

INSPECTION REPORT

SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117594

Headteacher: Mr A Sharpe

Lead inspector: Terence Parish

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 November 2004

Inspection number: 268900

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	883
School address:	Windhill Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	CM23 2NQ
Telephone number:	01279 654 901
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr A Davies
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is in the second year of performing arts college status. It has Artsmark and Sportsmark awards. The number of pupils is about average but it is a very popular school and is expanding both on entry in Year 7 and in the sixth form. Socio-economically the intake is well above average and so are standards in end of Year 6 tests in English, mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects on entry vary and are above average overall. The proportion of pupils whose first language is possibly not English is higher than average, swelled by pupils of Italian origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average but there is a wide range of needs, including physical. There is very low mobility; most pupils start in Year 7 and continue through to at least the end of Year 11. Many travel substantial distances and some potential sixth formers decide to seek sixth forms closer to home.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19214	Mr G. Price	Team inspector	11-16 English, drama
17923	Mr. M. Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics
30825	Mr. K. Hayton	Team Inspector	Science, biology
21806	Mrs. P. Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology
32787	Mr. S. Appleyard	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
17404	Mrs. J. Tolley	Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages
20877	Mr. D. Pink	Team Inspector	History
23324	Ms. S. Greenland	Team Inspector	Geography, sociology
30899	Mr. K. Boden	Team Inspector	Art and design, business studies
31850	Mr. D. Nevens	Team Inspector	Citizenship, music
7926	Mr. J.E. Bowden	Team Inspector	Physical education
7958	Mrs. G. Lewis	Team Inspector	Special educational needs, English as an additional language, film studies, post 16 English

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Glossary

The term 'Key Stage 3' is sometimes used and means 'Years 7 to 9'. It is often used in connection with national strategies to improve teaching and learning and hence raise pupils' achievement in these years.

The term 'Key Stage 4' is sometimes used as an alternative to 'Years 10 and 11'.

Throughout this report 'pupil' is used in Years 7 to 11, 'student' is used in the sixth form.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school which gives very good value for money. Pupils and students achieve very well; standards of work are well above average. Teaching and learning are both very good. Leadership and management are both very good and leaders are intent on making the school even better.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High standards attained at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 over the last few years have at least been maintained and 2004 results confirm a rising trend.
- Achievement, overall, is only satisfactory in design and technology and in ICT in Years 10 and 11, whereas achievement is good or very good in other subjects.
- Pupils and students show great interest in school life and want to learn.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent and their attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The school's self evaluation and monitoring of internal and external information are both very good.
- Well qualified learning support assistants are well used to help pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- There is a very good range of activities to enrich pupils' learning.
- Very good links with the community broaden the curriculum.
- Leaders and teachers provide excellent role models for new staff, pupils and students.
- Though not overall adversely affecting pupils' achievement, accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Improvement since the last inspection report is very good overall. All issues identified then have been addressed though ICT can still be further developed and some accommodation problems continue. In addition the quality of teaching and learning has improved, standards have risen and the school has achieved performing arts college status.

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A	A	n/a	

Key: A - in the top 5% of similar schools; 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 achieve very well overall; well in Years 7 to 9, very well by Year 11. The difference between the two stages is narrow. Students achieve very well in the sixth form. Achievement is certainly high enough for most students in most subjects; there is room for improvement in aspects of design and technology and in ICT in Years 10 and 11. Overall, standards are well above average by Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. 2004 results confirm a rising trend of improvement and statutory targets were exceeded. Pupils achieve very well

in mathematics, science, history and modern languages across Years 7 to 11, in art and design and in music in Years 10 and 11. They achieve well in English across Years 7 to 11. Most pupils with special educational needs, particularly when support is provided, achieve in the range well to very well. In the sample of sixth form subjects fully inspected, students achieve very well in biology, drama, mathematics, sociology, and physical education.

Pupils personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils' and students' attitudes and behaviour are very good; their attendance and punctuality are both very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are both very good overall. They are good in Years 7 to 9, very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, science, art and design, modern foreign languages, and history. Teaching and learning are only satisfactory in design and technology in all years and in music in Years 7 to 9, mainly due to current staffing issues. Teaching and learning within most subjects in the sixth form are very good and never less than good. A relatively weak common feature of both teaching and learning, particularly of teaching, is the limited use of ICT though this is not overall adversely affecting standards.

Care, guidance and support and the school's partnership with parents, other schools and the community are all very good. The curriculum is good. Community links are expanding due to the performing arts status of the school and already provide a valuable service to the community, pupils and students. The high quality of care and guidance supports high standards of work and behaviour.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good in the main school and in the sixth form. Governance is also very good for both. Statutory requirements are fully met. The headteacher and chair of governors share very high aspirations for the school and an excellent vision for its future development. Governors are very well informed and have a wealth of personal experience, knowledge and skills which ensure the school improves. The leadership group is very committed to maintenance of the highest standards and further improvement of any aspect of the school not yet meeting those standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very happy with the school; they feel pupils make good progress and behave well. A Year 10 pupil said: "the environment of the school is what life should be like".

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise achievement in design and technology and in ICT in Years 10 and 11 by appropriately improving staffing, teaching and learning, resources and accommodation.
- Continue the programme of improving accommodation across the school, paying particular attention to areas identified within this report.
- Improve guidance to potential sixth form students about courses and careers (see sixth form summary).
- Improve access to ICT equipment and services by sixth form students (see sixth form summary).

THE SIXTH FORM AT SAINT MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is very good and very cost effective. Very good teaching and learning result in very good achievement. Standards are typically well above average overall by the end of Year 13; much current work seen, at this early stage of courses, was above average. Examination results in 2004 are better than those in 2003, which were well above average. Leadership and management are very good and are contributory to why this sixth form is an increasingly popular choice for pupils finishing Year 11. Very good retention of students on courses, their very good attendance, and some large but very effectively managed classes contribute to very effective use of resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high and improving.
- Teaching and learning are very good and enable students to achieve well,
- Guidance to pupils and students on further study opportunities or available careers needs developing further.
- Sixth form access to computer resources to help them develop ICT skills further is not adequate.
- Students enjoy being in the sixth form and demonstrate this through very positive attitudes to work and the community life of the school.
- Though accommodation is satisfactory overall, increasing numbers of students and courses mean that additional accommodation needs to be provided.

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 in depth.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is good . Standards are above average and students achieve well as a result of good teaching and their positive attitudes. The department is well led, management is satisfactory.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is very good . Standards are above average. Students achieve very well as a consequence of consistently very good teaching. They enjoy the demanding challenges presented. The subject is well led and managed.
Science	Provision in biology is very good . Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are very good and students achieve very well. Leadership and management are very good, teachers work in close cooperation.
Humanities	Provision in sociology is very good . Standards are above average and students achieve very well from a low base of subject knowledge at the start of the course. Teaching and assessment are very good so that students learn very well. This is a newly-established department that is being very well led and managed. Provision in history is very good . Standards are above average. Teaching

	is very good, students achieve well but lack skills for independent learning. Leadership and management are very good.
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Visual and performing arts and media	<p>Provision in film studies is very good. Standards are above average overall. Enthusiastic teaching and very good use of assessment enable students to achieve very well in AS examinations. The subject is very well led and managed.</p> <p>Provision in drama and theatre studies is very good. Very good teaching and their own very positive attitudes enable all students to achieve very well. The department is very well led.</p>
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is very good . Students will take A2 examinations for the first time in 2005. Standards of work seen are above average. Very good teaching and learning results in very good achievement in lessons. Leadership and management are both very good.
Business	Provision in business education is very good . A wide range of courses allows students of varying aptitudes to achieve well. Teaching overall is very good and results have been above average. Standards seen in lessons are above average for most students.

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

Very effective guidance and support underpin very good achievement in the courses students pursue in school, but guidance is not always as effective in directing students to appropriate qualifications needed for university applications to help them achieve their goals. Very good induction procedures help students settle quickly into sixth form life. Students are treated in an adult manner and their views are sought and respected. The monitoring and evaluation of students' progress are very effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The head of sixth form is very well informed about students' progress and uses data effectively to raise standards. Students' progress is monitored closely against expected performance and appropriate targets are set. The provision is evaluated on a regular basis and action is taken to meet the needs and aspirations of students more effectively. However, access to computers and ICT resources needs to improve, and to be used to raise students' ICT skills further.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Sixth formers as a whole are very positive about the sixth form and the quality of support they receive in their work, and enjoy being in the sixth form at St Mary's. Students' views are regularly canvassed and taken seriously. However, a significant proportion of students feel that the advice they get about opportunities, careers and work should be more comprehensive and better managed. Inspectors agree.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils achieve very well overall; well in Years 7 to 9, very well by Year 11. The difference between the two stages is narrow. Students achieve very well in the sixth form. Standards are well above average by Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards attained at the end of Years 9, 11 and 13 over the last few years have at least been maintained and 2004 results confirm a rising trend.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, science, history and modern languages across Years 7 to 11, and in art and design and in music in Years 10 and 11.
- In the sample of sixth form subjects fully inspected, students achieve very well in biology, drama, mathematics, sociology, and physical education.
- Achievement, overall, is only satisfactory in design and technology and in ICT in Years 10 and 11.
- Most pupils with special educational needs, particularly when support is provided, achieve in the range well to very well.
- In the sample of sixth form subjects fully inspected, students achieve very well in biology, drama, mathematics, sociology, and physical education.
- Entry standards onto sixth form courses, or the issues they raise, may need further review.
- Students' ICT skills develop in a rather ad hoc way.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.2 (35.1)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	39.1 (39.0)	n/a (35.4)
science	37.3 (36.5)	n/a (33.6)

There were 132 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. At the time of writing national average points scores for 2004 are not available and national English end of Year 9 results are still subject to controversy. However, the percentage of pupils attaining level 5 or above (the national benchmark) is known for mathematics and science. The school's results are well above national results for mathematics and science in 2004 and well above results published in 2003 for English. Statutory targets for the school's performance at the end of Year 9 were exceeded and the school continued its trend, since 2001, of improving faster in Key Stage 3 tests than is done nationally. The school enters appropriate pupils for optional tests which allow them to demonstrate attainment at level 7 and level 8. Very significant numbers attained level 7 or higher in mathematics and science, a few at level 8. Mathematics

performed best at these high levels. These results confirm inspectors' judgements of very good achievement in mathematics and in science by Year 9, whilst achievement in English is good. Pupils have well above average attainment in the end of Year 6 test results of all three subjects when they enter the school; English consolidates high standards, mathematics and science take them further. There is very little difference in boys' and girls' results; over a five year period boys do a little better than girls when boys' and girls' national averages are considered.

2. In half of the subjects in Years 7 to 9 pupils achieve well and standards mostly rise to a secure above average from broadly average standards on entry. Attainment on entry overall has been stated as well above average as this is the position in English, mathematics and science but this is not the case in all other subjects; pupils start this school with below average standards in design and technology and in physical education for example. In ICT pupils begin with above average standards which rise to well above average by Year 9 but this has not yet been capitalised on in Years 10 and 11 so the rise in standards stalls and achievement in ICT becomes just satisfactory rather than continuing as good. Similarly, but for different reasons, achievement overall in design and technology slips in Years 10 and 11. This time the slippage is specific to particular areas in design and technology: graphic products and, last year, also control systems. These areas attract mainly boys and, as design and technology is now an option, too few very able boys, and in consequence standards of work tend towards below average. However standards, and more importantly achievement, are both restricted by staffing issues and inadequate resources.
3. The standard of work produced by most pupils with special educational needs is below and sometimes well below national averages across all years. However, they make good and sometimes very good progress in lessons as a result of very well planned and organised support from both subject teachers and learning support assistants. All are entered for end of Year 9 tests and GCSEs and often achieve results which are above expectations when their prior attainment is considered. However, the very good school analysis which demonstrates the positive effect support assistants have on the achievement of pupils with special educational needs, also shows that a small minority of boys in lowest ability 'sets' underachieve.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	75 (74)	53.4 (52.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	99 (98)	86.4 (86.6)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (98)	95.8 (94.8)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	332.9 (40.9)	282.3 (34.8)

There were 123 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. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2004 were well above average as in 2003 but, in 2004, pupils achieved better and results, compared to those in schools with similar prior attainment, are designated as A* for the proportion of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-C grades, 5 or more A*-G grades, and average points. A* means the school's results are within the top 5 per cent of results in similar schools. Results are more impressive when you consider that pupils had standards well above average when in Year 9, so the school managed to lift them even higher. Also, the 5 or more A*-C grades in this school are weighted towards A*-B grades and most pupils attain a lot more than 5; typically 10 GCSEs are taken. The proportion of A*-A grades is above the

national, at 17 percent rather than 14 percent, and some subjects such as English, mathematics, science and history produce significantly more A*-A grades than average. On the other hand, English literature and geography do not. GCSE results overall have been maintained well above average for at least 5 years and results in 2004 are the best for 3 years and exceeded statutory targets. Though girls do better than boys if raw results are looked at, boys actually do better than girls if each set of results is compared to national boys' and national girls' averages. Over 5 years, up to 2003, boys exceeded the national boys' average by 10 points, whilst girls exceeded the girls' average by 7 points. Boys started doing comparatively better 4 years ago and this may be linked to the small but significant imbalance in boy / girl numbers; in Years 7 to 11 there are more girls than boys. Inspectors came to no conclusion about this.

5. Standards of work and pupils' corresponding achievement closely reflect examination success. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, science, history and modern languages across Years 7 to 11, and in art and design and in music in Years 10 and 11. In other subjects they achieve well except for the exceptions discussed earlier. Achievement is more closely related to the standards of teaching and learning seen than of leadership and management of subjects. For example, in mathematics and in modern languages achievement is very good, teaching and learning are very good but leadership and management are only good. The reasons for this are explained in the relevant subject sections but are easily summed up; new heads of department have very good teams of teachers. There was no significant difference between the overall achievement of boys and girls noted though boys tend to predominate in the lowest 'sets', surprising as they do so well at GCSE; this is commented on above. The proportion of pupils from other cultures, mainly Italian, is small. School analysis shows they perform at least as well as their English peers and often better; inspectors confirmed this. School analysis also shows that computer-assisted learning has contributed well to the very good achievement seen in mathematics and in French. Inspectors did not witness this in operation.

Sixth form

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	95.3 (91.1)	85.5 (92.1)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	38.1 (28.0)	27.6 (33.8)
Average point score per pupil	317.8 (289.5)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 186 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. When students enter the sixth form their academic standards are broadly average. This 'average' is different from the 'average' in the well above average which defines GCSE performance. This is an academic rather than vocational sixth form and well above average GCSE results are typical of such a sixth form and therefore 'average'. Students are entered onto courses on the basis of their average points scores at GCSE and minimum grades in related subjects are not always taken into account. This raises some questions about the curriculum. For example, in this Year 12 there are students taking AS English literature who did not do as well as might be expected in GCSE

literature, but got a relatively high average points score overall; in consequence their progress this far into the term is being limited by weaknesses in their prior knowledge and understanding of literature.

7. During the sixth form students achieve very well and attain well above average standards. In 2003 standards rose significantly and this rise appears to have been consolidated in 2004; national data for 2004 AS and A-levels is not yet released. Inspectors confirmed students' very good achievement overall and particularly within biology, drama, mathematics, sociology and physical education. Again, the high quality of teaching and related learning led to this very good achievement. Of note are the large classes, well over 20 students, in some subjects, such as sociology and physical education, in which this high achievement is maintained.
8. Though students' literacy and numeracy skills continue to develop through the sixth form, their ICT skills do not except in business education, where it is necessary that they do so. Limited access and no ICT skills course for all both contribute to this glitch in otherwise well rounded progress. In addition, students particularly talented in ICT have no advanced course to follow.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students show great interest in school life and want to learn.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent.
- There is very good behaviour in and around the school.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff and between each other result in a very pleasant environment for work and recreation.
- Pupils and students willingly take on responsible roles when they are available.
- Although appreciation of pupils' own culture is good, there is room for more learning about the cultures of others.

Commentary

9. The last inspection identified that pupils had very good attitudes to school; these have been maintained. Pupils enjoy school; they are polite and friendly and contribute effectively to the happy atmosphere within the school. Pupils say they like being at school. They understand that the way they conduct themselves contributes to their achievement in lessons and to trouble free, enjoyable lunchtimes.
10. Nearly all pupils agree that behaviour is good; a few pupils said some low-level bullying takes place from time to time which is firmly dealt with by the school. Nearly all parents consider their children are happy at school. Exclusions are lower than average and permanent exclusions very few and far between. Though the school has a code of conduct, it is the very good relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils with each other, which effectively contribute to pupils wanting to behave well and lead to the very good behaviour seen in the inspection. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are happy

with the merit reward system and value the certificates they receive, although older pupils would like to see the system developed further to take into account their more mature attitudes

11. Staff trust pupils to move around the school and between dispersed buildings sensibly and they do so with little supervision; behaviour around the site is impeccable. The school has very high expectations of behaviour and pupils rise to them; most are attentive in lessons, apply themselves well and correspondingly gain in knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils show very good levels of maturity as seen in lessons, such as a Year 7 PSHE lesson when pupils' responses to a visitor's questions were well considered and attitudes were excellent. Pupils respond well when given responsibility; they willingly take the lead in assemblies and produce very good ones.
12. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall. Few incidents were seen where teachers or learning support assistants needed to intervene because pupils were not concentrating. The lively and enthusiastic teaching seen in some subjects is infectious in ensuring pupils enjoy learning.
13. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Very good spiritual development reflects the very strong Catholic ethos that is apparent throughout the school and all its activities. Staff are aware of and deliver the Catholic message at every opportunity, which engenders a reverential outlook on life amongst pupils. Morning assemblies and class registrations provide regular time for prayer, often led by the pupils; however these occasions frequently fail to include time for supporting reflection on the true meaning of the prayer. Groups of volunteer pupils regularly experience the enrichment of day and residential spiritual retreats.
14. Pupils have a strong respect for the views of other people and this is shown in the way they support each other in group work and listen respectfully to each other's contributions in lessons. Their ability to distinguish between right and wrong is excellent and shows in their attitude to fair play in games and the very orderly way they conduct themselves in their daily lives in the school. They respond very well to the responsibilities of living in a community; they have a strong ethos of service to communities near and far. For example, they visit people in the locality with special educational needs, they support a school in Zaire and they collect for a wide range of Christian charities.
15. Appreciation of pupils' own and others' cultures is good. Because of the performing arts status of the school pupils take part in a number of cultural events including visiting theatres and art galleries. There is some emphasis on multi-cultural celebration in music, art and food technology but the school recognises that this is an area that needs further expansion.
16. A wide range of activities and clubs, available both at lunchtime and after school, builds on pupils' confidence and self-esteem and encourages them to further their enjoyment of school. Pupils are supported in creating clubs if enough are interested to become involved and the Year 7 'freshers' meeting is a novel way of getting them to know the school.
17. Attendance at the school is very good and above the national median. The school makes a concerted effort to ensure that it receives reasons for absence and

consequently the rate of unauthorised absence at the school is well below the national average. The attendance issue identified at the last inspection has been resolved, registration takes place at each lesson, and spot checks are conducted to ensure pupils are where they should be. Very few pupils arrived at school late during the inspection despite the long distances some travel on buses. Pupils move rapidly but with due care between classrooms, many sited on very narrow corridors and connected by narrow flights of stairs, and arrive on time for lessons.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	647	28	0
White – Irish	19	0	0
White – any other White background	73	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	10	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	4	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	1	0

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.0	School data	0.1
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Sixth form

18. Students' attitudes to learning in the sixth form are very good and they behave as very sensible young adults. Students are interested in their work and very few do not complete their chosen courses. They are complimentary about the school and in the inspection questionnaire say that they enjoy being in the sixth form. Attendance in the sixth form is very good and monitored closely by staff. The school expects students to attend all lessons and they do so, including study periods. A novel approach is taken to such periods; students who are seen to be achieving very well can choose how many to attend, those in need of more work attend until they too achieve very well. Students appreciate the 'reward' following the effort.
19. Students contribute very well to the good order in the school and provide good role models for younger pupils. Opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills through community service and the Millennium Volunteer Scheme are good, with students helping in classes or with individual pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning, care, guidance and support and the partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are all very good. The curriculum is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are both very good overall. They are good in Years 7 to 9; very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Assessment is good overall; it is good in Years 7 to 11, very good in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are only satisfactory in design and technology in all years and in music in Years 7 to 9, mainly due to current staffing issues.
- Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, science, art and design, modern foreign languages, and history.
- Well qualified learning support assistants are very effectively used to help pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning within most subjects in the sixth form are very good and never less than good.

- A relatively weak common feature of both teaching and learning, particularly of teaching, is the limited use of ICT, though this is not overall adversely affecting standards.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 144 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (3%)	47 (33%)	62 (43%)	29 (20%)	1 (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.

20. There is little difference between the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4; in music they are only satisfactory rather than good and in geography, good rather than very good. Lessons seen during the inspection were good overall in Key Stage 3; the number of very good lessons was balanced by the number of satisfactory lessons. In Key Stage 4 there were four times as many very good lessons as satisfactory lessons. Overall, there were few excellent lessons; three were seen in Key Stage 4, one in Key Stage 3. Classes are generally larger in Key Stage 3, the spread of ability can be more, even in 'sets', inexperienced staff have to work a little harder with pupils not yet firmly established into school routines, and some teachers' subject expertise is not quite so sharp as in Key Stage 4. All these factors nudge teaching in Key Stage 3 to good rather than very good. The school has used computer-assisted learning in several subjects and the school's analysis indicates that though the overall effect is difficult to establish it has successfully contributed to pupils' very good achievement in mathematics and in French.
21. Both teaching and learning exhibit many strengths. Teachers' planning, encouragement of pupils and high expectations of them predominate teaching; acquisition of knowledge and skills and high productivity predominate learning. Though still judged as good, a relatively weak feature of teaching is the use of ICT and this stems from still limited or difficult access to resources. Though an ICT room is set aside for cross curricular work the dispersed nature of the school site with some rooms well removed from computers militates against extensive use of ICT. In addition the school does not have any fixed computer projectors and setting up portable ones takes time. Neither, and very unusually, does the school have any interactive whiteboards; the school is about to participate in an assessment of these resources but there are no plans to see best practice in their use elsewhere. Independent learning, though good overall and very good in half of the subjects inspected, is not consistently so and better access to computers and a larger, more central learning resource centre (library) would help it develop; the coming new build will address some issues and the library will be re-sited.
22. Lack of specialised ICT equipment and software contributes to the only satisfactory teaching and learning in design and technology and in music in Years 7 to 9. Inadequate accommodation for both subjects also hinders potential productivity and independent work. However, staffing issues in both subjects are also significant and, whilst the staffing glitch in music is likely to be temporary, more attention needs to be paid to it to avoid lower standards than usual next year. Staffing in design and technology is more significant as temporary appointments are only stop-gap and another teacher will have to be appointed; also too little technician support hinders development of the curriculum.

23. Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, science, art and design, history and modern languages. Common features of teaching and learning in these subjects are involvement of pupils in many features of the lessons, very good planning and pace, and good or better assessment. Pupils work hard, enjoy it and know how to get better.
24. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good overall. They are very good in science, modern languages and history. Teachers generally make very good use of learning support assistants and also plan work graded for difficulty, so that pupils with lower attainment or specific learning difficulties are able to use resources to help them do the work set. In such lessons, teacher and learning support assistant work effectively as a team; pupils are able to participate fully in lessons and respond well to the effective planning, adapted resources and support provided. They are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and work well without direct intervention. Learning support assistants are very well qualified and often supplement teachers' planning with appropriate additional targets for pupils in their care. They also play an important role in supporting several pupils whilst being designated to support specific individuals. Where teaching is only satisfactory it is often because insufficient use is made of the very well qualified learning support assistants and teachers do not adequately plan for pupils' specific needs. There is also variation in the quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work and some practice is more useful to pupils with special educational needs. In history and in science, assessment procedures are very good and provide good advice and guidance whilst praising success and effort.

Sixth form

25. Very good teaching in Key Stage 4 continues into the sixth form where the pattern of very good, good, and satisfactory lessons is the same as in Key Stage 4 and most subjects fully inspected were judged to have very good teaching overall. Strengths in teaching and learning are similar to those described above in respect of some subjects in Key Stage 4. In the few lessons which were only satisfactory, teachers' planning was not quite so adept, sometimes not taking fully into account the range of ability in the class, or questioning of the class was too 'open' so some students were not sufficiently involved with the work.
26. Teachers' use of ICT to provide alternative strategies to help students learn continues to be limited. Students' use of ICT is patchy but sufficient for what is needed, for example in business studies. However, students' access to the Internet for research purposes, a key feature of independent learning, is too restricted by local ICT network 'censoring' software and no computers dedicated just for sixth form use hinders students' access too.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good both in the main school and in the sixth form. Opportunities for additional activities beyond lessons are very good overall. Staffing is good and resources are satisfactory overall in all years. Accommodation is unsatisfactory but it is satisfactory in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall planning and monitoring of the curriculum are clear and effective.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- There is a very good range of activities to enrich pupils' learning.
- Personal, social and health education support well pupils' personal development.

- Performing arts college status has had beneficial effects in some curriculum areas but has not yet permeated a broad range of subjects.
- There are insufficient ICT resources to fully support the curriculum.
- Though not overall adversely affecting pupils' achievement, accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

27. The school has given careful consideration to curriculum planning and has a clear philosophy for development of this area. The recently appointed assistant head with curriculum responsibility has overseen thorough audits of several aspects of the curriculum. Reviews of personal social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, for example, have yielded valuable information. Much of this has yet to be converted to effective action. The key recommendations of the previous report have been implemented and the school's self evaluation procedures have identified the improvements to standards that this has brought about. The curriculum committee of the governing body provides effective monitoring of curriculum provision. All statutory requirements are met, including provision for a daily act of collective worship.
28. A good scheme of work for PSHE, which includes citizenship and careers education, is underpinned by the school's strong Catholic ethos. Consequently, teaching in these areas is reinforced throughout all aspects of school life. Careers provision has been audited, is satisfactory overall, and those requirements that need to be strengthened form part of the school's targets for 2005. Advice to pupils on appropriate career pathways is satisfactory overall though more information is needed for potential sixth form students when they are in Year 11.
29. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 provides for all National Curriculum subjects and, in keeping with the school's status as a performing arts college, has been broadened by the inclusion of drama for all pupils. Dance is also a valuable addition to the physical education curriculum and additional specialist staffing is brought in to support it.
30. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is broad and meets the needs of most pupils. The introduction of dance and drama has broadened the range of options for pupils and the re-organised option system has enabled greater flexibility in the way choices are made. Applied GCSE courses in business studies and ICT provide a limited vocational pathway for pupils. Business studies is a well-established course but there has been limited initial interest in the ICT course. The school realises the need for more active promotion of this type of course to broaden curriculum programmes for pupils in the 14 to 19 age range. Early GCSE entry for talented musicians and able mathematicians (current Year 10) caters well for some high attaining pupils but there are currently no whole school initiatives related to the gifted and talented obviously in action in the classroom.
31. Opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning through participation in extra-curricular activities are very good. These include general interest and leisure activities as well as curriculum support opportunities. This is particularly strong in performing arts where the school's specialist status has resulted in strong interest in activities which link the school with its local community. As yet, specialist status has not had the same positive

impact across all areas of the taught curriculum and does not feature strongly enough in the planning of some subjects. Curriculum extension activities include Italian and Latin. Both activities lead to opportunities for additional GCSE qualifications and Italian recognises well the most significant minority group in the school.

32. The school curriculum for Years 7 to 11 is supplemented for pupils with special educational needs. Learning support assistants provide extra help for pupils having difficulty with literacy and/or numeracy. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for specific individual support and, in Years 10 and 11, such pupils have a 'free option'. This gives the opportunity for additional support to be given in a range of subjects at the request of the pupil. As a consequence of this support, pupils with special educational needs taking GCSE examinations are able to use the 'free option' time to improve their work with the help and guidance of a teacher. A good level of staffing also enables subjects to have smaller classes for lower attaining pupils; this gives them the opportunity to receive more individual attention. Additional financial resources, 'earmarked pupil funding', given for two years for some pupils without a statement of special educational needs helps provide valuable extra support which is effective in raising pupils' achievement. Accommodation for the special educational needs base is unsatisfactory. The very small room allocated cannot accommodate more than six pupils at a time in some degree of comfort. The storage of resources in the base adds to the cramped conditions. Pupils with special educational needs need a learning environment which encourages them to enjoy learning and the base does not adequately do this. There are four computers available for use but little software to encourage independent learning.
33. The quality of the school's accommodation varies considerably but is unsatisfactory overall. Accommodation for science, with sufficient numbers of laboratories, and ICT, with plenty of room for a range of activities, is good. It is unsatisfactory in English because the shape of some rooms does not allow whole class interaction; in languages, because poor acoustics make it very difficult for pupils to hear what others are saying. There is currently no indoor accommodation on site for the teaching of physical education; a new build will provide this in the next financial year. Overall, achievement is sustained because teachers work hard to overcome these deficiencies but they cannot always use the ideal activity for each aspect of learning as a result of having to teach in rooms ill suited to the purpose.
34. The school has a satisfactory general level of resources though access to computers is too often restricted. Most subjects, with the exception of design and technology where there is no up-to-date computer-aided design and manufacturing equipment, are at least adequately resourced. In science and design and technology there is a lack of appropriate ICT equipment and also in science, barely sufficient equipment for experiments. In geography there is a lack of textbooks but the subject is well provided for in visual aids, including films. There is good provision of books in ICT and science. The school has fewer facilities for demonstrating from a computer to a whole class than usually found and whilst this is not significantly affecting the quality of learning it means some increasingly commonplace teaching practices cannot be done at this school. The library has a satisfactory range of books. There is a good selection of fiction covering the full age range of the school with books for younger readers clearly indicated. The range of non-fiction stock is more varied, being out of date in some sections such as ICT and other technologies.
35. The school has a good complement of teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum both for pupils aged 11-16 and for the sixth form. Provision is very good in science and in languages, the latter because of the presence of native speakers of the languages taught. Staffing is unsatisfactory overall in design and technology. Overall,

there is a good provision of support staff. Modern language assistants, including native speakers, provide good role models and help pupils acquire the skills of learning foreign languages. There is an adequate level of technicians for science and to support the computer network. There is insufficient technician assistance for art and design and insufficient technical support time hinders learning in design and technology.

Sixth form

36. The mainly traditional academic curriculum has recently been enlarged by the addition of sociology, psychology and dance. The range of options is widened further by a limited number of joint arrangements with neighbouring schools. The curriculum caters for the needs of those students wishing to pursue an academic career very well. There are limited opportunities for students to follow other career pathways. The school has recognised the need to expand this area of the curriculum. Business studies is making a valuable contribution to this development by offering successful courses which fulfil the career aspirations of students with a wide range of aptitudes and abilities. These include courses leading to Advanced Vocational Certificate in Education (AVCE) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). The school provides several courses in 'twilight' time (after school) to enable students to follow courses they want to.
37. The school's minimum qualification policy for entry on to sixth form courses has relied on students' average GCSE points scores and this has led to some students undertaking courses with lower than normally expected specific subject grades, for example a minimum C in English literature. The school is investigating alternative courses and teaching strategies. Students are given advice on choice of courses but this has been criticised by some students as insufficient preparation and inspectors agree. The school has identified areas for improvement in its provision for sixth form careers advice including greater involvement of students in planning their own career pathways.
38. Students have good opportunities to widen their personal development through involvement in a good extra-curricular programme including many charitable ventures. These activities contribute strongly to students' personal, cultural and social development. Sports opportunities for students are, however, limited and the specific time made available eroded by other demands.
39. Accommodation for the sixth form is satisfactory overall. The same comments apply as for the main school with addition of the lack of any rooms dedicated to the teaching of sociology or of film studies. Sixth form students have their own common room but there is little space for private study. The library is used for this purpose but is too small to accommodate large numbers of students, especially when other classes are using it. However, the school has definite plans to relocate the library into a new area which will shortly be built. Resources for the sixth form are satisfactory overall though students' access to computers or networks is inadequate.

Care, guidance and support

Care and welfare of pupils is very good. Provision of guidance for pupils and students through the monitoring of their work and the setting of appropriate targets is very good.

Support for pupils' and students' personal development is very good. The school takes very good care to ensure that pupils' and students' views are valued. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Heads of year and form tutors form very effective teams and enable support and guidance of pupils to be very good.
- The seeking of pupils' and students' views is well established in the school.
- There are very good arrangements for the induction of new pupils into Year 7 and students into the sixth form.
- Guidance to pupils and students on further study opportunities or available careers needs developing further.

Commentary

40. Appropriate policies and procedures for health and safety are in place. Child Protection procedures are clear and follow local area guidelines. Pupils are taught to care for themselves through PSHE. The scheme of work includes teaching pupils to recognise influences and pressures that they will meet in life. The use of visiting speakers, such as The Catholic Society and a Samaritan Counsellor, helps to broaden pupils' knowledge and of sources of help available to them or others.
41. Pastoral staff are well led and work effectively as a team. Heads of year and form tutors provide very good monitoring of personal development and academic achievement. They know their charges fully and pupils know and understand how to improve their personal academic targets.
42. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored and their individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Each subject area is expected to identify on the special educational needs register its own targets for such pupils which in turn are also monitored. The school uses a variety of tests to assess pupils' needs. Subject teachers in their marking sometimes identify specific targets. In lessons where teaching is good or better reference is often made to pupils' targets and objectives for the work in hand so that pupils understand better what they have to do to improve their work.
43. Pupils feel safe and secure; one Year 10 pupil commented during the inspection, "the environment of the school is what life should be like". Conversations with pupils and their inspection questionnaire revealed how much they value staff in the school. They appreciate their friendliness and feel it helps them with their learning. They also feel that teachers are willing to help them and are confident that they would listen to and take appropriate action to solve their problems. Pupils in Year 7 also have a high regard for the relationships that form with sixth form students and feel that they can help them too.
44. The school has firmly established seeking of pupils' views and evaluation of school events. There are regular consultations of pupils through the school council, form tutorials and individual mentoring which enable pupils to have a voice in the school and to know that their views are valued.

45. The school has very good induction procedures for prospective Year 7 pupils. 'Taster' days begin in Year 5; subject participation and performing arts days ensure that younger pupils are familiar with this school and have already made new friends before they start. Sixth form students organise the days and bonds are formed between pupils and students. Youngsters are given confidence that they will be supported in the new school, which is very often a long bus ride away from home. In Year 6, primary pupils are able to take part in an English transition project, e-mailing their work to this school's web site where older pupils mark it and give constructive comments on how to make improvements.

Sixth form

46. Overall, students receive good guidance. When students have chosen and adopted their subjects to study, the school's monitoring of their progress and guidance on how to improve and raise standards are very good. However, although staff encourage students to undertake individual research on their likely choice of careers, current involvement by staff to direct and guide them along appropriate pathways is not considered good enough by a significant minority of students. In discussions, students in Year 12 felt that they needed better information in Year 11 to help them make a more informed choice of subjects to study in the sixth form. Year 13 students confirmed this view and, in particular, felt they needed much earlier advice on what the requirements were in higher education if they wanted to follow particular career pathways. The Connexions service interview in Year 11 was felt to be of very limited use; the school cannot enter into a more substantial contract with Connexions for moral reasons. The recent appointment of a careers co-ordinator is in response to the school's evaluation of current provision; it needs improving further and inspectors agree.
47. Very good relationships between staff and students enable students to articulate their views. A sixth form forum encourages students to express their opinions in a formal arena and the evaluation of changes taking place in school through questionnaires reassures students that their views are valued and acted upon. Induction into the sixth form is very good, taster lessons are available and a residential team building exercise helps students to make the transition from pupil to young adult and helps develop firm friendships.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with its parents. Very good links are in place with primary schools and good links with colleges overall. The school has very good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all parents are happy with the school's provision for their children.
- Links with the community enrich the curriculum.
- This school supports learning in other local schools.
- Overall, parents receive good quality information.
- There are good links with businesses.

Commentary

48. Parents are supportive of the school and most are happy with the provision made for their children. The school is very popular and many parents are prepared for their children to travel long distances to attend it. Many parents are familiar with the school, having attended themselves, and these close connections foster very good support for events and out of school activities. The parents' association is very active and successful in providing support, organising social events such as the motor show and consequently raising considerable amounts of funding for the school. The strong association with parents establishes high expectations of standards from the school, which the school fulfils.
49. Parents are included in the monitoring process of pupils' academic and personal achievement. In the autumn term, if a pupil is causing concern, the school invites parents to discuss the concerns with staff. In the spring term, the school holds subject information evenings for all parents to attend. In the summer term the school provides parents with an annual progress report though the school needs to ensure all year groups invite parents to discuss the report with staff. Surveys of parents' views take place regularly; a recent curriculum evening to inform parents of the introduction of the national Key Stage 3 strategy was very well attended by over 200 parents and views of the event were sought and acted upon.
50. Overall, information to parents is of a good quality. Newsletters have a very attractive format that gives a very good range of information on the daily life of the school. The governors' annual report to parents is meritorious with detail rarely seen in other reports. Pupils' annual progress reports give very good general progress information and indicate the areas for improvement in personal development, but not all staff focus directly on specific subject achievement and weaknesses.
51. The school supports learning in the community very well through its performing arts college status and because it is well located near the centre of the town. A wide range of courses such as ceramics, life drawing, photography, and a variety of instrumental classes is available in the evenings. The feeder primary schools benefit from offers for staff in this school to teach in their schools, local secondary schools exchange visits - for example, pupils visited a nearby school for a poetry day - and 'master classes' are provided for or received from local high schools. The school has very close links with nearby Catholic churches, the priests visit the school to assist in PSHE lessons and pupils attend church retreats to broaden their interpersonal skills and enjoy themselves.
52. Good links with businesses through, for example, the industry day provide useful information and experiences in areas such as team building and problem solving. A wide range of businesses and organisations take part, for example, local banks, the Army and the local newspaper.

Sixth form

53. Links with businesses, further education establishments and higher education establishments in the sixth form are satisfactory. The school expects that its students will follow the path to universities and the majority of students take this route.

Students visit nearby universities and appropriate resources are in place to enable students to make an informed choice for a higher education destination. Students who are unlikely to follow this path receive information on local colleges and their syllabuses. Opportunities to review a wider choice of destinations for careers are thin.

54. The community courses provided in the evening are available to sixth formers and the school meets the cost. This gives sixth formers opportunities to broaden their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good in the main school and in the sixth form. Governance is also very good for both. The headteacher and chair of governors share very high aspirations for the school and an excellent vision for its future development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are very well informed and have a wealth of personal experience, knowledge and skills which ensure the school improves.
- The leadership group is very committed to maintenance of the highest standards and further improvement of any aspect of the school not yet meeting those standards.
- Leaders and teachers provide excellent role models for new staff, pupils and students.
- The school's self evaluation and its monitoring of internal and external information are both very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to do well in examinations.
- Financial management is very good and helps enable the school to provide very good value for money.
- Whilst the school is not currently affected adversely by operating without a deputy headteacher, this is not likely to be tenable in the long term.

Commentary

55. The degree of school self evaluation, analysis of performance, and subsequent actions is remarkable. The amount of closely correlated information and evidence assessing, reviewing, and painting a true picture of the school is probably greater than that seen in the very many schools inspected by this inspection team. It is certainly the most useful school analysis seen by the lead inspector. Much of this work began several years ago on the appointment of the current headteacher and is still driven by him. However, both fortuitous and planned changes to the structure of the leadership group have been backed by fairly intensive training and personal development of the people who are part of it. Consequently they are increasingly capable of managing the data and supporting the ongoing professional development of both middle leaders and managers, like heads of department, and of teachers. The leadership group is entirely happy with their roles and give of their best because they feel morally obliged to do so, are very well encouraged by the headteacher, and very well led by him as he provides an excellent exemplar of hard work, conviction, and obvious success; the school has improved in diverse ways under his direction. One year on, the performing arts college aspect of the school is well developed with very good links forged with community groups and additional courses in dance and in drama coming along well. All senior leaders and many other staff provide excellent role models for others, including pupils and students, through positive attitudes, hard work and details such as personal presentation; the school expects children to follow a dress code and staff do so too.
56. The school currently operates with no deputy headteacher when it once had two. The current leadership group is both leading and managing very well and each member, below the headteacher, takes a turn on a termly rotation to substitute for the headteacher in his absence. However, this situation is unlikely to be tenable over a long time and the governors recognise this and will seek to appoint a deputy headteacher within the next financial year. Leadership and management of subject areas are most often good with science, art and design, and history very good; leadership and management of design and technology and of ICT are satisfactory. Some subject leaders are relatively new or acting and their leadership has yet to bear full fruition. This is the case in mathematics, physical education and in modern foreign

languages for example; leadership in all three is currently good but likely to rapidly improve.

57. There is a high quality of governance due to a significant number of very able and experienced governors and a hard working governing body very well led by a chairman who has an excellent understanding of modern educational thought, such as value added, teaching pedagogy and learning styles. The headteacher and governors mutually respect each other and operate within their own briefs but work to a common purpose: raising standards further, improving the quality of education, and ensuring pupils and students develop well as individuals and as part of the school and wider community. Governors are extremely well informed about the school through documentation and data they receive including well informed reports from local authority staff the school uses to provide external evaluations of provision and progress. In addition, governors visit the school frequently and take part in 'pupil tracking' where they visit lessons. The school's own monitoring of lessons and teaching is also very thorough and detailed, very closely matches inspector's findings, and is appropriately available to governors.
58. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator teaches lower ability sets and Key Stage 4 'free option groups', providing a good role model for other teachers in the preparation and planning for individual pupils' needs. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are given opportunities to achieve above their predicted test or examination results based on their prior attainment. The special educational needs coordinator has built a well organised and successful team of learning support assistants. The special educational needs handbook is a comprehensive document providing an effective reference point for all who teach pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are well written and clearly identify targets for pupils. The regular review process ensures that pupils with specific learning difficulties are removed from the register when they have achieved their targets. The team of learning support assistants are very well qualified and able to use their expertise effectively. The link governor for special educational needs is well informed and attends regular half-termly meetings with the special educational needs coordinator. The deployment of learning support assistants is effective; this is organised by the senior learning support assistants in consultation with the special educational needs coordinator. There are some subject areas where there is little support provided. What is available is, when well planned, making a substantial contribution to the learning experience of more pupils than the limited number with a statement of special educational needs.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,368,474	Balance from previous year	16,917
Total expenditure	3,238,820	Balance carried forward to the next year	146,571
Expenditure per pupil (11-16)	3,697		

59. Financial management is very good and very closely linked to the exhaustive school development plan of which governors have a close appreciation. The finance committee, very ably chaired, is supported through the work of the school finance manager who is a non-teaching member of the leadership group. As a result of careful financial planning, the school has successfully moved out of deficit in recent years

without adversely affecting the quality of education provided; a reasonable excess of funds is mostly designated for part of the school's contribution to a substantial building programme. Expenditure is very well matched to determined need through detailed school planning processes. Expenditure is carefully monitored against plans so that variances are tackled appropriately. Governors and staff evaluate the budget in the interest of ensuring that very good use is made of finances available. The school complies very well with the principles of best value. The school council is used as a channel for consultation with pupils, for example over facilities provided by the canteen. This is complemented by the use of an external agency to survey the views of pupils. The Internet is very well used to obtain the best prices for goods and services and the school makes detailed comparison of its patterns of expenditure with those of similar schools.

60. The school receives a below average amount of income per pupil. Consequently, as pupils achieve very well, the school provides very good value for money.

Sixth form

61. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The head of sixth form is very well informed about students' progress and uses data effectively to raise standards through liaison with subject coordinators and form tutors. Students' progress is monitored closely on a regular basis against expected performance and appropriate targets are set. Students have regular reviews with their tutors to discuss their progress. The provision is evaluated on a regular basis and appropriate action is taken to meet the needs and aspirations of students more effectively. Induction procedures, beginning in Year 11 and including an induction week at the end of the summer term, are good. During the week prospective sixth formers meet with students who have just completed Year 12 courses, sample sixth form life at first hand, and attend a variety of taster lessons as well as participate in a residential course. As a result students settle quickly into sixth form life. Students' views are regularly canvassed and taken seriously though students have some doubts about guidance related to potential future careers and other opportunities post-18. Students also raised with inspectors difficulties they experience accessing computers or networks.
62. The sixth form is very cost effective as retention of students on courses is very high and almost all continue to for two years. In addition students' attendance is very good and consequently teaching and other resources are efficiently and effectively used. Some teaching groups, like sociology, are very large but very effective, which makes their cost effectiveness excellent, though at the price of very extensive marking and monitoring. The costs of educating pupils over the age of 16 are met from moneys intended for that purpose and there is no subsidy from elsewhere in the school. The school monitors this situation annually so that it can ensure that educational aims and financial planning are very well integrated.

PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE SPECIALIST STATUS

The school gained approval for performing arts college specialist status in 2003, after an impressive application which recognised its emerging reputation for quality provision in music, dance and drama.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are productive links with professional, community and educational arts organisations, many of which use the school's accommodation and resources.
- Pupils are benefiting from a very good enrichment programme supported by increased artistic links and partnerships and better accommodation and resources.
- Pupils now have more curriculum opportunities in music, dance and drama, but no access to courses which combine elements of all three.
- The co-ordination and development of the initial stages of the specialist status were very good but there is currently no overall curriculum leadership to rapidly integrate provision.

Commentary

63. The school has very good community and primary school links, valuable input from professional organisations and serves the artistic community of the area by acting as a centre for performing arts activities for participants of all ages in classes, rehearsals, summer schools and festivals. Relationships with partner secondary schools and colleges are developing well. This growing reputation in performing arts activity is enhancing pupils' opportunities in a very good enrichment programme. This is supported satisfactorily by improved accommodation, for example the recent theatre conversion, and in better resources, provided through specialist status funding.
64. All three art forms are well established within the curriculum, with good opportunities for pupils to take examination courses at GCSE and A-level. However, drama and dance are not wholly co-ordinated under the performing arts subject area and there are no opportunities at present for pupils to combine the three arts subjects in expressive or performing arts examination courses. The influence of arts based ICT is relatively modest and each subject area still has to realise a number of potential developments. However, standards and achievement in music and drama are above or well above the national average and the first GCSE results in dance are due at the end of this school year. Lessons seen in all three subjects demonstrated examples of good, very good or excellent teaching. At this early stage, performing arts has had little impact on other subjects in the curriculum, but greater awareness of its power to engage hearts and minds is emerging through a potent integration with the worship and spiritual aspects of school life.
65. The success of the school's application is one major indicator of the high quality of the preparation for and the co-ordination of the early development of the initial stages of specialist status. Very good monitoring of the programme's progress produces much data and information which will inform the planning of its later stages. Currently, however, performing arts has no overall curriculum leadership and management to ensure the best possible focus, status and provision comparable with similar established specialist colleges.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is satisfactory; it meets statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A thorough audit of the work-related elements of the curriculum has taken place.
- Careers information for Year 11 pupils includes a 'careers day' and interviews with senior staff.
- Business studies courses make a strong contribution to some pupils' awareness of work-related issues.
- An appreciation of how all curriculum areas contribute to pupils' awareness of the world of work is not yet well developed.

Commentary

66. Work-related learning (WRL) is co-ordinated effectively by a recently appointed assistant headteacher. A very thorough curriculum audit has identified where each subject can contribute to pupils' understanding of work-related issues. Because this has been completed recently the incorporation of the school's policy into departmental schemes of work is at an early stage of development. Departments with natural links to business and industry are building on these to make a strong contribution in this area. Business studies pupils, for example, follow courses with strong vocational elements that sometimes extend beyond the taught curriculum. A small group is enthusiastically involved in a Young Enterprise project and another group participating, with some success, in simulated share dealing. Achievement on business studies courses is good and teaching of WRL in this area is very good. The low uptake of places for the recently introduced vocational GCSE in ICT, and the lack of interest in a proposed similar course in leisure and tourism, has highlighted the need for the school to play a more active role in promoting these courses.
67. All Year 10 pupils take part in a week's work experience that is well monitored and followed up by pupils' own evaluations of their workplace experiences. Visiting speakers from business and industry are regularly invited to speak to pupils, through careers days for Year 11 and industry days for Year 9, for example, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to experience the workplace at first hand.

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

- Good teaching involves all pupils actively in lessons so that they learn well.
- Year 11 pupils achieve very well in the GCSE English examination.
- Good leadership and management have improved the curriculum for all pupils.
- Good practice is not sufficiently shared to give all pupils the best teaching.

Commentary

68. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Procedures for assessing the progress of pupils are better. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is now more balanced and challenging.
69. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well above average. The trend over the last three years is in line with the national trend of gradual improvement. Results in 2004 match the standard of work seen. Test results gained in 2004 are likely to be better than those in similar schools because teaching is good and because pupils are attentive and enthusiastic in lessons (national benchmark data has been delayed). Results in 2004 were better than in 2003 because the staffing difficulties that disrupted the learning of a small number of pupils were resolved.
70. GCSE results in English for 2004 were well above average compared with those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well above average in English and above average in English literature. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was well above average in both. When compared with similar schools, GCSE results were better overall than might be expected and much better in English alone. Boys and girls achieved equally well. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades, A*-A, in 2004 was above the national average in English but below average in English literature. GCSE results in recent years have generally been at very similar levels to those for 2004.
71. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average. Pupils achieve well. By Year 9 pupils are confident speakers and they read fluently with very good understanding. Written work is very well organised and levels of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally high. Pupils enter the school with well above average standards in English. Good teaching helps them to maintain these well above average standards until the end of Year 9. This represents good achievement. Against national figures in tests for each gender, boys generally do a little better than girls. Over the last four years test results have improved at the same rate as nationally.

72. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average. Pupils achieve well. In Years 10 and 11 pupils continue to make good progress. By Year 11 pupils are assured speakers in most situations. They are also very good listeners so that discussions are of a high quality. Written work is often equally impressive. Pupils have good vocabularies and use a wide range of expression. Tone and language are well modified according to the written task. Narrative writing is particularly strong because pupils write with originality and enthusiasm. However, pupils are less confident when analysing poetry and the quality of this work is less good.
73. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Those in small sets achieve well in all years. Those in mixed ability groups are generally well supported by teachers so that they make equally good progress.
74. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers actively involve pupils in most lessons so that they are challenged and learn well. Pupils enjoy this challenge and learn quickly through their contributions to lessons. In a very good lesson on figurative language Year 7 pupils analysed how Charles Dickens uses description. The teacher checked regularly that pupils of all capabilities understood the techniques identified before she moved them quickly on to writing their own descriptions employing similar techniques. All pupils made very good progress in developing their writing. In other less successful lessons pupils spend too long revising terms instead of pressing on to more interesting and challenging stages of learning. Teachers plan well but do not always think carefully about the new learning at the heart of each lesson. In an excellent lesson on J. B. Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* for Year 11 pupils the teacher had a clear focus on learning. His consideration of the needs of pupils of all capabilities was very evident in their high quality debate on characters in the play, and in their preparatory notes. The teaching assistant was fully involved in this planning and so was able to make a very valuable contribution to pupils' excellent learning. A lesson for Year 11 pupils on Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was less successful because it lacked a clear central thrust for learning to link tasks. As a result pupils were uncertain in their work and their motivation and progress suffered.
75. In general the attitudes of pupils in lessons are very good. They participate enthusiastically and collaborate very well. Work on developing the language and literacy skills of pupils is good. Pupils make widespread use of ICT in researching and presenting their work. Assessment is good, although procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils are not clearly established. Marking is inconsistent in the level of help it offers to pupils. Pupils are not always made aware of how they can improve their writing. Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside the classroom are good. The library is a stimulus to good learning for a substantial minority of pupils in all years.
76. Leadership and management are good overall. Programmes of lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9 have been improved. Teachers work well together as a team even though accommodation is unsatisfactory and does not encourage continual sharing of ideas. Well above average standards of work have been maintained since the previous inspection. Management has not yet achieved an even spread of the best practice in teaching and learning across all lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

77. Standards of literacy are well above average. Pupils generally have a wide range of skills in the use of language. Support for improving literacy still further is good in most subjects. In many lessons pupils have good opportunities to extend their speaking and listening so that the majority are confident and skilful communicators. Particularly good practice is evident in drama, science, geography and modern foreign languages. Support for reading is strong in English, science and geography. Small numbers of pupils make good use of the library to extend their reading. Writing for a variety of purposes is evident in many subjects and marking usually encourages pupils to improve their accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

French and German

Provision in modern languages is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and improving in both French and German; standards attained in GCSE examinations are high.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive, they clearly enjoy their learning.
- The department makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' spiritual development.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and enables pupils to achieve very well.
- There is scope to raise standards further in pupils' skills of listening and responding.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

78. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Improvement in the last year has been particularly significant; both standards at the end of Year 9 and GCSE results in French and German have risen significantly. The quality of teaching and learning appears to have improved significantly.
79. Standards of work seen in both French and German are well above average and improving. Pupils are confident linguists; writing, reading and listening skills are very well developed across all year groups. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are confident in responding to routine instructions and questioning. They write at length and in detail and have a very good understanding of grammar. They manipulate the languages effectively and grow in independence in doing so over time; they display a high degree of independence for example in using bilingual dictionaries and in identifying, explaining and applying patterns in the languages. However there is still scope to develop pupils' listening skills further and to increase their confidence in responding spontaneously.
80. In GCSE examinations in 2003 the proportion of candidates achieving A*-C grades was well above average in both French and German. All pupils did better in languages than they did in other subjects. 2004 results indicate a significant improvement in both languages with a much higher proportion of candidates achieving A and B grades than previously. The high standards achieved at the end of Year 9 also indicate a similar improving trend. This represents very good achievement in relation to prior attainment.
81. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning; they are very well behaved and display clear enjoyment in using the languages and in working independently of the teacher to identify patterns and find the meaning of new language. They work very well in pairs and independently; they respond enthusiastically to problem solving activities but some are reluctant to participate in oral work in front of the class and on a few occasions pupils are restless and lose concentration when tasks, particularly listening tasks, are too difficult.
82. Teaching and learning are very good. The quality of teaching is consistently good or better and enables pupils to achieve very well. Lessons are very well planned and activities are well sequenced, ensuring pupils build effectively on previous learning. Work is marked regularly and comments give clear guidance about how to improve. Teachers have a very good command of the languages they teach and use the languages very effectively in lessons to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills; pupils therefore benefit from very good role models. The language used is very well matched to pupils' experience and capabilities and this, coupled with clear presentations, enables pupils to rapidly understand and use new language themselves. Very effective questioning enables them to respond successfully and accurately to questions and higher attaining pupils are expected to interpret more complex language for others. The department makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual development; because of the strategies employed, pupils are confident in their own ability as effective linguists and grow in independence throughout the course. Pupils are routinely presented with a high level of challenge; both through the often exclusive use of the language being learned in lessons and through regular problem solving activities which challenge them to identify and explain patterns in the languages themselves. Pupils with special educational

needs are very well supported through very close liaison between teachers and the learning support assistant. ICT is used to good effect to support and extend learning but access to appropriate resources is sometimes difficult.

83. Pupils make the best progress when they are given the opportunity to practise informally; when this does not occur some pupils are reluctant to participate in class oral work and some give very brief responses. Opportunities are missed to develop listening techniques in formal listening activities and to raise standards further. Although support for speaking and reading is effective, lower attaining pupils sometimes find listening tasks difficult because they are not always given enough support to enable them to succeed.
84. Assessment is good; work is marked regularly and comments give clear guidance about how to improve, and pupils are involved in evaluating their own work although this is at a very early stage of development.
85. Leadership and management are good. The new head of department has succeeded in creating a strong team who work together very effectively to share ideas and develop a consistent approach. Strategic planning to redress the negative impact of recent staffing difficulties on standards and attitudes of the pupils involved has been particularly effective as the improvement in standards indicates. However at present, although longer term planning identifies appropriate areas for development, it is not sufficiently synthesised to raise standards further and provide an effective management tool. The department provides very good extra-curricular opportunities, for example the opportunity to learn Latin and Italian to GCSE, the opportunity to work with native speakers and trips abroad, as well as very good support for individuals after school and at lunchtimes. Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory; rooms are very cramped and this restricts the range and variety of learning opportunities which can be provided. But more importantly, acoustics are very poor and this makes listening and speaking activities very difficult.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because they are very well taught.
- Learning is very good because pupils respond very positively to demanding challenges set in lessons.
- Pupils display very mature attitudes towards their work.
- In a small number of lessons, higher attaining pupils should learn more than they do.

Commentary

86. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen and pupils now achieve more. The quality of teaching has improved.
87. In 2004, national test results at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average and also well above average for similar schools. The trend over the last three years is one of sustaining this level. Results from these tests agree with the standard of work seen during the inspection.
88. GCSE results in 2004 were well above average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well above average. All pupils gained

an A*-G grade. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results were much better than might be expected. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was much better than might be expected. Boys' results were slightly weaker than girls' results. Results in 2004 were similar to those for 2003. The trend in results over the last three years is slightly downwards.

89. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average; pupils achieve very well. There is no difference between the standards of girls' and boys' work. By Year 9 pupils can calculate the formula for a quadratic sequence and can apply Pythagoras' theorem. However, they cannot yet use trigonometric functions. Pupils entered the school with standards well above average and consolidated these standards with additional learning at this school.
90. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are also well above average; pupils again achieve very well. By Year 11, pupils can investigate inverse functions, factorise quadratic equations and calculate the standard deviation of a set of data. Pupils' very good attitudes and their ability to work independently, taking charge of their own learning, support their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other pupils because they play a full part in lessons.
91. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Teachers know their needs well. When supported by a learning support assistant they learn very well in class but there are instances when lack of such support means that the teacher cannot provide the amount of assistance needed. The most able pupils make very good progress because they are taught in groups where challenges are very demanding and they respond very well to these exacting demands.
92. Teaching and learning are very good. In a very good lesson for Year 9, learning about ratios was very good because pupils discussed suggestions. They were asked to consider whether a method proposed by one pupil would always work. This led to lively debate with other several other ideas being put forward. In a small proportion of lessons, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as much they should do because there is not as much more demanding work for them. In a very good lesson for Year 10, pupils learnt to solve quadratic equations very effectively because they were skilfully led by the teacher to combine previous parts of their learning without being told what to do. Pupils express their ideas very coherently and teachers draw upon these skills so that pupils very frequently learn by sharing the results of their explorations.
93. Assessment is good. Work is regularly marked but there is variety in the quality of information given to pupils. In the best examples, clear targets for the next steps arise very naturally from the work being assessed. In other instances pupils are not made aware of what makes the quality of work to be as it is.
94. Leadership and management are both good. The new head of department has already gained a good knowledge of each teacher of the subject through observation of teaching. He has sustained a good team approach. Newly-qualified teachers are well supported in their work. Examination results are analysed in depth to inform development of the subject. The decision to enter higher attaining pupils for GCSE at the end of Year 10 will allow these pupils to explore the subject in even greater depth. Mathematics makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. There are examples of good practice but opportunities for such work are too frequently missed. The subjects' contribution to the development of citizenship is also satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

95. Pupils are very competent in mathematics, allowing them very easily to meet all the demands made of them in their lessons. They readily recognise how the skills they have learnt can be employed in new situations. For example, in design and technology pupils have no difficulty in producing estimates of costs for their work. In some lessons, teachers consciously seek to develop or practise the mathematical skills of pupils whilst ensuring that such activities do not restrict learning within their subject. One such example occurred in music when pupils developed their knowledge of note values by doing subtraction sums using musical notation.
96. Discussions between the mathematics department and other subject areas ensure that pupils have the necessary mathematical skills when required for other work and that consistent methodology is used. Hence, for example, science teachers know that they are presenting graphs to Year 7 pupils in the same way that pupils use graphs in mathematics. Such good practice ensures that potential confusion is avoided.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning.
- Lesson planning and preparation are excellent.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
- An effective system of marking and for providing short-term learning targets has yet to be fully implemented.

Commentary

97. Improvement since the last inspection is good.
98. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well above average and even better than those in 2003, which were also well above average. There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school trend over the last three years is one of gradual improvement in line with the national trend. Test results in 2004 were much better than they were in similar schools and were helped by a very stable staffing situation.
99. In 2004 and in 2003, the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade at GCSE was well above average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was also above average. When results are compared to those in similar schools, GCSE results were also much better than average. Boys' results were better than girls' but the difference was not significant. Results in 2004 were even better than in 2003. The trend in results over the last three years is up. Pupils have achieved very well in examinations.

100. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average. By Year 9 all pupils have developed a keen interest in science and higher attaining pupils are able to question intelligently and sustain a scientific argument. Lower attaining pupils have a good understanding of scientific testing and are able to discuss the variables involved in experimental work with confidence. Pupils achieve very well. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are also well above average and pupils continue to achieve very well. By Year 11, pupils are able to plan experiments effectively and are able to explain scientific concepts to each other.
101. Teaching and learning are very good. Over three-quarters of the lessons seen were good or better and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. In Year 9, in a very good lesson, pupils were studying the relationship between forces and movement. Excellent planning meant the lesson proceeded at a brisk pace and skilful class management ensured that all members of the class were totally involved in the class demonstration. Pupils were constantly challenged and encouraged to put forward their ideas and did so with gusto. They responded to the enthusiasm of the teacher and enjoyed a very successful learning experience. In contrast in a satisfactory lesson in Year 9, although the lesson was well prepared and organised, the class management meant that the pace of the lesson and the active and effective participation of the pupils was not quite so good. In Year 10, a very good lesson was observed when the pupils were revising for their module test. An imaginative lesson plan, combined with real pace and enthusiasm from the teacher, saw the pupils working and learning at a very brisk pace; they were presented with a wide variety of activities, including learning by research, and a range of active learning methods including learning by teaching each other. The excellent planning of lessons was a very strong feature of teaching across the department and this high level of preparation means that teachers are able to focus on pupils and teachers' enthusiasm, shown by all members of the department, is transmitted to pupils and produces a strong and very positive learning response from them. Pupils are constantly challenged and teachers have high expectations.
102. Teachers and learning support assistants combine thoughtfully to make best use of support for the benefit of pupils. Where possible ICT is used to enhance teaching and learning and a good example was seen in a Year 9 lesson on velocity measurement, but pupils' ICT skills are restricted by inadequate access to equipment. Teachers' use of ICT is not yet fully developed either because facilities available to the department are limited. There is, for example, no fixed computer projection facility in any laboratory, which hinders wider use of ICT. Teachers make a very good contribution to the improvement of pupils' literacy skills; key words are emphasised throughout lessons and pupils' oral communication is developed by lesson planning which involves pupils in actively explaining ideas to the teacher and to each other.
103. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong, corporate identity in the department and a shared determination to provide the best science education possible. The more senior members provide very good role models and there is a lot of sharing of good practice. The assessment of pupils' progress is very good and pupils are aware of the standard they have reached. However the marking of exercise books to give short-term guidance and learning targets for pupils is variable and a department system is not yet fully implemented. Accommodation is good and the appearance of the laboratories is enhanced by good displays of both pupils' work and posters. However the geographical arrangement of the laboratories with many steps

and no real link between them makes the work of the invaluable technicians difficult. Pupils are very well provided with textbooks but the level of basic equipment is low with too few sets being available to enable pupils to carry out practical work in sufficiently small groups.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil attainment is well above average at the end of Year 9 and above average at the end of Year 11.
- Good teaching leads to good learning for pupils in all years.
- Teachers' assessment of work is good and the department makes effective use of peer and self-assessment.
- The department is well managed and work is well planned.
- Too few pupils, and no girls, have opted for the Applied GCSE ICT course.
- Provision of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT skills in other subjects is inconsistent.

Commentary

104. There is no discrete ICT provision in the sixth form so comments and judgements about ICT use by students have been included here so the full picture can be seen clearly. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Discrete ICT lessons are now provided for all students up to and including Year 11, and all Year 10 and Year 11 pupils follow a short GCSE course in ICT.
105. The school did not enter pupils for GCSE courses in 2003. In 2004, the results in the GCSE short course were well below those obtained in comparable subjects and below average when compared to those in the full GCSE in ICT for all schools. The proportion attaining A*-C grades was below average, and this represents well below average achievement. The school entered the whole year group for the higher tier of the examination in 2004, and a significant number of pupils consequently failed to obtain a grade.
106. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average. Pupils achieve well, and work seen during the inspection confirms the school's assessment at the end of Year 9. Standards on entry are above average and this, combined with pupils' positive attitudes to their work and good teaching, leads to good achievement. By Year 9, pupils can plan their work and confidently discuss concepts such as their choice of fields when designing a simple database, or the potential impact of text style and layout in designing a poster. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
107. Standards in Year 10 and 11 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. By Year 11 many pupils are able to plan and carry out extended projects and to write effective reports describing and illustrating what they have done with annotated screen shots. They are able to design databases, making appropriate selections of fields, data types

and validation rules. For the short GCSE course, some pupils are taught in single sex groups and where this was observed, the girls appeared to make better progress than the boys. This reflected a less positive attitude towards the course from some boys. The boys taking the Applied GCSE course in Year 10 made good progress in the one lesson observed.

108. Teaching and learning are good. In a good lesson in Year 7, pupils confidently took part in class discussion about the design features of a successful logo and then used a range of drawing tools to create their own logo. In a very good Year 9 lesson students were able to use technical language confidently when evaluating each other's designs for a poster and making constructive suggestions for improvement.
109. In a very good Year 11 lesson, pupils writing their report for a database design assignment annotated screen shots to explain their use of data types and validation rules. Where lessons were only satisfactory, teaching did not capitalise on pupils' high levels of prior attainment by setting tasks that challenged pupils to use and extend their ability, as in a mostly teacher-led lesson on data capture.
110. Assessment in ICT is good. Pupils know how well they are doing compared to national standards and can explain what they need to do to improve. There is good use of peer and self-assessment, especially in Years 7 to 9.
111. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good. The department is very well run. Planning, teaching, assessment, deployment of resources and the statutory curriculum are all good, but there has been only limited progress in inspiring pupils to pursue the study of ICT beyond the GCSE short course, and there is no discrete ICT provision in the sixth form.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

112. The use of ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. ICT resources are limited but well utilised, and plans for expansion are being implemented. A full audit of curricular opportunities has been carried out, but it does not yet identify specific ICT activities, except in a few subjects such as English and mathematics.
113. Pupils' competence in the use of ICT is good. They make good use of the supervised facilities made available to them by the ICT staff outside lesson times, but their skills are not fully utilised or developed within lessons.
114. In some departments, including business studies, English, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, music and physical education, opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT as part of their GCSE courses. There is also an online GCSE course in Latin where students use an interactive independent learning software package. A computer-assisted learning package is also utilised in several subjects and test and examination analysis indicates that it has a positive effect in English and in modern foreign languages.

115. There is little evidence of the use of ICT in art and design, geography, physical education (other than the GCSE course) and music. Access to resources is a limiting factor, as there is only one ICT room available for cross-curricular teaching and computers within departments are scarce. However, the ICT department welcomes students from other subjects into its lessons to make use of any spare computers. There is limited use of ICT in the special educational needs department, which has four computers. The use of ICT in design and technology is unsatisfactory. The department has 12 computers which are old and do not perform adequately; there is no provision for computer-assisted designing and manufacturing. .
116. Opportunities for sixth form students to use ICT in their work are satisfactory overall, but good in business studies and in music technology. Students often use the Internet for research, but they are only allowed to do so under supervision, and have inadequate facilities for private study.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have been improving.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.
- Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good, leading to very good achievement.
- National Curriculum assessments in Years 7 to 9 are not sufficiently accurate.

Commentary

117. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. High standards of teaching and achievement have been maintained and there has been an improvement in GCSE results and Year 9 assessment results.
118. GCSE results in 2003 were above average compared to those in all schools, with boys' results being better than girls'. The proportion gaining A* grades was below average. In 2004 results were much better than in 2003, being well above average with an average proportion of A* grades. The trend in results over the last three years is up, due to better analysis of grades enabling concentration on the weaknesses of individual pupils.
119. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average. Pupils achieve well from average geographical skills and knowledge on entry to the school. By Year 9 pupils can describe and explain geographical patterns, such as how weathering alters landscapes, and have already developed the skills of collecting and analysing data through fieldwork expeditions. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average, which indicates that achievement continues to be good, as pupils develop their analytical skills. By Year 11 they can draw reasoned conclusions from appropriate evidence and can assess the environmental impact of different forms of human activity, such as the development of the Cairngorms as a centre for tourism.

120. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because good provision is made for them in terms of different levels of work and extra attention in the classroom. The most able pupils also achieve well when they are challenged with more difficult work in lessons, though this provision is not consistent.
121. Teaching and learning are good overall and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. They are good in Years 7 to 9, very good in Years 10 and 11. All teaching was characterised by very good planning that took into account differing learning styles, and by good management of time and resources, but in Years 10 and 11 lessons were more tightly paced and more challenging with a greater variety of pupil activities. In a very good Year 11 lesson, thinking skills were developed when the teacher gave graphic illustrations of glaciers and then set the pupils to work out for themselves how the glacial process was working. In a good Year 8 lesson, the teacher produced a rock, an onion and a bottle of frozen water and invited pupils to suggest what the three had in common (weathering processes). However, in Years 7 to 9 there were occasions when learning would have been better served by more active experiences; for example when a Year 7 group was learning about the points of a compass they could have been given real compasses to work out the orientation of the school. Literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught as part of the geography curriculum, but not enough attention is given to using ICT as a learning tool, mainly because of difficulties accessing hardware when it is required.
122. Assessment is good overall. Continuous assessment by questioning and checking of work is a feature of all lessons. Work is regularly marked and pupils in Years 7 to 9 are aware of the criteria which define National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, there has been some inconsistency over the past few years in the moderation of assessments in Years 7 to 9, which calls into question their validity in some years.
123. At present the department lacks a head of department; the previous incumbent left at the end of last term and the new appointee does not start until after Christmas. The current acting head of department is managing well the day to day running of the department and is exercising satisfactory leadership in the circumstances. The capacity for further improvement under new leadership is good.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach high standards of attainment at Year 9 and Year 11.
- The pupils achieve very well across all years.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The strategies used in lessons do not always engage the most able pupils effectively.

Commentary

124. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. GCSE results in 2003 were well above the average compared with other schools. Results for 2004 indicate that the

proportion of pupils achieving at grades A* to C is very high when compared to the 2003 average. This includes a very high number attaining A*. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-G was above average. Standards, especially for the highest attainers, have improved significantly over the last three years. These standards are reflected by those seen during the inspection.

125. Standards in Years 7 to 9, based on teachers' assessments, are well above the average. These are confirmed by evidence from the inspection. Standards on entry are in line with national expectations. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
126. Pupils achieve very well. By Year 9 pupils can assess the contribution made by Disraeli, as prime minister, in his domestic and foreign policy. They can examine the outcomes of British imperial expansion during the 19th century. They use their language skills to write speeches defending issues of the period. By Year 11 pupils can identify the long and short term causes of World War Two; using sources they investigate the origins of appeasement and understand criticisms of this policy. They analyse well and explain their answers with care and precision. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The more able pupils also achieve very well over time. Pupils who may not use English as their first language also make very good progress. Pupils achieve well because of very effective teaching.
127. The attitudes of pupils in all years are very good. Pupils respond very well to their teachers. However, a small number of very high attaining pupils are not always positive and fully engaged in their learning. This is related to insufficient challenge for them from strategies departmental guidance provides to engage some of the most able pupils.
128. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons seen during the inspection were never less than good and frequently very good. Teachers have very detailed subject knowledge, coupled with a very good understanding of how most pupils learn. Teachers know their pupils well; consequently learning is very well matched to the capabilities of pupils of most abilities. Strategies for developing language skills are very well used so that pupils, especially the lower attainers, become confident learners. The pace of lessons for most pupils is brisk and challenging. Assessment procedures are very effective and pupils know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. The quality of marking, for historical knowledge, English expression and spelling, is very good and establishes high expectations for the pupils.
129. The quality of leadership and management is very good. A newly appointed, enthusiastic head of department has taken over a well established system. There is a consistent approach to teaching, a good programme of visits and a commitment to very high standards. The effective use of the school's management data to track the achievements of pupils helps to maintain those high standards. Support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is very well managed.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE textiles are well above average.
- The majority of pupils have a good attitude to the subject and are productive.
- Staffing difficulties in the past have had an adverse effect on standards and continue to cause problems.
- A lack of ICT resources affects standards.

Commentary

130. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Progress has been made in aspects of the work criticised last time, but staffing and resource issues still constrain standards.
131. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2004 shows pupils attain average standards. This is consistent with the work seen during the inspection and represents good achievement as pupils enter school with very little experience and below average standards in the subject.
132. Examination results in 2004 are higher than in 2003, when they were below average for the proportion of pupils achieving grades in the A*-C range. Overall they are not high enough. Pupils achieved well in textiles, food and resistant materials but did not achieve as they should in systems and control in 2003 and in graphic products in 2004. The proportion of pupils achieving grades in the A*-G range remains above average. Overall, girls attained better than boys, as was the case the previous year. This is because most boys chose options affected by staffing and resource difficulties; less than half of the year group chose the subject as an option with almost all girls choosing food or textiles.
133. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average and pupils of all abilities achieve well. They acquire a good knowledge of the design process which they are able to utilise in coursework later on. There is a good balance seen in the work between proficiency in designing and making. Pupils can work with a range of tools and materials but they have very limited opportunities to work on computers. Literacy and numeric skills are used effectively. Although pupils with special educational needs are supported in lessons and achieve similarly to other pupils, they could likely achieve higher if more learning support assistants were available in lessons.
134. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are average with satisfactory achievement overall but show considerable variation between the material areas. Standards and achievement are highest in textiles, where the best teaching was observed. They are lower in graphic products because the school does not have resources for computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) and this results in poorer outcomes than seen in most schools. A lack of suitable computers for other work also affects standards in all areas. Pupils are good at generating a range of possible ideas for their coursework and then developing the best one. They make good use of the design process to guide their thinking. Outcomes are generally satisfactory and a good proportion are better than this.

135. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed. Variation exists between the quality of teaching in the different material areas and between teachers. Pupils find most lessons interesting, respond with enthusiasm and are creative and productive. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to work in groups and pairs and this results in rapid learning because pupils develop their ideas by working co-operatively. In textiles there is good interaction between teacher and pupils, who develop knowledge and understanding at a good pace, and results are high. In some other lessons the pace is much slower with an over-reliance on work booklets. Pupils find the work less challenging and do not achieve as much. Teachers manage pupils well so that behaviour is good and a good learning environment exists. Teachers set meaningful homework which promotes independent learning. Assessment procedures are in place and all work is marked. In Years 7 to 9, marking is not always regular enough to promote rapid learning. In Years 10 and 11 pupils receive feedback on what to improve.
136. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has clear aims for the subject, which are shared by the rest of the team, who work well together. Staffing reductions and difficulties, some of which are ongoing, are holding back progress in implementing change. These also restrict the range of courses which can be offered in the main school and the subject cannot be offered in the sixth form. Other factors which continue to affect standards include the limited amount of technician support available and the lack of suitable storage for pupils' work. The accommodation is old and does not provide a stimulating environment. The department has good industrial links with Stansted Airport and Duxford museum which provide a focus for some modules. Technology clubs provide worthwhile extra-curricular provision. A few minor health and safety matters have been identified to the department.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design and music were inspected in full; drama was sampled.

137. Three lessons in **drama** were sampled. Teaching was very good and pupils made very good progress. Drama is only taught discretely to pupils in Year 7. In Years 8 and 9 it is taught within the English curriculum. Standards of work by Year 9 are average and by Year 11 are well above average. Drama is a new GCSE subject on the curriculum. Results for 2004 were average compared with those in all schools. Leadership and management of the department are very good. A very good programme of drama activities beyond lessons enriches the learning of many pupils.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are very high.
- Very good teaching has led to very good achievement for current pupils.

- The very good working relationship between teachers and pupils leads to a productive atmosphere for learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Lack of resources for ICT limits opportunities for pupils to use it in their work.

Commentary

138. Improvement in provision for art since the last inspection has been good. GCSE results in 2004 were very high and, although results were lower than in 2003, this still represents good achievement for pupils. Revised teaching methods and course content have helped to narrow the gap in performance between boys and girls. 2004 teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils were also lower but still remain well above average. Recent staff changes have strengthened teaching and inspection findings indicate that the very strong record of high results will continue.
139. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average. Pupils enter the school with varied experiences and abilities in art. They make good progress and by Year 9 their achievement is good. Higher attaining pupils have detailed sketchbooks that form a good record of developing ideas. Where these are used well, they contain evidence of experimentation with various media and techniques, good annotation and a high standard of observational drawing. Year 9 pupils are able to use line, tone, colour and texture with skill and sensitivity and there is a marked progression from their earlier, less sophisticated, work. Pupils are introduced to the work of established artists from the outset of the course and, by Year 9, are able to recognise key artistic styles and adapt them to their own work. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs often find this difficult but, nevertheless, are able to produce worthwhile artwork because of their interest in the work and the good support they receive.
140. During Years 10 and 11 pupils' technical skills and artistic understanding develop rapidly. Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. Topics are set in a variety of social and cultural contexts, allowing pupils to explore the relationship between art and society. Pupils draw inspiration from the patterns, colours and techniques from other countries as well as their own native background culture. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Higher attaining pupils annotate their work with pertinent comments that reveal a perceptive insight into the reasoning behind it. They can discuss their work with understanding. The best sketchbooks reveal quality research and experiment. Various primary and secondary sources are used, including the Internet. Occasionally Internet research is not always edited, which reduces its value in developing critical evaluation skills.
141. Teaching is very good overall and the very high level of pupil involvement in art reflects the enthusiasm and expertise of the current team of teachers. Constant interaction with pupils has established very good relationships and a positive learning atmosphere. Lessons are very well planned, have a clear structure and pupils' individual work is managed in a purposeful way. Assessment procedures are good and include opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. Whilst pupils receive good verbal feedback on the progress of their work they are not always clear about their target grades. Resources for ICT are not sufficient for pupils to use

this as an additional tool during lessons. The effects of good technician support are minimised by too little time allocated to the job.

142. Very good leadership and management have been key factors in the high standards achieved. There is a clear vision for the value of art in the personal development of pupils and this is reflected strongly in the way schemes of work are planned and taught. The curriculum provides a broad range of artistic experiences but three-dimensional work in Years 7 to 9 is not prominent enough. Pupils' experience of art is enriched by participation in a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good by Year 9 and very good by Year 11.
- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- Opportunities available beyond lessons are good and are enhanced by developments promoted by the school's performing arts special college status.
- Current teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are not as strong as they were and pupils have no access to subject specific ICT.

Commentary

143. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, for although recent standards and results are better and assessment and monitoring are now having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, current teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are not as strong as they were.
144. Despite pupils' wide range of previous experience in music their overall attainment on entry is close to the national average. Teachers' assessments of pupils in Year 9 in 2004 show all pupils were at least meeting national expectations. In work seen, standards by Year 9 are above average. However, poor fingering techniques and insufficient instruments restrict the development of good keyboard performing by Year 9.
145. Recent GCSE results are well above average overall although the proportion of A* and A grades is about average. GCSE results include some talented pupils who enter the examination one year earlier than normal. Work seen confirms that standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average and moving towards well above average for many pupils. Pupils in Year 10 have the potential to gain a higher proportion of A* and A grades when they take GCSE. Pupils of all capabilities achieve well overall, both lower and higher attaining pupils having benefited from carefully adapted tasks, good support and challenging opportunities. Achievement is good by Year 9 and very good by Year 11,
146. Pupils' very good achievement indicates good and sometimes very good teaching and learning in recent years. However current staff Years 7 to 9 are new and inexperienced. Teaching and learning in these years are currently satisfactory overall. Learning is insufficiently reinforced and consolidated by probing questioning and testing pupils' understanding through providing opportunities for them to apply previously gained skills and knowledge in problem solving. A lack of pace in teaching sometimes leads to occasional lapses in pupils' otherwise very good behaviour. The good and sometimes very good experienced teaching seen in Years 10 and 11 promotes more rigorous learning, stretches pupils well, forces them to work hard and take responsibility for their progress, and develops independent study skills. Because teachers value and respect their views and ideas, pupils gain the confidence to realise them. Feedback in lessons, opportunities for peer assessment, evaluation and formal assessment all contribute to the good aspects of learning. There is positive emphasis on key skills, especially the use

and understanding of technical terms, although subject specific ICT is not yet available to Years 7 to 9, despite being used well for composing and research in Years 10 and 11.

147. Pupils have access to a good range of musical activities beyond lessons, including individual instrumental lessons and good opportunities to perform in ensembles, assemblies, concerts and musical theatre. The schools' specialist college status in performing arts is enhancing pupils' experience through professional and community activities. Overall, music contributes well to pupils' personal development.
148. During the inspection the head of department was on leave. Evidence of high aspirations, realised through successful strategic and curriculum planning, and good enrichment opportunities, resulting in very good overall achievement, indicate good leadership and management. The good custody and management of the subject by the acting head of department are efficient and effective. Accommodation is mixed; the second teaching room has no facilities for pupils to perform or compose music, is depressing and is subject to too much external sound interference to be suitable for music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils attained at least a 'C' grade pass in the 2004 GCSE course; this represents very good achievement.
- Pupils achieve well by the end of Years 9 and 11 in the compulsory course as a result of good teaching.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the compulsory course.
- Good leadership and management provide a purposeful focus, ethos and direction for the subject.
- A lack of indoor accommodation severely restricts the breadth of curricular activities that can be offered.

Commentary

149. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Since 2003, there has been new leadership and management as well as new staffing of the department. The upward trend in the proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grade passes in GCSE over the past three years has been maintained, as have the positive aspects mentioned in the previous report.
150. GCSE results in 2004 were high; all pupils attained at least a C grade pass. Approximately half of the thirty-one pupils entered attained A* or A grade passes. This continued the rising trend in results over the previous years. The higher number of boys taking the course does not make it possible to comment on the difference in boys' and girls' results.
151. Standards in Year 9 are average; pupils achieve well in relation to their below average capabilities on entry to the school. By Year 9, all groups of pupils have acquired a range of individual skills and are able to apply these in games and dance. Most pupils competently evaluate their own and others' work. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average; all groups of pupils achieve well and have continued to build on the skills and techniques learned in Years 7 to 9, particularly team games. Across all years,

in the compulsory course, pupils have developed well their understanding of the principles and procedures for warm-up; the quality of older pupils' work is particularly good. Standards seen in the GCSE course are above average – all groups of pupils are achieving well. In Year 11 theory lessons, for example, pupils show a good understanding of the issues surrounding the provision for sport at a national level. Pupils are competent in the use of ICT in their work.

152. Teaching and learning are good. Relevant starter activities immediately engage pupils. Learning objectives are made clear, thus pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers have a good command of the activities being taught and have a consistent approach as regards behaviour and discipline and in the ability of pupils to work to their best. Effective breakdown and demonstration of skills, for example, in a Year 11 hockey and rugby union lesson, ensured pupils understood further what was expected of them. Lessons are well structured, purposeful and provide for progression and challenge. Pupil involvement in lessons, for example, pair, small group work and peer evaluation, enlivens the overall quality of learning and deepens their knowledge and understanding. Attitudes and behaviour are very good; pupils clearly respect the ethos within which the subject is taught, which enhances the quality of learning and promotes a very good atmosphere in lessons. Teachers circulate well and effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils aware of their capabilities and what they need to do to improve. However, the quality of marking of pupils' GCSE theory work is inconsistent because pupils are not always told what they need to do to improve. Some pupils would benefit from more guidance in structuring the presentation of their theory work, particularly in Year 10. In the compulsory lessons, there is insufficient use of ICT to effectively support pupils' learning.
153. Good leadership and management provide a purposeful focus and direction for the relatively inexperienced department in order to improve standards and provision even further. Leadership and management are self-evaluative; there is a strong team ethos and a shared commitment to improve provision. The department has recognised that assessment procedures have not involved sufficient moderation at the end of Year 9 and, in consequence, have been a little inflated.
154. The range of extra-curricular provision throughout the year extends pupils' learning and includes both recreational and competitive opportunities. Extensive on-site playing fields enable the provision of a wide range of games and activities throughout the year. However, the present lack of indoor accommodation and external lighted areas means the breadth of extra-curricular provision is limited. This also makes it difficult to meet statutory requirements and severely limits the range of overall curricular activities that can be offered. Intelligent use of neighbouring facilities has mitigated problems whilst the new build at this school is awaited. During the previous school year, association football and netball teams were successful in district competitions. A few individual pupils have achieved district and county representative honours, some attend sporting academies and one pupil has achieved national representative honours in rugby union.

Comment on general sporting provision in the school

155. Approximately 66 per cent of pupils have access to two hours of quality physical education provision per week. This is below the government's target of 75 per cent. Further opportunities are, however, provided through a range of extra-curricular provision throughout the year and the opportunity for older pupils to opt for the GCSE course. As yet, the department is not involved in the Schools Sport Partnership (SSP) programme nor is it involved in the Physical Education School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCLS). The physical education department does, though, have established links with local community sporting organisations that are of benefit to pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

156. One lesson of business education was seen in Year 10. Teaching and learning were both very good. Standards were well above average and pupils achieved very well. Pupils' attitudes were excellent and the most able mathematicians and skilled ICT users willingly helped any of their peers who needed some support. Pupils also demonstrated good independent working skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for pupils' personal development and citizenship was sampled by the observation of four lessons, the examination of subject documentation and discussion with the co-ordinator, form teachers and pupils.

157. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have a dedicated fortnightly lesson, as well as opportunities to explore relevant issues and develop skills through a number of other subjects, notably science, music, geography, and physical education. There are also minor and major 'events' which make use of visiting speakers and experts. During the inspection a talk by a visitor to Year 7 was excellent. In addition, pupils are encouraged to participate in many activities such as the key stage and school councils and religious, voluntary, charity, cultural and community initiatives. This good scheme of work for personal, social and health education and citizenship meets statutory requirements and represents good breadth and balance in terms of promoting pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The good quality of teaching in the four lessons seen, and pupils' mature and intelligent responses to it, means that attainment of skills and understanding related to personal development are generally above average through Years 7 to 11. Unusually, the school provides an examination in citizenship with questions contributed from all participating subjects; all pupils in Year 9 in 2003 gained at least nationally expected levels of attainment in their citizenship examination and they achieved very well. The scheme of work is led and managed well, although the co-ordinator's own teaching commitments make it difficult for him to monitor teaching and learning in the dedicated lessons.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, nine 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 for which there were 5 or more candidates.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses – almost all students aggregate grades within an Advanced level course so few grades appear here.

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Communication studies	5	100	86.4	60.0	23.8	48.0	32.0
Other social studies	6	100	69.7	16.7	16.7	35.0	24.1

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	5	100.0	98.6	60.0	50.2	92.0	87.5
Biology	9	67.7	96.4	22.2	39.2	48.9	78.6
Business studies	8	100.0	98.7	25.0	36.87	77.5	80.1
English literature	16	100.0	99.5	43.8	46.5	91.3	86.5
General studies	35	100	97.8	28.6	31.0	73.1	73.1
Geography	11	100	98.7	36.4	44.5	76.4	84.0
History	13	100.0	99.0	15.4	44.6	73.8	84.6
Mathematics	12	100.0	96.7	100.0	55.6	113.3	88.8
Other social studies	18	100.0	97.4	55.6	42.7	88.9	81.8
Physics	8	100.0	96.7	75.0	44.6	100.0	81.7
Religious studies	15	100.0	98.8	53.3	46.7	90.7	85.6
VCE Business	8	100	61.5	0.0	14.6	61.0	60.1

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English literature. A Year 12 **GCSE English 'retake'** group was sampled; students are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their lack of general knowledge is impeding their understanding of the course.

English literature

Provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students' attitudes are very positive.
- Students' achievement is good.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

158. Standards of work in Year 12 vary from below to well above average and are average overall. This variation stems from students' prior attainment in English literature at GCSE. Standards in Year 13 are above average; students display confident understanding and are able to discuss at a high level of sophistication.
159. Achievement is good. Good teaching and assessment ensures that students make good progress in lessons and over time. Examination results are above average and, in comparison with prior attainment, illustrate good added value. Almost all students who participate in AS level English literature courses go on to A-level in the subject. The present Year 12 students with lower prior attainment are experiencing some difficulty in writing and discussion. Some do not possess the analytical skills or the language needed for the close study of literary texts. The more able students in Year 12 do display the kind of sophistication required and showed a very mature approach to the reading of T. S. Eliot's poem, 'The Waste Land'.
160. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is good overall as a consequence of the planning and preparation for lessons. However, in lessons where teaching was judged to be only satisfactory, planning and preparation did not take into consideration the mix of ability in the group and, consequently, expectations were too high for some students. Assessment procedures have been developed to ensure that students regularly have feedback on work in progress in tutorials. This is having a positive effect, especially on the lower attaining Year 12 students who need to develop their confidence. Students' very positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve at a higher level than might be expected.
161. Leadership is good. The head of department provides a good role model for teachers in the department in conscientious preparation and careful planning of lessons. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The skills and knowledge of the team are being extended to allow staff to gain experience in teaching at sixth form level. The head of department is very supportive of inexperienced staff. Management is satisfactory. The changes in intake have led to discussion about possible alternative courses within English for students who may not be as academically able as their peers. However, insufficient consideration has been given to the present Year 12 group and their specific needs. This is illustrated in the unsuitable choice of texts (where the examination criteria allow) and inadequate preparation of suitable supplementary resources to enable the lower attaining Year 12 students to tackle the course better.
162. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Students do not have a base for English and were seen in a variety of locations during the inspection. These included a science laboratory, the ICT suite and a variety of classrooms. The timetable sometimes meant that a change of room was necessary during a double period lesson. The imminent

rebuild should address accommodation issues in English. Resources are also limited and do not provide sufficient opportunity for independent study.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

163. There is very good provision for literacy in the main school and this is continued in the sixth form. There is an emphasis on the appropriate use of specialist language and expression in subjects. Standards of literacy are very high.

MATHEMATICS

The focus of the inspection was mathematics but **further mathematics** was also sampled. In a good lesson, students achieved well whilst learning how to use the second derivative to determine the nature of turning points of curves. Students learnt well because they were keen to form and test conjectures. Standards of students' work in this lesson were above average.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well as a result of consistently very good teaching.
- Teachers have very high levels of mathematical knowledge.
- Students develop their ability to take charge of their own learning.
- Further mathematics allows students to explore the subject in depth but more should be done to inform students intending to study the subject beyond the age of 18 of the importance of taking that option.

Commentary

164. A-level results in 2003 were very high when compared to those in all schools. All students gained an A or B grade. Students did much better in mathematics than they did in their other subjects. Male and female students achieved equally well. Results in 2004 are not as good as in 2003 because students started the course with lower levels of attainment. There has been no discernible trend over the last three years because of differences in the nature of the students taking the course.

165. Standards of work are above average; students achieve very well. Too few female students currently take the subject to make any comparison of the relative achievements of male and female students. Similarly, no valid comment can be made on the achievement of students from minority ethnic groups. Students in Year 13 use iterative techniques to solve equations and can calculate the probability of an event from a probability density function. However, they do not always immediately recognise how one part of their learning can be applied in a different area of learning. Students entered the sixth form with average standards. The most able students make very good progress because they take further mathematics, allowing them to explore the subject in greater depth. However, not all students are made fully aware of the importance of taking further mathematics for those who wish to continue with the subject to the highest levels at university. This greatly restricts their choice of university course.

166. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. The consistency of the standard of teaching is a prime reason why students achieve as well as they do. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and how to teach each component of the course. In a very good lesson, Year 13 students responded very well to the demanding challenge they faced at the beginning of the lesson to solve a type an equation which they had not previously met. They were not given any suggestions by the teacher but their high levels of independence and confidence led to them quickly formulating ideas. Ideas were developed through mature discussions with fellow students. Teachers use homework very well, frequently asking students to undertake research to prepare for a coming lesson. This makes very good use of the time available in lessons.
167. Assessment is very good. Students are regularly provided with very informative comment so that they have very clear information on the progress they are making and know of any improvements required. They respond very maturely to any suggestions made.
168. Leadership and management are both good. The new head of department has ensured that the sound legacy he inherited has been sustained. High expectations are held by all teachers of the subject and student performance is closely monitored. The changes of examination course have been well managed.
169. The previous report contained insufficient information to form a basis for the evaluation of what improvement has been made since that time.

Mathematics across the curriculum

170. Students have levels of mathematical skills which ensure that they are very well equipped to meet the demands of their studies. In business studies, students have no difficulties when compiling accounts. In biology and in sociology they process statistical data accurately, knowing which measures to use. In history, students draw upon numerical sources with confidence.

SCIENCE

The main focus was on biology but several lessons were sampled in physics and chemistry. Both **physics** and **chemistry** groups were well organised; teaching and learning varied between satisfactory and very good. The standards of students' work were between below and well above average.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, leading to very good learning.
- Lesson planning is excellent.

- Students' attitudes are very positive.

Commentary

171. Since the last report the department has made good progress. The numbers of students taking advanced biology have risen and standards are now above average and students achieve very well. 2003 examination results were above average and 2004 results appear better.
172. Overall teaching is very good; one excellent lesson was seen. Excellent lesson planning ensures that the time in lessons is managed well and the approach throughout by teachers is imaginative and enthusiastic. Students reflect this enthusiasm and lessons are very positive learning experiences. In an excellent lesson, students were challenged to learn about a topic in small groups and then to explain their topic to other students. This 'learning by teaching' was very effective, students were actively involved in the process and the skilful management of the teacher ensured that this active learning proceeded at a brisk pace. This technique was seen to very good effect in other lessons, all of which contained a very good variety of learning experiences. The relationship between students and teachers is a very good one of mutual respect and this too helps to ensure an effective learning atmosphere. Students are willing to put forward ideas in discussion and are not anxious about asking questions over topics they find difficult. Written work shows students care about presentation and content and also evidence of good monitoring from teachers.
173. Leadership and management are very good. There is close cooperation between the two teachers taking the course and this is recognised and appreciated by students. Students are well provided with textbooks and practical resources are adequate although resources are stretched by the large size of the AS group. Assessment of work is very thorough and students are aware of the standard they are achieving and what needs to be done to raise that standard. Students carry out research using the Internet and are guided to appropriate websites by teachers. There is no separate laboratory provision for students, which may hinder some experimentation, but the overall accommodation is good.

HUMANITIES

History and sociology were the focus subjects; geography and government and politics were sampled.

174. In the one Year 13 **geography** lesson seen, teaching was good as the four students considered the pros and cons of "urban sprawl" in different parts of the world. The teacher used his topic knowledge to elicit information from the students through carefully structured questioning that extended their vocabulary and thinking skills and enabled good learning and achievement. Students' attitudes in class were very good, showing enjoyment of the subject. Standards are average; groups have been too small for reliable statistical analysis of results but these have been approximately in line with national performance. Last year most of the five A-level students gained C grades.
175. A small number of students take **government and politics** at AS and A-levels. Students achieve well, are responsive to their teachers, and enjoy their learning. Students in Year 13 can discern the changes in Conservative policies since the 1950s. Teaching is effective in matching the learning strategies to the capabilities of the

pupils. Effective use is made of ICT in Year 12 to help students understand the underlying concepts in the study of government. These students begin to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the parliamentary system.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is high.
- Students achieve well.
- The inability, of some pupils, to take responsibility for their own learning adversely affects their achievement.

Commentary

176. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average. The number of students taking the subject fluctuates from year to year and this makes comparisons between years difficult; there are currently 6 students in Year 13, but 23 in Year 12. 2003 A-level results were average overall but a higher proportion of pupils got A and B grades. There were no AS examination entries in 2003. In 2004, examination standards appear above average at A-level. At AS level, standards also appear above, but with a very small entry. Evidence from the inspection confirms these high standards. Most students complete courses they begin in Years 12 and 13. The achievement of students in Years 12 and 13 is good and students in Year 13, for example, understand that the Great Famine of 1845-1850 was a turning point in Irish history and that the British political parties at the time changed their ideologies in order to deal with the consequences.

177. The quality of teaching is very good. The quality of learning is good, because despite the efforts of the teachers some students find it difficult to take responsibility for their own learning. This results in some students coming to lessons unprepared though most are positive and interested in their courses. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and are very able to structure learning to the varied abilities of the students. English language skills are carefully developed so that students can express their ideas succinctly. Assessments are used very effectively to help students raise their achievement. Students and teachers use ICT effectively to make presentations and stimulate learning.

178. The leadership and management of the sixth form courses are very good. There is a consistent approach to teaching and a commitment to achieving high standards. The newly appointed head of department has successfully continued the existing very good management practice. History provision at sixth form was not reported upon at the last inspection.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students demonstrate very good achievement.
- Very good teaching and excellent background knowledge result in very good learning.
- Very good management supports the introduction and development of the subject.
- The subject needs permanent accommodation and a base.

Commentary

179. The subject was introduced in Sept 2003 and no students have yet taken the A-level examination or aggregated their AS level grades. However, the four entrants gained A to D grades between them.

180. Standards of work are above average overall for a significant proportion of the current students in both Years 12 and 13, with no apparent differences between the achievement of males and females. This demonstrates good achievement; students have had no previous sociology experience. Early in Year 12, students have already gained a sound grasp of sociological terminology, which is being skilfully introduced to them by their teacher through reading and discussion. Year 13 students could identify and understand a Marxist explanation of the causes of crime, and contrast this with other perspectives.

181. Teaching is very good. Planning is thorough and lessons move forward at a fast pace, wasting no time, so that students learn very well. The teacher has excellent background knowledge of all aspects of the topics under discussion and this enables him to challenge students' input and extend their thinking. Work is thoroughly assessed both by the teacher and by students of each other, so that they can learn from each other's mistakes. Pair and group work are very successful because students are mutually supportive and respect each other's achievements. Occasionally the teacher does too much telling so that learning becomes passive, but on the whole lessons are lively and interesting experiences.

182. Leadership and management of this newly-established subject are very good, with comprehensive documentation in place. The workload of the head of department is unnecessarily increased by the scattered nature of the teaching rooms; on one occasion during the week the group had to change classrooms in the middle of a double lesson. Resources are good, but the subject lacks the specialist library needed for full development of a sixth form subject. Students' attitudes are excellent; they enjoy the subject and the insights it offers into society, and most work to the best of their ability. Retention from AS to A2 level is good, and group sizes are growing as the subject increases in popularity. Because the subject was not inspected in the previous inspection there is no evidence by which to judge improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Drama and theatre studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that all students make rapid progress in lessons.
- Students have good opportunities beyond lessons to develop their knowledge of theatre and their skills in performance.
- Very good leadership and management have led to the development of a popular and successful course.
- Students have great enthusiasm for drama and work very hard.

Commentary

183. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The A-level course was formerly taught to small numbers of students outside the timetabled day. Drama is now a popular and expanding course and an important part of the performing arts provision.
184. Results in GCE A-level examinations in recent years have been close to national averages, although numbers of candidates have been too small to be statistically significant.
185. The standards of work seen are well above average. Students achieve very well. They make very good progress in lessons and show very good gains on standards of work at the beginning of the course. By Year 13 students are very confident when working with texts. Background knowledge of the history of theatre is also very good. They are very resourceful when working together on scripted and improvised scenes. They show good control of language, sound stage craft and confident use of movement. When evaluating each other's performances they are perceptive and constructive. All students are comfortable in a directorial role. Students have very good knowledge of theatrical terms. They bring excellent attitudes to lessons. They work very hard and with great enthusiasm. Written work logs are thorough and detailed.
186. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have excellent rapport with students based on very high expectations and mutual respect. Teachers plan lessons very well to ensure that all students are fully involved in shaping and directing activities. As result they learn very quickly and find lessons stimulating. Excellent knowledge of the subject enables teachers to choose appropriately challenging and engaging activities. Lessons are fast-moving and teachers enthusiastic. They plan lessons carefully to ensure that activities are varied and that students are fully engaged. Few students fail to complete either Year 12 or 13. Assessment is thorough and teachers track the progress of students carefully. Marking is detailed to indicate the standard of work and show students how to improve.
187. Very good leadership and management have been instrumental in the successful development of this expanding course. A very clear shared vision ensures a common direction for all work in the department. Students have a very clear overview of examination requirements. They have good information in advance before starting the course and make rapid progress in Year 12. Students enjoy drama and for many it is a favourite subject.

Film studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is enthusiastic and teachers plan and prepare lessons very well.
- Very thorough assessment helps students achieve very well.
- Students show very good attitudes to the work in hand.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

188. AS level examination results in recent years are broadly average but show very good achievement for the relatively few students completing their studies at the end of that course. Standards of work in Year 12 at AS level are above average. Students come to this subject, which was acquired as part of the media element of their English language GCSE examination with only limited knowledge of it. Some students have modest examination results in English language. They achieve very well as a result of the way in which teachers very carefully plan the elements of the course to build up students' knowledge and understanding. Year 12 students are beginning to use specialist terms and ideas well in their discussions. The introduction of the A-level course in September 2004 consolidates students' prior learning. Year 13 students are developing a sophisticated understanding of texts and using specialist terminology with real confidence.
189. Teaching and learning are both very good. Teachers' excellent planning ensures that teaching and study time is used very effectively and very good assessment helps students make rapid progress. Carefully marked and annotated written work clearly identifies to students where they need to make better progress and what they need to do to raise the standard of their work. In lessons, the standard of discussion is high and challenging questions help make students think and gain understanding of ideas and techniques. Teachers' choice of texts for study is relevant and meaningful to students; the texts generate enthusiasm as they relate to students' general knowledge about, and interest in, films.
190. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong commitment to improving standards and developing film studies further. The introduction of the A-level course provides continuity for students who have successfully completed their AS level course. There is very effective monitoring of students' progress which students appreciate.
191. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. There is no permanent teaching base and students do not always have access to television and video recorders or DVD players. Consequently opportunities for independent study and, sometimes, whole class study are restricted. The very good progress that students make, given the paucity of resources, is a credit to their very good attitudes and to teachers' hard work.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievements in lessons are very good as a result of very good teaching and learning.
- Standards of work seen are above average.
- The very positive attitudes of students results in a very positive learning atmosphere in lessons.
- Good leadership and management provide a purposeful focus, ethos and direction for the subject.

Commentary

192. There were no accredited sixth form courses in physical education at the time of the previous inspection. In 2005, the first group of students will sit the GCE advanced level examination.
193. In Year 13, standards of work seen are above average and students achieve very well in lessons. Clearly structured lessons and focussed teaching have ensured that Year 13 students have a good grasp of, for example, sports related anatomy and physiology. The popularity of the post-16 examination course has grown with a much-increased take-up in the present Year 12. These students, for example, are developing very well their knowledge and understanding of the impact of colonialism on indigenous societies.
194. Teaching and learning are very good. Crisp and relevant starter activities immediately engage students and learning objectives are shared with them; thus they know what is expected of them. Teachers have a very good command of the units of work being taught and are enthusiastic in their approach. Lessons are well planned and structured with pace, progression and challenge. In a Year 13 sports anatomy and physiology lesson, a variety of practical activities involved students in individual, pair and small group work. On occasion, though, the pace flags a little because of the need for students to take notes at the start of lessons. Students are encouraged to undertake individual research and use the Internet to do so. As a result, many have produced good quality information booklets, using ICT, which they share with their peers. Students appreciate the very good quality marking of their work as it informs them as to what they need to do to improve. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive and they comment very favourably on the quality of support and guidance teachers provide for them throughout the course. Homework is consistently set and extends students' learning.
195. Very good leadership and management provide a purposeful focus and direction for the subject in order to develop post-16 provision further and ensure high standards at the end of Year 13.
196. Other than examination courses, there are few opportunities for most students to take part in formal physical activities. Present timetable arrangements mean that not all students can attend designated sixth form sports time because of other commitments. Students comment that a further knock-on effect is that Wednesday afternoon school fixtures for sixth formers have had to be cancelled.

BUSINESS

Provision in business education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of business studies courses caters very well for the different aptitudes and abilities of students.
- Teaching and the management of students' vocational assessments are very good.
- Good leadership and management are providing positive guidance for development of the subject.
- Results for all courses have shown an improving trend and, overall, students' achievement is good.
- Standards for current Year 13 GCE students are average and achievement is satisfactory.

Commentary

197. In addition to AS and A2 Business Studies courses, the school also offers students the option of an AVCE double award business course and an NVQ course in business administration. Together these courses provide for the wide range of academic and vocational aspirations of students. Results for all courses have been above average and show a rising trend. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

198. 2004 results for NVQ students, the only available results for this course, show that all entrants gained a pass grade. Current students are compiling detailed and comprehensive folders that meet all the assessment criteria. These indicate that students have a broad understanding of workplace procedures gained from their placements with local companies. Good access to computers has enabled students to develop and use good ICT skills. They are able to relate their workplace experiences to the demands of the course and write extended accounts of what they have learnt. Assessment is an integral part of the course and is very thorough. Students benefit from the very good advice and expertise of a recently qualified NVQ assessor. Students value her advice and the efficient way in which she oversees their work.

199. The AVCE course has had good completion rates and has resulted in above average achievement for students. In work and lessons seen, standards are average. Year 12 students understand the key concepts relating to, for example, business communications, and can give accurate answers relating to this topic. Students' ICT skills are sufficient to enable them to access appropriate business related web sites and to complete set tasks relating to, for example, a product life cycle or market strategies. Where students are required to work in groups, discussion is usually to the point and verbal reports given confidently. Year 13 students have a good understanding of business terminology and use this with understanding in class discussion. Overall, students' achievement is good.

200. 2003 results for A-level business studies gave students an average points score just below the national figure. Students' achievement, however, was good. Provisional results for 2004 indicate an improvement and continued good achievement. AS level results were not as good as predicted for some students and this has had a consequent effect on their Year 13 work. They are currently working at average standards with satisfactory achievement. The department has analysed the reasons for poor examination performance and has taken steps to remedy it. The department's

own value added analysis for these students indicates a comparatively low starting point with some students having lower than expected GCSE grades. Although Year 13 students often have a good understanding of individual business concepts, they do not readily apply them to produce a coherent picture of business practice. For example, good questioning in one well taught lesson elicited that students understood graphs well enough to calculate a profit margin from a break-even graph, but they did not immediately recognise that this was an application of knowledge they already had. In contrast, students in Year 12 have a much more appropriate range of entry qualifications and, consequently, higher predicted grades. This is reflected in their course folders, which contain detailed notes and well written essays and case studies. Achievement for these students is good.

201. Teaching, overall, is very good. Some satisfactory teaching was seen. The most successful lessons are characterised by excellent planning which enables course materials to be taught in a structured way. Confident, knowledgeable teaching enables teachers to develop good relationships with students. This creates an atmosphere where students can develop independent learning skills. Most students are positive about the benefits of their chosen course. The small amount of satisfactory teaching does not enable students to engage fully with the lesson content. Assessment procedures on vocational courses are very strong and guide students' work well. AS and A2 students are assessed well but procedures for informing students of their progress towards target grades are not strong enough. Some students are unclear of their target grades.
202. Leadership and management are good. There is a broad vision for business education and for its benefits to the personal development of students. The department makes a good contribution to the school's overall policy for work-related learning and good contact with business and industry enables students to undertake relevant placements.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

