertake independent investigations of samples of evidence relating to the *Jack the Ripper* murders and evaluate the validity of many statements. Lower attaining pupils do not follow up leads to

provide additional material to make their reports more convincing. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their individual targets.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Examples of very good and satisfactory teaching were also observed. Lesson planning, using a three-part model, is good. Pupils know what they will learn from the start of lessons and learning objectives are revisited towards the end to reinforce them. Teachers match tasks well to the needs of pupils of different abilities. They use methods that engage pupils' interest. For example, in a lesson on slavery in the USA with a Year 9 class, pupils used an opportunity to demonstrate their learning very well through an enactment of a slave auction. The teacher organised the class very efficiently to take the parts of different characters. They summarised their feelings about the character they played in writing and reflected on the morality of slavery. Weak time management is a feature of some lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, for example, where insufficient allowance is made for reinforcing learning at the end. Time is misused on occasions, with older pupils spending time inappropriately on low-level tasks, such as colouring. Work is marked helpfully so pupils know how to improve, but not all pupils' know their levels and grades when asked. Many pupils use ICT competently for coursework and homework.

106. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Revised schemes of work and new assessment procedures have been implemented. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the coordinator and her team are now subject specialists. Standards are rising and although achievement is close to satisfactory in Year 11, it is better in Year 10. This relates to inconsistency in good teaching and learning, and insufficient use of evaluation and assessment data to raise the attainment of groups of pupils and improve their achievement.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 because teachers manage pupils' behaviour well.
- The marking of formal assessment tasks is good because it shows pupils how much progress they are making.
- A significant minority of pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, behave badly in lessons and do not learn as well as they might.
- Higher attaining pupils do not receive a wide enough range of challenging tasks.

Commentary

107. The results in the GCSE short course examinations have been consistently above the national average in recent years and were above the national average in 2003. The results in 2004 were much lower than in the previous year. There are no comparative data available for the Certificate of Achievement course, although the evidence suggests that pupils' standards were broadly in line with the expectations of the course.

108. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents good achievement because pupils enter the school with below average levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in religious education. Standards by the end of Year 11 are in line with national expectations overall, although pupils entered for the

GCSE short course, rather than the Certificate of Achievement course, achieve above average standards. This represents satisfactory achievement overall. In all year groups, pupils' standards in aspects of the subject relating to learning from religion are more secure than their knowledge and understanding in learning about religion. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is more secure than their knowledge and understanding of other religions. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.

109. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, it is good in Years 7 to 9 because teachers manage behaviour more effectively than they do with older pupils. As a result, pupils in these years are more engaged in their work and learn more successfully. A significant minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11, mostly boys, are immature and lack self-discipline. They generally complete their work during lessons, however. Teachers provide good support for lower attaining pupils and for pupils with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work, especially to help them develop greater levels of knowledge and understanding of religions other than Christianity. Formal assessment of pupils' work is good; teachers give these pieces of work a level and write comments that show pupils what they need to do in order to improve. However, comments on day-to-day marking are largely concerned with effort and do not help pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to get better. Teachers use homework well to challenge and motivate pupils.

110. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The head of department is reflective and committed to raising standards. There is insufficient formal monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department. Management is good. Procedures are clear, non-bureaucratic and supportive. Non-specialist teachers get good support. The department has effectively addressed the issues raised in the last inspection and progress since that time has been satisfactory. Statutory requirements to provide religious education to all pupils are met.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are effective and promote good achievement in GCSE examination courses.
- Standards in the food technology and textiles courses are consistently very high.
- Pupils have an opportunity to work with a wide range of materials.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
- In the GCSE resistant materials course, there is a small amount of poor teaching, low expectations of behaviour and poor standards.

Commentary

111. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of experience in design and technology. Throughout Years 7 to 9, their achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national expectations. Since the last inspection, standards have improved and

the more capable pupils are achieving above average standards. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and are enthusiastic about their projects. They behave well in lessons, complete the homework set and develop a range of making and design skills, including the use of computers. The curriculum provides a good foundation for the GCSE courses that follow.

112. Standards of work in Year 11 are above average. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were above average. There was considerable variation in the results in the different courses. In contrast to those in food technology, which were well above average and textiles, which were above average, the results in graphics products and resistant materials were well below average. Examination results in 2004 and work seen in lessons show a marked improvement in graphics, with standards that are well above average; however, standards in resistant materials remain very low. Pupils are attaining average standards in the newly introduced, alternative course in product design. Pupils' achievement in the GCSE courses is mostly good. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.

113. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and has many strong features. However, a small amount of teaching in resistant materials is poor, as teachers fail to plan in sufficient detail, have low expectations of pupils' behaviour and poor classroom management and control skills. In these lessons, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are poor and, as a result, they learn and achieve little. In the most effective lessons, teachers prepare well, work to an agreed lesson structure and have very high expectations in terms of behaviour and standards achievable. Learning is rooted firmly in challenging, safe, practical activities and homework is used well to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils respond well, with good behaviour and high levels of cooperation, often working very effectively in pairs or small groups. They use computers to carry out research, in the analysis of surveys and to improve the quality and presentation of their design work. Pupils' ability in freehand sketching is not developed sufficiently and is a barrier to progress when they are at an early stage of developing their design ideas. Teachers assess work well, using an approach based on a grading system that pupils clearly understand. Pupils evaluate their own work and receive detailed marks and feedback on how they can improve, as well as challenging targets they must aim to achieve. The quality of assessment contributes to the high standards achieved in the GCSE examinations.

114. The quality of leadership is good. Teachers make an effective team, working to agreed procedures to promote high standards and raise achievement. The quality of management is satisfactory. A number of improvement strategies have recently been introduced. Teachers are clear about their shared and individual responsibilities. They are well supported by their technician colleagues. Health and safety systems are in place to ensure that pupils and staff work in a safe environment. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards, accommodation and resources, especially ICT resources, have all improved significantly. However, the issue of lower standards in the GCSE resistant materials course has not been resolved and remains unsatisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well from a low standard on entry and attain standards in line with the national expectation by Year 9 and Year 11.
- Well planned and taught lessons enable all groups of pupils to learn well.
- The accommodation remains poor and limits the range of activities that can be attempted.
- The new head of department is evaluating the subject well and planning appropriately to develop it in the future.

Commentary

115. Standards in art and design are in line with the national expectation and with the standards found in similar schools, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The assessments undertaken by teachers in 2003 indicate that standards by the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average, and remained at a similar level in 2004. The work seen in lessons shows that these assessments were accurate and that pupils are progressing well. Girls' attainment is much better than that of the boys, as is the situation nationally. Pupils are identified by the school as having little experience of art and design before entering Year 7. Many are at Level 3, which is below the level expected. Work seen in class and in folders shows that pupils have developed their basic skills very well, but their imaginative work is less successful. Pupils are mainly completing two-dimensional work. All have sketchbooks, but work in them is inconsistent. Some pupils are developing their use well, inserting resources and developing ideas thoughtfully, but other sketchbooks are very weak, with little work of value in them. There is now an emphasis on improving this work and making it central to the pupils' research and development of ideas.

116. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were in line with the national averages and were at a similar level in 2004. Boys achieved similar standards to the girls, whereas nationally girls do much better. Because of staffing difficulties, one teaching group gained much higher grades than the other group. An analysis of data indicates that, overall, pupils did less well in art and design than in their other subjects. The overall results are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Standards of work in the present GCSE classes and in pupils' folders are in line with national expectations for all pupils. Most of the work is based on fine art rather than craft or design. Pupils are supported well by their teachers and complete work to meet the GCSE assessment criteria, although there is little evidence of personal work or research. Large three-dimensional work was completed for the examination last year and a jeweller, as artist in residence, helped some pupils to develop small pieces for their examination. Homework is completed well; pupils are realising the value of putting time and effort into their research and their drawing skills have increased as a result.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is some good direct teaching of skills and techniques. When this happens, pupils clearly make progress. Pupils in the GCSE classes generally work quietly, but there is a core of girls who prefer to waste time and seek attention by misbehaving. Attitudes to art and design are positive most of the time and the pace and challenge of the well planned lessons keep pupils involved. The use of ICT is not extensive; the resources are poor and pupils sometimes complete work at home. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support individual pupils and the technician is used well to prepare lessons and complete displays, which benefits the subject.

118. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The newly-appointed head of department, who has been in post for just over three weeks, is evaluating the situation well and making appropriate plans to move the subject on. Assessment is thorough and the

targets set are explained well to pupils. Resources for art and design are similar to what they were at the time of the last inspection and are broadly satisfactory. The use of the art rooms is still inefficient and the scope of lessons is limited by the space available. The department organises visits and exhibitions that help pupils' personal development.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good for pupils in Years 10 and 11, enabling them to develop an extensive range of musical skills but composition is a weaknesses.
- Music activities do not always match the abilities and needs of all pupils.
- The extra-curricular and instrumental provision is good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work.

Commentary

119. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. Pupils' musical ability is broadly average on entry to the school and their achievement during Years 7 - 9 is satisfactory. This is so for all groups, including pupils with special educational needs or those who are gifted and talented. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were in line with the national average. In 2004, a small number of pupils took the examination, but only a few attained grades A*-C, with boys continuing to do better than girls. However, the standard of work seen during the inspection by the current pupils in Year 11, both boys and girls, is above that expected nationally and their achievement is good. The standard of work by these pupils is an improvement on that noted during the last inspection. Pupils are competent performers, able to evaluate each other's work critically but sympathetically. These strengths in performance and analysis are not matched by the quality of their compositions, which lack extended structure and musical invention.

120. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 - 9 and good for those in Years 10 and 11. A strong feature is the teachers' good encouragement of pupils and most pupils have positive attitudes when working in paired and group situations. Teachers are good musicians, able to demonstrate clearly in lessons. However, lesson planning for pupils in Years 7 - 9 is unsatisfactory and does not ensure that all groups of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented or have special educational needs, are given work that matches their abilities. At times, teaching is pedestrian and this leads to lack of interest by some pupils. However, where pace and challenge is maintained, especially in lessons for pupils in Years 10 and 11, learning is good. Despite satisfactory resources overall, there are insufficient computers and suitable programs for all pupils to use.

121. The department is led and managed satisfactorily. There is a strong sense of common purpose in the department's work. All teachers, including visiting instrumental staff, support each other and give freely of their time. However pupils do not set themselves targets in order to understand how to improve their work. Their overall progress is not monitored and evaluated regularly enough in order to identify how well they are doing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Many more pupils now have instrumental lessons and there is a good range of musical ensembles. Pupils enjoy the social interaction and mix of age groups when rehearsing and performing in concerts.

Drama

122. The work in drama was sampled and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. Drama is taught for one lesson per week in Years 7 - 9 and is then an optional examination subject at GCSE. Results in recent GCSE examinations have been well below average, but during the inspection pupils in Years 10 and 11 were seen to be doing much better and achieving standards of performance and written work that are in line with national expectations. This difference is due to the changes in syllabus and staffing that have taken place in recent years.

123. Pupils of all ages enjoy their drama lessons, showing interest in and appreciation of each other's performances. They work well together in preparation and the plays and subjects they explore give them a valuable insight into other cultures as well as good social experience. Very good relationships with teachers and effective class management lead to a very good response from pupils. Teachers have high expectations and, consequently, the disciplines of drama are acquired at an early stage in Year 7. Pupils are encouraged to be independent in

both performance and in the evaluation of their own work and that of others. The subject is well led and managed by the subject leader, so that the other teachers involved are given very clear guidance and support. Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection has been good. The contribution of drama to the wider curriculum is valuable, with annual school productions that involve large numbers of pupils across the age range.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are knowledgeable specialists, good role models and they plan well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they respond well to the high expectations demanded of them.
- Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
- The curriculum in Years 7 - 9 does not meet statutory requirements, as insufficient time is allocated to gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities.
- ICT is not used effectively enough to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

124. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. These standards do not match the assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2003 and 2004, which indicated that standards were well below average. There was a considerable variation between the performance of boys and girls, with boys attaining above average standards and girls well below. Inspection evidence shows that teachers were not interpreting the National Curriculum level descriptions accurately enough. As a result, the department has reviewed its assessment procedures and, along with introducing assessment on entry in Year 7, staff will be able to moderate and assess pupils' attainment and their achievements more accurately. By the end of Year 11, standards in the core programme are in line with those found nationally. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were above average; however, the results in 2004 were much lower, as a number of girls did not participate fully in the course.

125. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and their achievement by Year 9 is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the physical education programme and achieve well. By the end of Year 9, pupils perform a range of skills in games with increasing control. They demonstrate a sound understanding of games play and recognise the importance of rules in individual, pair, group and team activities. Boys and girls achieve well in basketball and football. Netball and hockey have been introduced for the first time into the girls' curriculum and there has been insufficient time to establish their performance skills in these areas. In football and basketball, the higher attaining pupils anticipate shots and place the ball accurately, with consistent control, in order to outwit their opponents.

126. By the end of Year 11 in the core physical education programme, pupils perform a range of skills with increased consistency, control and accuracy in games and health-related exercise. Their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in the GCSE groups achieve well and make good progress. For example, in a Year 10 GCSE basketball lesson, pupils use more advanced techniques and skills, demonstrating a good understanding of the principles of attacking and defending play. Pupils opting to study for the GCSE examination have made significant improvement.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are knowledgeable specialists, confident in teaching a range of activities. Teachers are good role models and establish good relationships with the pupils. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good; they respond well to the high expectations demanded of them, participation is high and behaviour is good.

Lessons are well planned, managed and organised and teachers are implementing the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 strategy well. Good questioning consolidates and extends their learning.

128. Leadership is good. The new head of department has established a shared vision and the department works well together as a team. Management is satisfactory overall. Policies and procedures, schemes of work and assessment arrangements are in the process of being updated but are still incomplete.

129. The curriculum in Years 7 - 9 does not meet statutory requirements. Pupils benefit from a range of activities, but games continue to dominate the curriculum, with insufficient time allocated to fulfil the programmes of study in gymnastics and outdoor and adventurous activities. Most units of work are six weeks in length, which does not enable pupils to become more expert in their skills and techniques. Accommodation for the teaching of physical education has improved with the completion of the outdoor hard play area. However, the gymnasium is not equipped adequately for curriculum gymnastics, there is no designated classroom for the teaching of examination courses and the physical education office is too small to accommodate the needs of the department. The provision of resources is good, but the use of ICT to observe, analyse and evaluate movement is underdeveloped.

130. Extra-curricular activities and the sporting calendar have improved since the last inspection. Teachers in the department give generously of their time and the school is beginning to be successful in many sporting fixtures and events, especially in football, tag rugby, basketball and athletics. The new appointment of a school sport co-ordinator will enable the department to develop links with primary schools, enhance the opportunities during out-of-school hours and increase participation in community sport.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

131. Work in business studies was sampled. Two lessons were seen. In both lessons, teaching and learning were satisfactory and pupils' achievement was satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although a start has been made, the school has not fully implemented statutory requirements for citizenship.
- The impact of the citizenship programme on pupils' overall behaviour and attitudes is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory because it does not show pupils how well they are doing or what progress they are making.
- The citizenship coordinator lacks sufficient seniority and time to do her job effectively, although she has a clear understanding of what needs doing.

Commentary

132. The school has timetabled sessions for personal, social, health and citizenship education for all pupils, which seek to cover these areas as well as careers. The programme is taught to all pupils during two lessons per week, although part of this time is used for an assembly. Although other subjects of the curriculum have been audited twice in order to see what input they might make additionally to the citizenship programme, staff have only just received training on citizenship. Most subjects, therefore, do not complement existing provision and do not contribute to the assessment process.

133. Standards of work in citizenship are below average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Work in pupils' folders shows that topics listed in the first strand of the programme of study are not covered in sufficient depth and that coverage of the second and third strands on 'enquiry and communication' and 'participation and responsible action' is inadequate. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in citizenship because not enough lessons with a citizenship focus were observed during the week of the inspection.

134. Leadership is currently unsatisfactory. Although the teacher in charge of citizenship has a clear vision of what needs to be done, the subject cannot be developed further unless more time, resources and support structures are put in place to ensure that statutory requirements are fully met. Management is also unsatisfactory. Procedures for monitoring, evaluation and assessment are currently unsatisfactory. Citizenship was not a separate National Curriculum subject at the time of the last inspection. However, the school has made insufficient progress in introducing this new subject in the two years that it has been a statutory requirement.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's personal development programme does not yet have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.
- The coordinator is currently unable to monitor the provision effectively, although she has a clear understanding of what needs to be done.

Commentary

135. Personal, social and health education forms part of a taught programme, which also includes careers and citizenship. This programme is taught to all pupils during two lessons each week, although a 20-minute assembly is included within that time. All pupils in the school, therefore, are provided with a course in which the main elements of health, sex and relationships and drugs education, personal development and careers are covered.

136. Standards in personal, social and health education are below what would normally be expected by the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. Work in pupils' folders shows that, in their time at the school, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not sufficiently reinforced nor are topics covered in sufficient depth to enable them to make enough progress. Achievement is, therefore, unsatisfactory across all year groups.

137. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Although it is satisfactory and mostly good in Years 7 - 9, it is often unsatisfactory and occasionally poor in Years 10 and 11. In many lessons, a

significant minority of pupils behave badly, talking over the teacher and showing difficulty in listening to each other's ideas. On other occasions, pupils had to leave the task to go to assembly, thus making it difficult for the teacher to consolidate learning effectively. Some teachers have high expectations of standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes and in these lessons, pupils behave well, are attentive and participate actively in all the tasks. Although the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, the school's personal development programme has yet to have a positive impact on changing and improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils learn about themselves as growing and changing individuals and as members of their communities, but they lack self-awareness and maturity and are not given enough opportunities to put what they learn into practice through taking a full part in the life of the school and its communities.

138. The coordinator has a good understanding of how to improve the programme, but she has been unable to monitor and review the provision effectively. Currently, management and leadership are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements in the content of the curriculum and in the quality of teaching, but progress overall has been unsatisfactory.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	9	0.0	65.2	0.0	11.1	0.0	20.6
English literature	1	0.0	85.9	0.0	19.1	0.0	32.2
Design and technology	5	60.0	74.9	0.0	15.1	18.0	25.3
History	1	100.0	80.7	0.0	19.5	8.1	25.7

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	1	100.0	98.6	0.0	50.2	40.0	87.5
Biology	1	100.0	96.4	0.0	39.2	40.0	78.6
English literature	12	100.0	99.5	16.7	46.5	68.3	86.5
Design and technology	2	100.0	97.8	0.0	35.0	60.0	77.9
Mathematics	5	80.0	96.7	20.0	55.6	48.0	88.8
Physical education	1	100.0	98.0	0.0	30.9	40.0	75.2
Business (VCE)	26	100.0	65.0	34.6	14.6	82.3	60.1
Health and social care (VCE)	6	66.7	67.7	16.7	14.5	56.7	63.5
Performing arts (VCE)	10	100.0	87.3	60.0	42.2	94.0	77.8
Science (VCE)	10	100.0	44.8	10.0	3.7	68.0	58.5
Leisure and recreation (VCE)	8	75.0	62.9	0.0	10.2	47.5	57.9

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	6	100.0	n/a	66.7	n/a	0.0	n/a

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on A-level and AS courses in English literature. The A-level course in Spanish was sampled. One lesson in Year 13 was seen and written work was analysed. Teaching and learning are good and the provision for students with special educational needs is outstanding. Standards are in line with course expectations.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge gives students confidence and makes class discussion a valuable experience.
- Students value English and work hard to do well.
- Detailed marking and tracking of students' progress enable them to succeed.

Commentary

139. In 2003, although all students gained a pass grade, the overall level of attainment was well below the national average in A-level English literature. In 2004, the standards came closer to national expectations, confirming an improving trend since 2002. Current standards in Year 13 are in line with course expectations, indicating good achievement from the start of Year 12, when the students had below average GCSE grades for entry to an A-level course. The most capable students make good use of well chosen references to the text and show keen awareness of different critical viewpoints. They express their own opinions with clarity and confidence. Effective use is made of social, historical and literary backgrounds. Other students meet these requirements at a lower level but all are working within the expected range of attainment for A-level. English is among the most popular choices for AS and A-level study, particularly by female students and the retention rate into Year 13 is satisfactory.

140. Students have positive attitudes to English. They value the subject for its interest, usefulness and the likelihood of success. They consider themselves well taught and they appreciate the guidance and support they receive from teachers.

141. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers' very good subject knowledge earns the students' respect and enables them to direct attention to themes and references during discussions. Between the paired teachers, students are given a good range of learning approaches that maintains their interest and enthusiasm. Cordial but purposeful relationships are prevalent and detailed, constructive marking enables students to improve their critical skills. Careful questioning challenges students to form their own interpretations and judgements. Students in Year 12 are given good models of analytical criticism and they are encouraged to build up their own critical vocabulary. In the most successful lessons, visual aids effectively back up the spoken word. Learning targets are shared with students so that they can measure their own progress. Homework is used well to support and develop work in class.

142. The English literature curriculum is well balanced, covering a wide range of genres and periods. Nevertheless, given the staffing of two teaching groups in each year, it should be

possible to offer a choice of courses to include English language and therefore attract more male students to English studies.

143. English is well led, with teachers showing a high level of interest and commitment. Individual progress is well tracked and students know what they have to do to improve. Regular and realistic evaluation has led to improving standards, so progress since the last inspection has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

144. In nearly all subjects in the sixth form, students have adequate linguistic skills to cope well with their programme of study. In a few courses in Year 12, including geography and art and design, some weaknesses in reading and writing affect students' progress.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered pure mathematics, together with the applications of mechanics and statistics, which are studied for AS and A-level examinations.

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual students receive insufficient structured guidance for success in examinations.
- Students' work is inadequately monitored and assessed.
- A small number of students complete the course but recently five have gained A-level grades.
- Overall course leadership and management are lacking.

Commentary

145. Only a small number of students follow the A-level course in mathematics and therefore comparisons with national data are inappropriate. The A-level results peaked in 2003 when four students were successful, with grades in line with their other A-level subjects; in 2004, one student gained a grade C. Of the seven students taking AS level mathematics in 2004, only one passed and the majority failed all three modules; nevertheless, four have continued with the A-level course. The standard of their work is below that expected because they have insecure knowledge of topics studied previously. Achievement overall, in the light of their earlier attainment in the GCSE examination, is unsatisfactory.

146. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all lessons but students' understanding overall lacks depth. Consequently, in a mechanics lesson, the teacher needed to focus on the solution of elementary equations rather than the techniques required for an understanding of projectiles. Collectively, students made a satisfactory contribution to the solution of trigonometrical equations for pure mathematics but showed no recognition that they had completed the same examples some four months earlier. For students in Year 12 studying statistics, a power-point presentation provided a well-structured and stimulating review of dispersion but with just two students present, discussion and development were very limited. Teachers ensure that students with special educational needs are able to participate. Although teachers mark some work, they do not give guidance on how to improve or on standards. Teachers do not monitor students' progress in relation to the expectations of the course.

147. Management of the course is unsatisfactory and the head of department fails to provide appropriate leadership for the relatively inexperienced team of teachers. Teachers have good mathematical knowledge but do not work together to determine strategies to ensure cohesive course presentation. Only a limited range of resources has been used. However, students consider that the practical approaches of the AVCE science course have retrospectively helped them to understand aspects of mechanics. The mathematics teachers do not liaise with teachers of other subjects to benefit students. Students work through examples from texts with a degree of success, but the development of techniques required for examinations is not an integral part of their course. Students erroneously believe that failure in examinations is their fault for not working hard enough. In recognition that students need guidance to bridge the gap between GCSE and AS level expectations, they are given a booklet, produced by the school, but without the necessary tuition to help them get the most out of the guidance.

148. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils achieving the highest grades in GCSE mathematics has been very low. Consequently, very few students are suited to the higher level mathematics courses provided in the sixth form.

Mathematics across the curriculum

149. Students have sufficiently well developed mathematical skills to support adequately their study of other subjects, such as science. They are good at presenting statistical information in geography, drawing upon a range of data handling techniques.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was on AVCE science. In addition, A-level human biology was sampled. In the human biology lesson, students were achieving well, with standards at the expected level. The teaching was good due to well-planned resources, very good subject knowledge and very good guidance given to the students in this small group.

Science

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge.
- Students' achievement is good.
- Teachers and students share very good relationships.
- Lessons are well planned and resources used effectively.
- There is insufficient review of students work to ensure that all students achieve well.

Commentary

150. At the end of Year 13 in 2003, the AVCE science results were above the national average and were maintained at this level in 2004. The school's data on students indicates that, on entry in Year 12 to the AVCE course, their previous attainment was at the national average. Students' work clearly demonstrates that standards have been maintained above the expected national levels. This represents good achievement by the students.

151. Teaching and learning are good. The team of teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Students show an interest and are motivated by the practical-based approach and relevance of the course. Teachers and students share very good relationships and work in a constructive and cooperative atmosphere. Students' attitudes are very good. Students appreciate the teachers' support and the range of teaching and learning approaches. They are aware of their potential grades and are regularly informed about their progress and attainment. Portfolios are marked in detail. However, some students' work is not reviewed sufficiently early before coursework deadlines.

152. Leadership and management are good. The relatively new course is relevant and suitable for the students. The units that make up the course are well planned and teachers are aware of examination requirements. There is good co-operation amongst the team of teachers. The course is practically based and is well supported by a very effective team of science technicians.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

One ICT lesson in Year 12 was sampled. In this lesson, the teaching was unsatisfactory and the work was insufficiently demanding to challenge the students.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

153. Sixth formers make good use of computers around the school and at home, but there is insufficient planned provision within lessons.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on A-level and AS courses in geography, although a small number of lessons in classical civilisation and psychology were sampled. In the Year 12 lesson in classical civilisation, teaching and learning were very good and students' achieved well, although standards were below course expectations. In the Year 12 lesson in psychology, teaching and learning were good and students achieved well.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students respond with interest to consistently good teaching.
- Leadership and management of the department are both good and are directed towards encouraging students to work more independently.
- The AS level examination results are well below the national average but the A-level results improved in 2004.
- Assessment is not rigorously used to track and monitor students' progress.
- The standard of extended writing is not high enough.

Commentary

154. There is one geography set in each of Years 12 and 13 and the retention rate from Year 12 to Year 13 is good. The attainment of students on entry is average. The standards reached in the A-level examinations in 2004 improved over those of 2003, when there were too few students for national comparisons to be meaningful. The results in the AS level examinations in 2003 were below the national averages at grades A - E and at the highest grades of A and B. No students gained the highest grades of A or B in 2004. The cohorts are too small for comparisons to be made between the performance of boys and girls.

155. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are in line with course expectations and overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards in individual project and coursework, including the use of ICT and statistical techniques, are higher. Students have a good understanding of both physical processes, such as coastal erosion and river flooding and human factors which cause climate change and global warming. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, but their slow pace of reading is a barrier to learning for a few boys. The higher attaining students are not challenged sufficiently to develop research skills and to apply geographical models critically to a range of case studies.

156. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Students benefit from the secure subject knowledge of the staff and questioning techniques which probe beyond the superficial answer. Students' general knowledge base is low but they are challenged to extract and summarise information from a range of current sources. They respond with enthusiasm to the considerate and courteous approach of staff and understand the level of work required to reach their target grades. Assessment is not rigorously used to monitor and track their progress. Preparation for examination techniques is good but there are not enough opportunities for extended essay writing. A few students are reluctant to contribute to discussions and listen passively.

157. Leadership of the department is good and there are clear strategies for raising standards through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. Staff work very well as a team, share high expectations of the students and evaluate their own work. Good management of the department ensures that resources are up to date and that there is a consistent and well structured approach to the planning of lessons. There was no sixth form geography at the time of the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Two lessons in design and technology were sampled. Standards are average and students achieve well. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and give students very useful help and guidance to ensure they achieve their potential. The quality of their practical work is good. Project work shows that original ideas are developed through extensive research, analysis, evaluation and high standards of presentation. There are very good opportunities for students to work in the context of their own special interests, which promotes their good achievement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus was on the AVCE course in performing arts. In addition, a small number of lessons were sampled in art and design and media studies. In art and design, students are working well and their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and students' attitudes are very positive. In media studies, teaching was well planned and resulted in good learning.

Performing arts

Provision in performing arts is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and students achieve very well.
- Students are highly motivated and produce accomplished practical work because of the very good teaching.
- Leadership of the subject is very good and all teachers work hard to provide enrichment beyond the timetabled lessons.
- There are insufficient computers for students to use.

Commentary

158. The Alevel results were above average in 2003, with two-thirds of the cohort attaining the highest grades of A and B. This standard was maintained in 2004, with students attaining in line with expectations. Standards of work by the current Year 12 and 13 cohorts, which now include male and female students, are above average. Since many of them start their course with relatively modest levels of attainment, these results indicate that achievement by all students is very good. The consistently high quality of teaching means that they use technical language competently and support each other effectively in practical work. Their learning is supplemented by regular enrichment giving them an awareness of a wide range of theatre productions. They learn how to evaluate these critically and illustrate theatrical concepts in their lessons.

159. Students learn very well because of very good teaching. Teachers show extensive subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Working relationships are very good. Students are inspired and motivated to produce performances of high quality. Teachers encourage and challenge all students, because they are sensitive to and knowledgeable of individual needs. Planning is

thorough. Questioning is rigorous, ensuring students reflect and develop their answers. Very good cooperation between all staff promotes a consistent and systematic approach to the subject. The accommodation is adequate but restricts the activities that can be undertaken. There are no computers available for students to use during lessons.

160. Leadership and management are very good. Students' progress and their attendance are carefully monitored. There is a common approach to target setting, and a consistent approach to assessment, which ensures that students understand their strengths and weaknesses. Careful monitoring results in a coherent approach by all staff because the best practice in teaching is shared. Performing arts is gaining a deservedly high reputation within the school and the local community for high standards and a professional approach to performances.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on A-level and AS courses in physical education. One lesson was sampled in leisure and recreation. The teaching and learning in this session were satisfactory.

Physical education/sports studies

Provision in physical education/sports studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of AS and A-level groups is good and, as a result, students are highly motivated and make good progress.
- Leadership and management are good and courses are well planned, managed and organised by specialist teachers.
- Good resources support learning, independent study and research, although the use of ICT is underdeveloped.

Commentary

161. Standards are in line with course expectations by Year 13. Up until this year, the number of students taking physical education has been very small. Over time, all students have obtained a pass grade. Two students took AS examinations in 2004 and both are continuing to study for the A-level examination in Year 13. Numbers are improving in Year 12, with nine students currently following the course. All students studying this course took the GCSE examination in physical education and attained above average standards. Small numbers have an impact on the opportunities for students' participation in the practical performance aspects of the syllabus.

162. Inspection evidence shows that the students in Years 12 and 13 are producing work that is of average standard. Most students are achieving well and have a good command in their knowledge of technical language, physiological terminology and factors that optimise performance.

163. The teaching of AS and A-level classes is good. Teachers establish positive relationships with students, valuing and respecting their contributions to the lessons. Good planning, command of the subject and a range of teaching methods motivate students and maintain high levels of interest. As a result, students are enthusiastic and respond well to the high expectations demanded of them. Good use of challenging questioning and extended discussion improves students' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 12

lesson on the respiratory system, students made effective use of more advanced technical language and were beginning to develop their analytical and evaluation skills, making links between physiology and physical activity. Good use is made of the resources available for each module but the use of ICT by teachers is underdeveloped. The department does not have a designated classroom for the teaching of examination groups, which is a disadvantage.

164. Leadership and management are good. The lead teacher has a clear vision and commitment to improving standards. Assessment is used effectively to respond to individual needs. In Year 12 and Year 13, students participate in a well-planned programme of physical recreation in curriculum time, giving them the opportunities to develop and improve their skills in their chosen activities. Students who also study A-level English, however, do not have access to this provision because of timetabling difficulties. Extra-curricular sporting provision in the sixth form is limited.

BUSINESS

Two lessons were sampled in AVCE business. In both lessons, teaching and learning were good. Students are making good progress, enjoy the subject and those in Year 13 have worked well enough to improve on their original target examination grades.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

One lesson was sampled in health and social care. Teaching and learning were good in this lesson, although standards were below course expectations.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

One lesson was sampled in personal, social and health education. Teaching and learning were satisfactory, although students' knowledge and understanding about issues relating to discrimination were below average.

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

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

