

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST EDWARD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOL**

Romford, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102349

Headteacher: Mr Giles Drew

Lead inspector: Terence Parish

Dates of inspection: 7 – 11 February 2005

Inspection number: 268922

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:	1201
School address:	London Road Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM7 9NX
Telephone number:	01708 730462
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Richard Fishleigh
Date of previous inspection:	16/11/98

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school achieved Language College status immediately before the inspection. The number of pupils is a little higher than average. It is a very popular school and attracts pupils from a wide area as it is the only Church of England comprehensive within it. 180 pupils are admitted each year on the strength of their Church affinity and an additional 30 local pupils are accepted who have no particular connections with the Church. Socio-economically the school is broadly average, though parents show very strong commitment to their children's education. Standards on entry are variable but never less than average. End of Year 6 tests in English, mathematics and science were certainly above average for the current Year 7 but other tests, now and historically, show general attainment on entry to be most often average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of their particular needs, is below the national average; there is a broad range of special needs. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is very low. An increasing proportion of pupils are black British African, black British Caribbean, or black from other backgrounds. There is very low mobility; pupils stay at the school as long as they can, a few join late, increasingly so in the sixth form.

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.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15465	T Parish	Lead inspector	
12775	J Goodchild	Lay inspector	
7926	J Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
12331	VM Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology
1240	M King	Team inspector	Art and design
31850	D Nevens	Team inspector	Music Citizenship
17404	J Tolley	Team inspector	French 11-16
1578	M Sinclair	Team inspector	Business education Work-related learning
23588	C Ajitsingh	Team inspector	History
19015	G Peacock	Team inspector	Science
19214	G Price	Team inspector	English
30699	AH Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics
4615	M Bostock	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
8632	DE Beer	Team inspector	Geography
17522	Nigel Stiles	Team inspector	French post-16 European and Community Languages

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Edward's is a very good school with some excellent features. It provides very good value for money. Standards in the main school are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Standards in the sixth form are above average and students achieve well. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. This school has very many strengths because of the high expectations of learning which permeate it and which peak in the excellent attitudes and demeanour shown by sixth formers; they were a pleasure to inspect.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards by Year 9 are well above average and the GCSE examination results are very high; there is a high proportion of A*-B grades.
- In contrast to the national picture, boys in this school achieve as highly as girls, and black pupils as highly as their peers.
- Pupils' achievements are only satisfactory in citizenship in Years 7 to 11, and in physical education and in business education in Years 10 and 11; teaching and learning are only satisfactory in these subjects; leadership and management of physical education are unsatisfactory.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; they achieve very well.
- The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are all very good; spiritual development is excellent.
- The school's commitment to inclusion, to ensuring all pupils have equal and fair chances of success, is excellent.
- The curriculum is very good overall and allows a broad education to be followed and high standards to be attained. However, provision for work-related learning is unsatisfactory.
- Collaborative and independent work by pupils varies in quality and quantity and best practice is not adopted by all subjects and teachers in Years 10 and 11.
- Financial management and the pursuit of best value are both very good.

Improvement since the last inspection is very good overall. A good school then is now very good; achievement has improved, science is very much better, ICT is now well used, management and assessment are both better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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	C	C	C	

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

Pupils achieve very well overall. They achieve very well by Year 9 and Year 11; students are currently achieving well in the sixth form. In the main school achievement is very good in most subjects. There is room for further improvement in citizenship, physical education and business education, in each of which achievement is satisfactory, and some improvement in ICT and in modern languages, where achievement is good. Standards of current work in the sixth form are

above average national sixth form standards; further general improvement, to ensure examination standards reach and are maintained at above average, is needed. Standards are well above average by Year 9 and Year 11, compared to national 11-16 standards. 2004 results for GCSE continue a rising trend of improvement and school targets were met. Year 9 national test results are

very high. Pupils consistently achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history and music. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and attain good standards in GCSE. Details of sixth form subjects are in the sixth form summary.

Pupils personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Spiritual development is excellent. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; students' attitudes are excellent. The attendance and punctuality of both pupils and students are 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 very good in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. In the main school, teaching and learning are very good overall in most subjects; they are good overall in ICT and in modern foreign languages, satisfactory in physical education, citizenship and business studies. Teaching and learning within subjects in the sixth form are most often good; they are very good in design and technology, history and music and satisfactory in art, French and business studies. Teachers and pupils are making good use of ICT to support their work. Not all teaching in Years 10 and 11 prepares pupils thoroughly enough for the different style of work in the sixth form.

The curriculum is very good and enables all pupils to achieve very well by Year 11. Care, guidance and support are all very good, help pupils do better and foster a very good atmosphere in the school. The links with parents are very good; parents' desire for their children to do well certainly helps the school to succeed. Links with other schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good overall; they are very good in the main school and good in the sixth form. Governance is good overall; it is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. Governors are very good at ensuring the school fulfils its inclusive intentions. The headteacher and school managers have ensured high standards in the school, both academic and social. Both school and governors have worked very hard to improve accommodation and acquire Language College status.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents, pupils and students are all very happy with the school - standards, behaviour, and most particularly the high level of care provided. Inspectors agree with their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and achievement in citizenship, business education and physical education by training teachers better in the expectations of the citizenship curriculum; addressing the part-time nature of leadership and management of business education as soon as is practicable; and improving the leadership and management of physical education.
- Tackle the requirements of work-related learning more rigorously.
- Ensure best practice in teaching and learning is adopted by all teachers in both the main school and sixth form, particularly with regard to pupils taking more part in learning.

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is good overall and has some very good and excellent features; it gives good value for money. Good teaching and learning result in good achievement. Standards are typically above average overall by Year 13. Examination results in 2004 were average but close to above average, and better than in 2003. Leadership and management are good and contribute to the increasing popularity of this sixth form for students from this school and others. Almost all students stay right through Years 12 and 13; their attendance is very good and their attitudes exemplary.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve well overall as a result of good teaching but only achieve satisfactorily in art and design, French and business education, in which teaching and learning are satisfactory.
- Excellent attitudes and behaviour are important factors in students' learning.
- Standards in work seen are well above average in history and above average in most other subjects fully inspected or seen.
- Pastoral support and the guidance given to individual students are very good.
- The wide range of courses available in the sixth form meets students' individual needs and aspirations very well.
- There is scope to raise standards still further by ensuring best practice is followed by all subjects within the sixth form and also prior to students' entry in Years 10 and 11.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is good . Standards are above average. Teaching is good, students enjoy lessons and achieve well. Leadership and management are good. Provision in French is satisfactory . Standards are average. Teaching is satisfactory and leads to satisfactory achievement. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. English language was sampled. Teaching was good and students achieve well.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . Standards are above average. Teaching is good, students are very well supported and achieve well. Leadership and management are good.
Science	Provision in chemistry is good . Standards are above average. Teaching is good and students achieve well. Leadership and management are good. Biology and physics were sampled. Teaching was very good and students were achieving very well.
Humanities	Provision in history is very good . Standards are well above

average. Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching. Leadership and management are very good.

Provision in **geography** is **good**. Standards are above average. Students achieve well due to good teaching. Leadership and management are good.

Government and politics was sampled. Standards were high and students achieve very well.

Engineering, technology
and manufacturing

Provision in **graphics with materials technology** is **very good**. Very good teaching results in highly motivated students who achieve very well. Leadership and management are very good.

Visual and performing arts and media	<p>Provision in art and design is satisfactory. Standards are average. Teaching is satisfactory and leads to satisfactory achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory.</p> <p>Provision in music is very good. Very good teaching and learning, supported by very good leadership and management and opportunities for enrichment, allow a diverse group of students to achieve well overall.</p> <p>Theatre studies was sampled. Teaching was good and students achieve well.</p>
Business Education	<p>Provision in A-level business studies is satisfactory. Standards are average. Teaching is satisfactory and leads to satisfactory achievement. Leadership and management are satisfactory.</p> <p>VCE business studies was sampled. Teaching was good and students achieve well.</p>

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

Procedures to help students' transition into the sixth form are very good. Students from this school, and those joining from elsewhere, are satisfied with the advice and support they receive. Guidance to help them make appropriate choices for their future is good. Students have a high profile within the school and lead the School Council. Their views are listened to and taken seriously by the school; some students feel they should be treated more like young adults than they are.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Assessment information is used to good effect to identify underachievement and ensure students are on appropriate courses. Students' views are canvassed and responded to promptly and appropriately. The wide range of courses available in the sixth form meets students' individual needs and aspirations very well. Students' progress and achievement is closely monitored and tutors work effectively as a team to provide appropriate support and guidance to individuals when necessary. The quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement in individual courses are the responsibility of heads of departments; sixth form managers raise any concerns with departments. There is scope to raise standards still further by ensuring best subject practice within and prior to students' entry to the sixth form is utilised by all subjects, so that students are even better prepared for the rigour of all advanced level courses.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students have very positive views of the school. They feel well supported by teaching staff and are confident that they will achieve the grades they need for entry into university or the world of work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils achieve very well overall and by Year 9 and Year 11. Students achieve well in the sixth form. Standards are well above average overall by Year 9 and by Year 11, and above average overall by Year 13. The 'average' used in the sixth form is different and of a higher absolute standard than the 'average' used in Year 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and pupils' achievements in national end of Year 9 tests in 2004 appear to have been very high.
- Though GCSE examination standards are graded just well above average overall, the high number of examinations most pupils take very successfully means examination standards are very high.
- The high proportion of A*-B grades indicates able pupils achieve very well and the very low proportion of low grades indicates pupils with special educational needs also achieve very well.
- Pupils are currently achieving very well overall in Years 7 to 11 and a little better in Years 10 and 11 compared to Years 7 to 9.
- In Years 10 and 11, in contrast to the national picture, boys achieve as well as girls and often attain standards of work at least as high.
- Pupils' achievement is only satisfactory, and consequently relatively weaker than in other subjects, in citizenship in Years 7 to 11, and in physical education and in business education in Years 10 and 11.
- In the sixth form, students achieve very well in history and in design and technology but only satisfactorily in art and design, business education and in French.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	38.0 (35.4)	33.3 (33.4)
mathematics	40.6 (39.8)	35.5 (35.4)
science	37.7 (36.4)	33.1 (33.6)

There were 184 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. English, mathematics, and science test results in this school were all well above average. When the school's results are compared to those of similar schools (schools where pupils started in Year 7 with similar levels of attainment), this school's results are very high, within the top five per cent of such schools. Trends have not yet been analysed nationally but all data suggest that the school's overall Year 9 test results have improved faster than the national trend of steady improvement, with particularly significant improvement between 2003 and 2004. Whilst all three test results improved in 2004, English improved very significantly and science significantly. Mathematics continued its five-year relatively steep rate of progress; results have got even better year on year and may be in the top five per cent of similar schools in 2004 as they were in 2003. Boys' and girls' results are closer together than is typical; boys results tend to be a little lower in English and a little higher in mathematics and in science.

2. In Years 7 to 9 pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, and music. They achieve well in all other subjects except citizenship, where achievement is satisfactory. Standards of work range from well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design and music to average in ICT, physical education and citizenship. Standards on entry to this school vary because entry is largely on Church of England criteria and large numbers of pupils come from distant and separate communities almost randomly; there is certainly no selection by ability. The range of entry standards is from well below to well above average, the proportions varying from year to year. Broadly average with a tendency to just above average is a reasonable judgement. This is at odds with some end of Year 6 national test data which, in 2004, indicates that the current Year 7 was well above average at the end of Year 6. Other valid data show Year 7 to have started just above average. Inspectors would agree that this Year 7 probably began with above average standards in English, mathematics and science though standards in other subjects were average or below expectations.

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) and statements of their particular need. Across all years in the main school and in most subjects, pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good quality support they receive. In English, mathematics and music pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. This is also the case in history in Years 10 and 11. All Year 10 and 11 pupils with special educational needs are entered for a range of GCSE examinations and some take vocational courses as part of business studies. In 2004 GCSE examinations, results show that all pupils with special educational needs attained four A* to C grades and that a third attained five A* to G grades. School data also show that ninety per cent of pupils with special educational needs made better than expected progress by the end of Year 9.

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	80(71)	52(52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100(99)	89(88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100(99)	96(96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	43.7(42.1)	34.9(34.7)

There were 177 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 examination results in 2004 were well above the national average overall, in the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades, and in the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-G grades. The proportion of pupils attaining one or more A*-G grades was above average. The school's targets were met. Standards in GCSE results were also well above average when this school is compared to similar schools in all measures except the proportion of pupils attaining one or more A*-G grades, which was average. Pupils in this school often take ten or more GCSE examinations and, in 2004, 45 per cent attained C or better in all of them. Overall in 2004, pupils in this school attained a much higher proportion of A*-B grades, and particularly A grades, than pupils did nationally; 45 per cent attained five A*-B grades. Pupils attained high standards in almost all subjects; the proportion of A*-C grades in them was significantly higher than in national results. The proportion of grades at or below E is well under half of the proportion seen nationally, whilst the proportion at F or below is just a quarter. Mathematics results were very high and followed on from the success in Key Stage

3. Science results were well above average and very much improved from the picture painted at the last inspection. Both English language and English literature results were well above average. About half of pupils took French, half German, and some both; results were above average overall and particularly good in German.
5. GCSE results have improved faster than the national trend of gradual improvement over the last five years; the school's results have made particularly rapid progress between 2002 and 2004. Although girls most often do better than boys in examinations, the difference is much less than that found nationally. And, if the school's girls' results are compared to girls' national results and the same is done for boys' results, then boys in this school actually perform better than girls.
6. In this school, far more pupils take short GCSE courses than is the case in most schools (short courses are of the same standards but contain half the work). The proportion, in this school, that takes more than one short course is very high; 20 times higher for three or more short courses. The school's overall results for short courses were well above average in 2004; the proportions of A*-C grades and A*-G grades were also well above average. Considering some of these courses are taken as extras, this represents very good achievement. Remarkably they also form a good basis for some A-levels, for example geography.
7. Pupils continue to achieve very well overall in Years 10 and 11 but do so in more subjects than in Years 7 to 9. They achieve well, rather than very well, in ICT and in French; they achieve satisfactorily in physical education, citizenship and in business education. Assessment in physical education is unsatisfactory and so is leadership and management; in consequence, standards, which are average, are not driven high enough. Citizenship is led and managed well but non-specialist or insufficiently trained teachers and a lack of clarity in what standards in citizenship are do not promote higher standards. No one takes an examination in citizenship, though the school intends to offer one in 2006, and few do in physical education. Standards in business studies, which are average, are below the above average standards attained in 2004 GCSE examinations. Leadership and management are broadly satisfactory but the course is mostly not taught by the head of department, who is part-time; this situation is not likely to foster higher standards or good achievement. In all subjects in Years 7 to 11, pupils' achievement reflects the quality of teaching and learning within them and is helped enormously by the high standards of pupils' behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning that the school has fostered; this is why boys achieve just as well as girls. Inspectors also concluded that parents' support for their children was an obvious positive influence and conjectured the likely benefits of many pupils actually living elsewhere; boys in particular can succeed at school without social pressures, possibly within their own community, to appear not to. Perhaps in support of this conjecture, black boys, an increasing group within the school, achieve just as well as their white peers, which is not the picture most often painted nationally. Other ethnic minorities are represented by relatively small numbers of pupils; they achieve appropriately.
8. Several years ago Homerton College included this school in a report about schools where boys bucked the national trend, achieving at least as well as girls. This inspection report shows, for whatever reasons, this is still true.

Sixth form

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	95.5(88.8)	92.4(92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	35.1(38.0)	36.2(35.6)
Average point score per pupil	243.0(223.5)	265.2(258.2)

9. Compared to results of all schools with sixth forms, this school's results in 2004 were average overall. However, 'average' covers a wide spread of results and these results represent a strong average – they were close to above average. Results have been similar for several years but were better in 2004 than in 2003. This school offers a mainly A-level based, academic curriculum and allows students onto courses with a minimum of four C grades at GCSE. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is consequently broad, from below average to well above average. In addition, the school is very successful at GCSE and pupils of low prior attainment in Years 7 to 9 frequently attain a high number of good GCSE grades. Consequently, pupils with low probabilities of attaining any A-levels when they were younger leave with a string of them, typically in the C-E range but good enough to enable them to go further, including university. This is good for them and meets the aims of this inclusive school but deflates the data used to calculate the performance of the sixth form. Examination results indicate students achieve well overall. They are helped to do this by sticking at their courses; retention in the sixth form is high, over 98 per cent.
10. Standards in A-level examinations are only interpreted if there were more than five entries. A data table is provided in this report which provides information on all courses. In a nutshell: standards in one were very high, in one well above average, in two above average, in four average, and in two below average. A VCE in business or in ICT was taken by students in 2004. Results in business were below average, in ICT, above average. Both vocational subjects improved results in 2004, particularly ICT.
11. Standards of current work are above average. Students enter the sixth form with broadly average attainment overall as most students entering 'academic' sixth forms nationally have good or better GCSE results. Students are achieving well overall. Standards are well above average in history and students achieve very well thanks to very good teaching and inspirational leadership; this continues the very good work done in Years 10 and 11. Standards in music are above average and helped by the very good provision of musical activities outside of the classroom as well as the high musical skills of teachers. Standards are just average in French and in art and design, though students achieve satisfactorily in both. Higher expectations and more challenge are needed in French. Standards are below average in design and technology but students achieve very well due to very good teaching and leadership. Many more students have pursued this course in recent years, since the appointment of the current head of department, and the ability range is wide; Year 12 is in a much better position than Year 13 because the students have had another year of decent provision when younger. Standards are also below average in A-level business education but this time pupils are only achieving satisfactorily; having a part-time head of department, as in Years 10 and 11, does not help drive standards up. Achievement in the advanced vocational business course, not fully inspected, is better.
12. Achievement by males and females is broadly similar, though the overall below average grade given to sixth form results in 2003 was due to female results being down. Results in 2004 were almost identical, with results for females having a slight edge. As remarked on earlier, standards in examinations were average but close to above average. This is a significant improvement from 2003 when results were below average overall, and the improvement is likely to continue. The school considers it is a realistic aim to achieve above average results overall in post-16 examination results, which would indicate students were achieving very well, and inspectors agree.
13. Students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are all very good and they are well able to discuss their work and join in pleasant and constructive conversation, which inspectors found very refreshing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes of pupils are very good, and of sixth form students, excellent. The behaviour of pupils

is very good, and of students, excellent. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils and students is very good. The attendance of pupils and students is very good and their punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of most pupils towards their learning are very good and sometimes excellent.
- The behaviour of most pupils is very good.
- Attendance is well above the national average.
- The attitudes, values and personal development of students are excellent in all respects.
- The spiritual development of pupils is excellent.
- Very good working partnerships have been established between pupils and staff based on mutual respect.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and supported well by the large number of opportunities to accept responsibility within the school community.
- A small number of pupils disrupt lessons and the learning of others.

Commentary

14. Parents and pupils consider behaviour to be extremely good with few instances of bullying, which are swiftly dealt with. Inspectors confirm these views.
15. The attitudes of pupils towards their learning are very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils are highly motivated to learn, enjoy their studies and achieve well in external examinations. Very good working partnerships, based on mutual respect, have been established between staff and pupils. Almost all staff are good role models. However, there are a very small number who do not always treat all pupils with respect; this is one of the features of the unsatisfactory leadership of the physical education department and was an issue raised by some parents. Pupils support each other in their learning and listen with interest to views of their peers that differ from their own. Pupils are able to form logical, coherent arguments to support their opinions and their ability to listen to views different from their own keeps their thinking flexible. They are able to work independently when required, take responsibility for their learning and need little in the way of supervision by adults.
16. The behaviour of pupils is very good. Outside of lessons pupils are well behaved and courteous towards each other. Bullying is not an issue in this school. Procedures to manage incidents are in place and pupils feel confident to approach staff knowing that incidents will be dealt with effectively. Though the number of pupils excluded has risen since the previous inspection, the pupils involved are a particular group who have become more troublesome as they have moved through the school. Fixed-term exclusion is reserved for those pupils who fail to conform to other measures the school employs. Pupils are fully supported on their return to school and it is rare for them to be excluded a second time. This school temporarily excludes pupils if they are seen with a mobile telephone or in possession of cigarettes which other schools may not; this makes temporary exclusions higher than they might be. Pupils are able to use the telephone at reception to contact home, a concern a few parents raised.

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	965	45	0
White – any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	24	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0

Mixed – any other mixed background	25	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	39	3	0
Black or Black British – African	60	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	26	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	1	0

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

17. In lessons the attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are generally no different to those of others. Where teaching assistants (TAs) are present to support pupils with special educational needs, this is accepted well by all; others often taking advantage of their presence and seek extra help themselves. The attitudes and behaviour of those pupils who attend withdrawal lessons and the support option groups in the learning support department are very good – this results in a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere. Year 10 pupils, for example, responded very well to the role-play activity used to support their forthcoming work experience placement. Year 11 pupils with a statement of their particular needs are particularly appreciative of the help, support and guidance they received from the learning support department throughout their time in school.
18. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The school has a strong Christian ethos. Spiritual development is excellent. The religious education syllabus, and teaching, provides very good opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils. Music, art, drama and English also make significant contributions. The moral and social development of pupils is very good. Pupils are encouraged to look at a range of moral and ethical issues in various subjects and form their own opinions. Pupils say that they are given the freedom to think and not taught what to think. They are well aware of right and wrong actions and most have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They are able to demonstrate an understanding of the effect of their actions on others and this is expressed well in their concern for others in the wider community. Pupils' cultural development is very good. There are many opportunities to develop their cultural awareness through visits to the theatre and art galleries. The multicultural diversity of the school's community is recognised and celebrated. During the inspection the main foyer of the school displayed information for both Lent and the Chinese New Year celebrations. Visits to Europe to support pupils' language studies also increase knowledge and understanding of different societies. The school provides a very good programme of assemblies that contain an act of worship and promote pupils' personal development. Morning tutor periods also have an act of worship.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6

National data	6.9
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National data	1.1
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The table gives the per centage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

19. Attendance is well above the national average for all schools and is very good. Punctuality to school and lessons is very good. This contributes significantly to the high standards that pupils achieve in external examinations.

Sixth form

20. Students' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. They have positive attitudes towards their learning and use their private study time effectively, working independently without the need of adult supervision. They are very good role models for the rest of the school. The prefects have duties at break and lunch-times supervising younger students. Year 13 students chair the school council. They organise an impressive range of fund-raising events for charities. The Rag Week, before Christmas, is very well organised and involves staff as well as students. The sixth form review is very popular. Year 13 students take complementary studies that involve community service. For example, they work in lower school lessons, primary schools and a senior citizens' club organising activities. About 70 students have volunteered to be trained as peer mentors to younger students. All of these opportunities contribute significantly to the personal development of students. Attendance and punctuality are very good and contribute significantly to the standards that students achieve.

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, the curriculum, and links with parents are all very good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are good.

Teaching and learning

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are only satisfactory in; citizenship in Years 7 to 11; physical education in Years 10 and 11; business education in Years 10 to 13 and art, and French in the sixth form.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory in physical education.
- In Years 10 and 11, teaching is very good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, history, and music but, in the sixth form, only very good (within the subjects inspected) in design and technology, history and music.
- Effective use of able learning support assistants helps ensure pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- In Years 7 to 11, relative weaknesses in teaching and learning, aspects which are good overall rather than very good, are some teachers' planning and use of time in lessons and pupils' independent and collaborative work. Pupils need to learn better for themselves, in some subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 151 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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9 (6 %)	51 (34 %)	56 (37%)	32 (21%)	3 (2%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

21. The proportion of good or better lessons seen is about average but the proportion of very good or better lessons is about four times greater in Years 7 to 9 and three times greater in Years 10 and 11.
22. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 11, particularly so in Years 10 and 11, when pupils are enabled to do very well in many GCSE examinations. Alongside teaching in classrooms goes thorough assessment, frequent conversations with pupils, very good contact with parents and high expectations by all, including pupils, that success will happen. Most teachers are happy to provide extra support outside of lessons and, though not seen at the time of the inspection, support increases as pupils approach GCSE. All this works, high standards result. However, the momentum is not quite carried through to the sixth form, where overall achievement slows. The school argues plausibly that pupils attain much higher standards at GCSE than might be expected and achievement in the sixth form is just as good but should be based on expectations from when students were younger, not at the end of Year 11. However, there are some relative weaknesses in teaching in Years 10 and 11 which do not foster smooth transfer into the kind of learning necessitated in Year 12 in 'crossing the bridge' as several inspectors described it. This relative weakness is teachers' planning for independent, collaborative and challenging work where pupils are more involved in the learning. Some subjects do this well: English, Spanish, science (including lessons called Thinking Skills), ICT, history (very strong) and music. These, except for Spanish, which is not taught post-16 yet, are doing well or very well in the sixth form too; history and music were two of the best taught subjects inspected in the sixth form. Two subjects are particularly weak in this area of teaching and learning, physical education and business studies. The latter is relatively weak in the sixth form. Other subjects are variable, some teachers, or some lessons, are better than others. The school has engaged in substantial staff development in teaching and learning styles, but not as much as in many schools inspected by this inspection team, and there are obviously positive signs of the results of these developments in the overall very good quality of teaching and learning inspectors have seen. Best practice now needs to be more uniform and even better ways of preparing pupils for the sixth form explored.
23. Citizenship is several years old now and practice in schools is variable. In this school teaching and learning are satisfactory due mainly to the use of teachers who have no specific skills or training in it. Best practice seen elsewhere usually involves a dedicated cadre of teachers who have trained up. Teachers also need to know exactly what standards they are working to or should expect, just as in any other subject. No examination in citizenship, in this school, means there is no carrot for general teachers to pursue. Teaching is also only satisfactory in physical education in Years 10 and 11. This time there are specialist teachers but teaching misses opportunities to constructively involve pupils and makes little use of teaching aids such as whiteboards and even chalkboards; not all physical education is physical exercise. Assessment is unsatisfactory in physical education too; practice is unclear and not recorded, and pupils do not know how well they are doing. This is a result of unsatisfactory leadership and management. Business studies has specialists too but lessons are taught to the middle ability range rather than all pupils; able pupils are not challenged and those that find it difficult are not helped enough. Teaching is not monitored very well; this is not helped by the part-time nature of the head of department.
24. Teachers have copies of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) as well as very useful summary information provided for each pupil on the school's list of those with special educational needs. As a result, teachers are well aware of the needs of these pupils. Targets on IEPs for pupils with a statement of their particular need are discrete and sharp thus helping teachers plan their work to meet the needs of these pupils in lessons. In mathematics lessons, for example, targeting and sensitive support is provided particularly to support written work and, in ICT and history lessons, pupils are given individual support to ensure they make adequate progress. Group IEPs are in place for pupils at the School Action and School Action Plus stages

of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. These are also useful in helping teachers plan their lessons but the more general nature of targets means it is not always easy to ensure the specific needs of those pupils at the School Action Plus stage are fully met. In the support option lessons in the learning support department, pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in their coursework and their development of literacy and numeracy skills. Where observed, teaching assistants provided effective support in lessons for pupils with

special educational needs. Because they are attached to specific departments they have developed well their own expertise in the subjects and are thus confident in supporting work in hand; pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in examinations.

Sixth form

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	10 (33%)	14 (47%)	5 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

25. These percentages are broadly similar to the distribution found nationally in sixth forms though, in this school, there were fewer good or better lessons than average; 83 percent as compared to 94 percent.
26. The sixth form provides a very good environment where students have the opportunity to develop intellectually and to be well prepared for higher education courses. Examination results imply satisfactory teaching and learning but the picture is better than that; overall students are achieving well and teaching and learning are good. The subjects that follow were inspected fully. Teaching and learning are very good in design and technology, history and music; good in English, chemistry, mathematics, and geography; and satisfactory in art and design, French, and business education.
27. Good teaching in art and design in Years 10 and 11 becomes satisfactory teaching in the sixth form as the needs of lower attainers are not well enough met; this is particularly so in Year 13. Business education suffers the same problems in the sixth form as described above; evaluation is not stressed enough, units of work are not well linked, and marking is variable. Teaching in French is just satisfactory because students are not given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning or practice. Marking does not correct sufficient errors.
28. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge very effectively to set clear learning objectives in lessons; students are therefore well aware of what is expected of them. Effective planning, including starter activities as well as a variety of structured activities throughout, ensures lessons are well paced and that the time available is well used to ensure good learning takes place. In the best lessons, students are thoroughly engaged in challenging activities that help them develop intellectually as well as personally. In an excellent Year 13 history lesson, there was a very good balance between teaching and independent learning in assessing essays. The teacher provided very effective tools for judging others' work and the use of peer and self-assessment ensured students were being very well prepared for the forthcoming examination. On occasion, however, students are not sharpening their critical thinking skills and heightening their interest in the subjects they study. As a result, they are not being fully prepared for the rigours of study in higher education.
29. Very good classroom relationships underpin the best teaching in the sixth form. Where students are actively involved, they make very good gains in knowledge and understanding and their contributions, including presentations, enliven the quality of learning. In a Year 13

English literature lesson, students were treated as young adults and encouraged to participate. Consequently, they demonstrated a mature attitude to learning and achieved well.

30. Based on inspectors' discussions with students, it is clear that students feel the standard of teaching in the sixth form is good and they particularly appreciate the fact that teachers are available to provide additional help and advice when it is required.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good overall; it is good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. Opportunities for additional activities outside of lessons are very good overall. Staffing is very good and resources are good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and will remain so even after extensive building work is completed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good choice of options in Years 10 and 11 allows a broad education to be followed and high standards to be attained.
- There are very good opportunities for learning outside of lessons.
- The library is very good and soon to be better still.
- There is good provision of ICT equipment for both pupils and teachers; the number of interactive whiteboards is particularly high.
- Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Careers education and guidance are very good but work-related learning is unsatisfactory. (See section in report entitled Work-related Learning).
- The range of courses available for sixth form students is very good; any prospective student needing to follow courses not provided in school is well guided to alternative sixth form provision.
- Insufficient time is provided for design and technology in Years 7 to 9.
- The take-up of sport, outside of physical education lessons, is not monitored.

Commentary

31. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and all other statutory requirements. It is very successful in meeting the needs and aspirations of parents and pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good and dedicated fortnightly lessons are supplemented by a range of visiting specialists.
32. In Years 7 to 9, drama enriches pupils' experiences and complements the very good provision for music, both in lessons and in performances. From September 2004, as a pilot, almost all pupils follow three European languages; the 'new' language, Spanish, has proved very popular. This provision is described in the section of the report entitled 'European and Community Languages'. Science includes some lessons from the 'Thinking Skills' initiative; this work really challenges able pupils and should be more widespread in the school. The amount of time given over to each subject is broadly adequate except for design and technology where there is insufficient time to allow pupils to complete the range of practical tasks they should.
33. Through an arrangement of full GCSE courses and many half courses many pupils can follow most of the subjects within the National Curriculum right through to GCSE. The proportion of pupils taking short courses is double that nationally; the proportion of pupils taking three or more short courses is 25 times that nationally. Inspectors looked closely at this unusual provision and came to the conclusion that, as pupils were very successful in both full and short courses, it is very good.
34. All pupils follow courses in core subjects and religious studies. The most able students can follow courses in physics, chemistry and biology as an alternative to double award science and there is also the provision to allow able linguists to study up to three modern foreign languages. Key Stage 4 curriculum arrangements allow the most able pupils to maintain a broad range of study until the end of Year 11 giving them the widest possible choice of subjects when they move into the sixth form. The school has tried broadening the range of vocational provision, for example leisure and tourism and health and social care but the courses were dropped due to lack of demand; pupils would rather do well in as many GCSE examinations as they are able to, and their parents agree.

35. Overall, curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to the curriculum and are fully involved in the life of the school. In Years 7 to 9, pupils with special educational needs have access to special literacy support and some pupils have access to a social skills course offered by the learning support department. Alongside the broad range of GCSE courses on offer, pupils are able to take vocational courses and a support option group in Years 10 and 11 enables pupils to take one or more fewer GCSE courses. The strong ethos of inclusion and support for pupils with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experience of these pupils as well as that of all other pupils in the school. A formal extra-curricular homework club run by teaching assistants means pupils with special educational needs have the opportunity to ask for and receive extra subject and specific support and guidance during the week. A small games club also broadens the learning experience of pupils with special educational needs. Provision for pupils with special educational needs across subjects is good overall and in science is very good. Departments are kept fully informed of special educational needs as a result of regular liaison with the learning support department and the information it provides.
36. The range of activities available outside of lessons is very good and the proper lunch hour ensures pupils who need to catch buses at the end of the day can still participate in some. Participation in the arts, music and drama is particularly strong and inspectors saw one excellent lunchtime mix of music, from rock bands to a Gospel choir. Teams and squads get plenty of sports practice, with facilities open from 8.00 am, but it is unclear how much general participation in extra-curricular sport there is as no-one records it; this is important as it is not possible for pupils to get two hours of quality physical education each week (a government target) without participating in sport outside lessons. There is very good support for learning outside of lessons with many subjects providing homework and revision 'clubs' (close to examinations) and sixth formers supporting younger pupils formally or informally. A very good science club for youngsters is run by students; this uses Creativity in Science and Technology material which would benefit all pupils. All Year 7 pupils have a 24 hour residential trip within their first month in the school to help them get to know each other and this school still runs trips and visits to places of interest and longer trips abroad for languages, history and sport.
37. Staffing is very good, which is unusual close to London and a credit to school leadership and management and the very good attitudes of pupils, factors which encourage teachers to come and to stay. There is a high number of part-time staff, which makes timetabling and curriculum management harder than it might be with fewer, but full time, staff. The provision of non teaching staff, including learning support assistants, technicians and office, catering and site staff, is excellent. All these productive people help teachers get on with teaching and help pupils learn through ensuring they have a decent place in which to work or through helping them more directly. Along with experienced leadership and management, learning support teachers and a behaviour support mentor, there are sufficient teaching assistants to support those pupils with a statement of their particular needs as well as other pupils on the school's list of special educational needs. Teaching assistants are very enthusiastic and committed to working with pupils with special educational needs and their effective deployment ensures the curricular needs of these pupils are met.
38. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall but well looked after, and teachers, pupils and students make the best of it. The increasing school roll has enabled some government funded new building and refurbishment. Undoubtedly more building will have to be done before accommodation becomes satisfactory, for example, new dining facilities, the replacement of 9 portakabin classrooms, increased accommodation for music, and some covered recreation areas. The swimming pool, paid for long ago by friends of the school, is very good and serves local clubs as well as the school. An unusual feature of service supply is the inadequate mains cable that brings electricity into the school. Since the school started using computers in the way that it should the cable has not been able to supply sufficient power. This has led to power cuts in the past with some disruption to the school. A substantial diesel generator is now used to run part of the school during the day and emergency backups protect computers.

39. Dedicated accommodation for the learning support department is not accessible by parents or pupils with mobility needs.
40. Overall, resources are good. They are sufficient in most areas, well used and well managed. Text book provision is good. The school library contains a good stock of books, which are updated each year, plus an extensive library of videotapes. The library is very well managed and will soon be enhanced still further through extension and refurbishment. The library is well used by pupils, especially at lunchtime. The videotapes are managed by the reprographics department; this jewel in the school prints and binds good quality booklets, notes, and visual resources which are prepared by teachers and used extensively to resource lessons. Resources are good in science, design and technology, ICT, history, and modern foreign languages. In art and design, resources are very good except that access to specialist photo manipulation software is limited. In music there is access to specialist ICT equipment in the sixth form, but this means it is not available for general use in Years 7 to 9. ICT resources are particularly well developed in design and technology, which helps raise standards in it. There is an above average number of computers in the school and good availability of them; teachers from any subject can access them if they want to. There are good ICT resources in the learning support department to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. There are a large number of interactive whiteboards across the school and many, but not all, teachers are making increasingly effective use of them to support teaching; teachers also enjoy good access to ICT using desktop and laptop computers.

Sixth form

41. The school provides a very good range of academic courses that meet the needs of those students who wish to continue their education at school; the very high retention of students on courses, over 98 per cent, supports this judgement. Great care is taken to meet the particular requirements of individual students and, although the school does not offer a significant number of vocational courses, students are counselled to make sure that they choose the correct pathway for their continuing education whether it is at school or in one of the local colleges. In addition, the school makes notable efforts to provide breadth in the curriculum by maintaining subjects that attract small numbers, such as French and German. All students in Year 12 follow a general studies course and Year 13 students take part in a complementary studies programme that offers opportunities for community service and preparation for future employment. This latter course was, in the school's mind, more useful for Year 12 students than general studies but funding is provided nationally for general studies and the school has had to be pragmatic.
42. Music is popular across the school and both music and music technology are offered in the sixth form. Government and politics is successfully offered alongside history. Psychology is a new popular course and the school has bought into a fairly standard distant learning package which uses video conferencing. Sociology is likely to follow a similar model in September 2005.
43. The programme of induction for sixth formers is very good. This positive introduction and the very good advice and guidance that are offered through the tutorial system contribute greatly to the very good retention rates in sixth form courses. Almost all students continue their studies through from AS to A-level.
44. All students take part in a timetabled physical education programme in Years 12 and 13 and have access to sport in Year 13 if they want to. Otherwise, extra-curricular activities are similar to those enjoyed by younger pupils with sixth formers running some of them.
45. The sixth form general accommodation is cramped but students make excellent use of the study areas that are well equipped with computers. They seem able to work at school very late and a significant number were working when inspectors arrived in the morning and were still there when inspectors left.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is very good. The support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, which pupils receive is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' access to well-informed support and guidance is very good.
- Induction arrangements for pupils coming into the school are very good.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is excellent and makes a positive contribution towards their personal development.
- High quality assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils who are underachieving.
- Support and guidance for less academic students and the few with behavioural difficulties is very good.

Commentary

46. Parents commented that pastoral care is "second to none". Whilst inspectors cannot say that, they do agree it is very good. Pupils coming into the school from other schools commented on how it was different, they felt safe and looked after, they could talk to teachers in a friendly way.
47. The support, advice and guidance that pupils receive is very good. The transfer from primary to secondary school is well managed and pupils reported that they quickly felt secure in the school. There are also effective arrangements for the induction of pupils with special educational needs into the school. Year teams stay with pupils throughout their time in the main school and build strong relationships with pupils and their families. Pupils interviewed were confident that they would be able to ask members of staff for help, either academic or personal.
48. Very good use is made of the high quality assessment information the school has collated on pupils and achievement is very good as a result. Pupils who are underachieving are quickly identified and support strategies put in place. Parents are involved automatically in managing any difficulties that arise. The few pupils who have behaviour difficulties are monitored and supported well. The school has very good links with external agencies to provide specialist support for pupils as required. Annual reviews for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are effective and support pupils with a statement of their particular needs as they move through the school. Parents' and pupils' views are taken into account because they are involved in the setting and reviewing of their targets at annual reviews and reviews of individual education plans (IEPs). The school draws on a wide range of assessment data to help guide the appropriate placement of pupils on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs. Whole-school data provide the potential to closely track the progress pupils with special educational needs make.
49. The school has successfully retained, through innovative timetabling, pupils who might otherwise have been excluded from education. They all manage to gain passes in GCSE examinations. Support for less academic pupils is very good. The number of GCSE courses they study is reduced and additional time allocated for focused study support. Very good careers guidance prepares pupils well for option choices at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 for post-16 studies. The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is very good. The school takes seriously its duty of care for pupils and has ensured that good procedures are in place to monitor health and safety and to ensure the welfare of pupils. Child protection procedures are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.

50. The provision to involve pupils through seeking their views and acting on them is excellent. Both School and Year Councils are effective forums for pupils to express their views and bring about changes in the school environment. Pupils in Year 7 produce a newsletter that is circulated amongst their year group. Year 11 girls run a stationery shop twice a week for pupils in the school foyer. Pupils' views are surveyed from time to time on a range of topics such as their attitudes towards learning.

Sixth form

51. Arrangements for students entering the sixth form are very good. They are encouraged to select subjects to study that will fit in with their career profile. Tutors use assessment data effectively to track students' progress. Students have to attend the sixth form full-time and are expected to use time not in lessons in unsupervised private study. Students not achieving as well as predicted are given a supervised study timetable until their work is of a sufficient standard. Guidance on future options is very good. All students are prefects; they also chair the school council, and undertake a range of duties to support the school in its work. They are actively encouraged through the complementary study programme to undertake community service within the school, helping and supporting younger pupils and staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is very good. The quality of the school's links with the community is good. The school's links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents are very good.
- Effective partnerships with feeder primary schools ensure no discontinuity in the educational experience of pupils.
- There are good links with parishes and community groups through the chaplains and the many clergy who contribute to the school's assembly programme.

Commentary

52. The school's partnership with its parents is very good. Parents support the school well and are pleased with the education their child receives. Their views are sought periodically on the life and work of the school. The Parents and Friends Association actively supports the school by raising much-needed additional funds. Many parents also covenant monies to support the school in its need (as an aided school) to raise 10 per cent of all building costs. The school website gives parents access to information about the curriculum and forthcoming events. Parents are able to communicate with staff via email. The use of email to send information to parents is increasing.
53. Reports to parents are very good and give a clear statement of what their children have studied, how they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. However, they do not include National Curriculum levels their child is working at. The annual consultation meeting gives parents the opportunity to discuss progress and set targets with staff based on current assessment information. Parents also receive interim progress reports. Other information evenings are held at points of transition to support both parents and pupils in making appropriate choices related to future studies.
54. The quality of the school's links with the community is good. Particularly strong are the links with the parish churches, through the chaplains, who support each year group and through the many clergy who contribute to the school's assembly programme. Many parents choose to send their child to the school because of its strong Christian ethos. There is good use of the school facilities, particularly the swimming pool, by the local community.
55. There is a good partnership with other schools and colleges. There are close, consultative,

working relationships with Church of England primary schools. The mechanisms for the transfer of pupils into school are very good. Curriculum-bridging units are in place to support continuity and progression in learning. Pupils from a local primary school joined with Year 7 for an Earth and Space Forum led by the heads of science and geography. Two primary schools currently benefit from an advanced skills teacher's weekly visits to teach French. The school is part of the sports coordinator scheme and outreach work is planned for September with a number of primary schools.

56. There are effective links between the learning support department and the parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are invited to and attend annual reviews of pupils with a statement of their particular needs. Their views are recorded; hence they are fully involved and informed about their child's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review process. Parents and pupils are also involved in the setting and review of targets on IEPs. Parents are kept fully informed of procedures for support of pupils with special educational needs. Leadership and management have close links with primary feeders and, as a result, provision for incoming pupils is planned in advance.
57. Support has also been given to five local secondary schools by the modern language department through their advanced skills teacher. The school has just been granted Language College status and will continue to develop such links with other schools through its outreach programme.

Sixth form

58. There are some links with local colleges of further education but links with other sixth forms are fairly rare because of the distance between this school and others; music links have been made from time to time. Under the national Aim Higher initiative, and gifted and talented programme, links with universities are becoming established that will benefit the aspirations and personal development of both pupils and students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both very good in the main school and are both good in the sixth form. Governance is good for the main school, satisfactory for the sixth form. The leadership of the headteacher is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is very good at ensuring the school fulfils its inclusive intentions and meets statutory requirements but is less strong at evaluating and monitoring.
- Leadership has ensured pupils achieve highly at GCSE level and students well in the sixth form; more can still be done to lift standards further in the sixth form.
- The school's self-evaluation and general monitoring are both very good overall, though they could be still sharper.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, in part because of the employment and very good deployment of excellent support staff and in part due to the very well thought out curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- Sixth form managers and subject co-ordinators liaise well and students' progress is tracked effectively.
- The school enables teacher training to be very effective.
- Financial management and the pursuit of best value are both very good.

Commentary

59. The school's commitment to inclusion, to ensuring all pupils have equal and fair chances of success, is excellent. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are very academically able all make very good progress in the main school. Boys achieve as well as or even a little better than girls, depending on how statistics are viewed, and the increasing number of black pupils achieve as well as their peers. The small minority of pupils who misbehave are enabled to continue their education with the minimum of disturbance to it and some pupils, who have caused problems elsewhere, have been successfully integrated within this school. Governors, and particularly the Chair, have played their part in enabling this inclusiveness very well and have ensured it is a prominent feature of the Christian ethos of the school. Governors are also rigorous in ensuring statutory duties are met, though recent requirements for work-related learning have not so assiduously been followed through.
60. As the school is very good and has likely been so for some time, governors' evaluation and monitoring, though satisfactory, now needs sharpening or refocusing. For example, the sixth form has improved and students achieve well and the question is now how further improvements can be made. A number of governors were met during the inspection and it is apparent that parent governors would particularly like to be involved more in monitoring the school's work. School management and leadership also need to ensure any weak documentation, as exemplified by the physical education department's development plan, is improved sufficiently to help guide any necessary improvements.
61. The headteacher's leadership and management are very good overall and he has been particularly highly effective in raising standards in Years 7 to 11, especially at GCSE. He has also ensured that pupils' and students' willingness to learn is fostered and encouraged, and supported through the very broad curriculum that they can follow for as long as possible. Senior managers are also very good leaders and managers. They have very well supported the headteacher and enabled very good progress since the last inspection through working with staff to foster better teaching and middle management, and with pupils to ensure the school's very good ethos is maintained. Very effective recruitment and retention of staff, through the hard work of managers, has helped maintenance of high standards and further school improvement. The high proportion of part-time teachers makes some management roles potentially difficult though they have enabled the school to ensure each area of the curriculum is almost always staffed by subject specialists. Recruitment has been helped through training teachers. The school has engaged in, and remains involved with, a broad range of teacher training initiatives, both training teachers 'on the job' and in co-operation with teacher training institutions. Generally very good induction of new staff, which extends to trainees, and the very good behaviour of pupils enable trainees to learn their craft. The high number of interactive whiteboards around the school also allows trainees to become effective in new technologies. Both the headteacher and governors have ensured new workload agreements are well met and effectively did so before many were required; staff in this school have substantially more than the minimum amount of preparation time and are very well served by learning assistants and administrative and maintenance staff at all levels.
62. The headteacher and an assistant headteacher analyse performance data, generate pupils' academic targets and ensure their progress is very well tracked. In consequence of this, and undoubtedly also by improving teaching due to very good staff development, standards have risen by Year 9 and Year 11. Their close checking of several sets of data enables targets to be set which are considerably above standards that might otherwise be expected. Different levels of classroom observation and book scrutiny ensure the school has a good picture of teaching standards and, where problems exist, intervention strategies minimise difficulties. A very well-organised system of staff development booking and recording means in-house professional development is well augmented by external courses linked to teachers' performance management targets. A tight budget means staff development has to 'pay for itself' through improving the school directly in some way but there is still scope to support staff taking post-graduate academic qualifications. The school takes full advantage of opportunities to receive professional development 'cheaply' and, for example, piloted the national 'Leading

from the Middle' training. The headteacher and senior leaders are also taking advantage of new SLICT courses (Strategic Leadership of ICT).

63. The leadership and management of subject departments are often very good overall, with most subjects led and managed well. Design and technology is led very well and managed satisfactorily; there have been ongoing staffing problems and assessment still needs to be made better in Years 7 to 9, but standards are rising sharply. Business studies is led and managed just satisfactorily. There are several issues relating to teaching, learning and achievement, which are reported in the relevant section; the part-time nature of the head of department's post has interfered with both leadership and management but this issue will shortly be resolved. Leadership and management of physical education is unsatisfactory; there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection and there are several areas of weak management reported in the relevant section of this report. Leadership and management of pastoral areas of the school through, for example, heads of year is very good and is demonstrated through the high grades given for pupils' attitudes and behaviour and for the level of care they receive.
64. Leadership and management of the learning support department are very good and provide a clear focus and direction for the provision of pupils with special educational needs. This has resulted in a very good whole-school ethos for the involvement of and support of these pupils. Leadership has ensured that the ethos of provision and support for pupils with special educational needs has a high profile and that staff are fully involved in the overall provision for them. Development planning is well linked to whole-school areas for improvement. Management has ensured teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide the required support for pupils with a statement of their particular needs as well as those pupils at the 'School Action Plus' stage of the Code of Practice for special needs. This provides the breadth and level of support required for these pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the support staff are well embedded as a result of the appraisal system they are part of. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4, 227,071	Balance from previous year	£48,230
Total expenditure	4, 147,760	Balance carried forward to the next	£127,541
Expenditure per pupil	3,613		

65. Though the school's income per pupil is slightly above average, it is well below the average of similar schools within the outer London area, even though almost half of the pupils live in inner London areas which attract much higher educational funding. In a nutshell: this school is relatively poorly funded when it has to pay London salaries and London on-costs. Consequently, the governors and the bursar they employ have to manage funds very cleverly to make ends meet. To their credit, the school has never run a deficit budget. Governors also managed to fund elements of Language College work prior to the school receiving additional funds so that the official start to the College, September 2005, will see many things in place. Details of pay related management points are made known to all and staff can apply for or recommend others to receive additional pay. Governors consider such requests within the pay review committee. This has resulted in an open and generally equitable pay structure.
66. Governors currently have to pay over £1000 each week for fuel and hire costs for a diesel generator; the electricity supply cable to the school was installed forty years ago and cannot cope with the use of electricity for computers. This is an un-looked for expense which

governors are attempting to resolve. Best value is always sought in contracts and supplies and within the curriculum offered. The employment of a skilled and thinking site manager enables work to be done effectively and tendered work well managed. Buildings are externally well maintained whilst the interiors, though crowded, are essentially cheerful and looked after. The school applied to the DfES for a capital grant for new building and received it; badly needed classrooms and laboratories will be open in a few months. The school has to raise ten per cent of the cost itself, around £530,000, and fund-raising and management strategies will see success. Considering the very good features of the school, in particular the very good quality of education, set against comparatively low costs, the school gives very good value for money.

Sixth form

67. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Governance of the sixth form is satisfactory. Governors are informed about the sixth form provision, its cost and the results students achieve. Assessment data is used well to evaluate performance in the sixth form both in terms of analysing examination results and ensuring that students' progress is tracked efficiently against their targets.
68. The sixth form managers know students very well and have effective systems in place to ensure students' progress is tracked and they are given appropriate support and guidance. This is concentrated mainly upon individual students' progress in the sixth form. The sixth form provision is well organised and co-ordinated and procedures run smoothly from day to day. The sixth form is a well run and pleasant community, characterised by mutual respect, very good relationships and a commitment to learning. There are good arrangements for induction into the sixth form and students settle in quickly. The atmosphere within the sixth form area is calm and conducive to learning.
69. Some students find the transition to the different demands of A-level courses in Year 12 difficult and they have access to interactive learning programs which help them to develop the skills they need, for example research and essay writing techniques. In some subjects students make the transition from GCSE to sixth form work very smoothly. In order to raise standards further there is scope to draw on best practice to identify and share effective teaching and learning techniques which prepare students more effectively for the demands of all advanced level courses.
70. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the sixth form through thorough analysis of available data. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the sixth form are good and there is effective liaison between the sixth form managers, tutors and subject coordinators to raise standards.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The incorporation of the school's policy into a whole-school approach that involves all departments is in an embryonic stage.
- Teachers have not yet received training on how to implement the work-related curriculum.
- The school has not played an active role in promoting a range of vocational options.
- Very good careers education and guidance and well-planned work experience make a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of work-related issues.

Commentary

71. Work-related learning (WRL) is unsatisfactory. A co-ordinator has only been recently appointed and there has been insufficient time for any developments to become embedded and effective. An audit of current practice within departments has been done and a draft action plan produced but this has not yet been agreed by the senior management or governors. A policy is still in draft. Strong links with the local Education Business Partnership have been established. The co-ordinator has been well trained, but the rest of the staff have not yet received training that would enable all to appreciate the width and import of WRL and to readily identify future contributions. WRL does not fully contribute to the wider curriculum. Relatively few subjects currently support WRL well, although there are some examples of good practice. For example, science has good links with engineering firms and art and design with firms of architects and designers.
72. The well-planned work experience allows all Year 10 pupils to extend their understanding of work through direct experience. Very good careers education and guidance prepares pupils well for the world of work. Pupils from Year 7 onwards are offered very good advice and support when making choices and considering the management of their careers. There are close links with Connexions, the careers service, and extra support is carefully tailored according to pupils' needs. Those with special educational needs and the more able are well catered for. However, there are missed opportunities to highlight and promote activities that engender an enterprising spirit and increase employability.
73. There are one or two vocational courses offered to a group of less academic pupils, which are well taught and result in good achievement. The school offers a vocational GCSE ICT and nearly all Year 10 and 11 pupils take a business studies course, which makes some contribution to their awareness of work-related issues. There are no other opportunities for pupils to study vocational courses or to test their aptitude for vocational training. Links with colleges are sparse. This aspect of WRL is underdeveloped.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well by Year 11 to gain GCSE examination results that are well above the national average.
- National test results underline the very good achievement of pupils by Year 9.
- Very good teaching ensures that lessons are challenging and enjoyable so that pupils learn very well.
- Very good leadership and management have led to better teaching and improved standards since the previous inspection.

Commentary

74. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Teaching and learning are better and standards have improved.
75. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 appear better than those in 2003, which were above average. The trend over the last three years is one of faster improvement than the national trend of gradual improvement. Results in 2004 match the well above average standard of work seen during the inspection. Test results in 2004 were much better than they were in similar schools because teaching and learning are very good and because the department is very well led.
76. GCSE results in 2004 were well above those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well above average; the proportion attaining an A*-B grade was above average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was very high. When compared to results in similar schools, GCSE results were much better than might be expected overall. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was particularly high whilst the proportion gaining A*-G grades was as expected. Boys' results were further ahead of the national average compared with girls' results because they work equally hard but participate more in oral work. Results in 2004 are better than in 2003. The trend in results over the last three years is up because better teaching and leadership have led to improved learning.
77. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average. Pupils achieve very well. By Year 9 pupils write very well using varied sentence structures to enliven their work. They enjoy reading a range of literature and understand how writers achieve effects. They talk confidently and express themselves clearly. However, girls do not always show the same confidence in their oral work as boys.
78. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average. Pupils achieve very well. By Year 11 pupils write well at length for a variety of purposes. They show through perceptive close analysis that they can read complex texts with very good understanding. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed. Most pupils write fluently but the expression of a minority remains awkward because they read too little, despite regular library lessons.

79. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in mixed ability groups because they are very well supported by others. The most able pupils make very good progress because lessons are stimulating and provide many opportunities for independent study.
80. Teaching and learning are very good. In Year 9, an excellent lesson saw pupils in role as producers of *Macbeth* presenting their ideas to others posing as theatre managers. Oral language skills were very well developed and each pupil was assigned an evaluation task, so that everyone was enthusiastically involved and learning was excellent. In contrast, learning was just satisfactory in a library lesson for Year 8 pupils where lower-attaining pupils did little to develop their reading skills. In an excellent Year 10 lesson pupils prepared for enacting trials of Mercutio's character in *Romeo and Juliet* by reading the address of Atticus Finch to the jury in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Pupils greatly enjoyed the pace and challenge of learning and made excellent progress. In all the lessons seen for pupils in Years 10 and 11 teaching was at least good. Teachers help pupils to develop their ICT skills by regular use of computers. Assessment is very good. Teachers mark the work of pupils with great care, giving helpful comments to help them improve standards further.
81. Leadership and management are very good. Evaluation and monitoring of teachers' work is thorough. Teachers are strongly supported and work very well together. They share a common vision for English and have worked hard to produce an exciting programme of lessons that offers appropriate challenge to all pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy English lessons and standards are rising further. Departmental planning is very good. Lessons for all pupils include important aspects of citizenship.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

82. Pupils have well above average skills in language and literacy. They have no difficulty in meeting the demands for reading and writing in all subjects. Oral work in lessons is also consistently strong. In English lessons a steady focus on aspects of language helps to ensure that all pupils develop their reading and writing very well. Regular lessons in the library help encourage pupils to read widely. Very good teaching of literacy is evident in music, where teachers emphasise key vocabulary in lessons and give very good support for essay writing. Pupils extend their writing skills in science, art and design and in religious education by tackling a range of tasks. Careful marking by teachers in these subjects helps further in improving written work. Work on the structure of language in modern foreign languages gives pupils better understanding of how sentences may be varied to make their writing more interesting. In geography, history, ICT, and design and technology pupils are made aware of technical vocabulary and encouraged to use it precisely.

Modern Foreign Languages

83. Provision in **Spanish** was sampled. Teaching and learning in lessons seen were very good and pupils clearly enjoy their work. They make rapid progress in lessons and build very effectively on previous learning. After only one and a half terms of Spanish, pupils involved already have a very good range of language and structures and manipulate the language effectively to express their ideas both in speech and in writing. They are keen to participate in oral work in class, have very good relationships with their teachers and are not afraid of making mistakes. Lessons are conducted almost exclusively and very effectively in Spanish. The language used is very well matched to pupils' experience and capabilities so that pupils not only benefit from excellent role models but also develop their listening and speaking skills. Activities are challenging but learning is fun. Lessons are very well planned with clear steps in learning; opportunities for pupils to identify patterns themselves are frequent and effective. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to practise informally in pairs, very effectively monitored and supported by the teacher. Pronunciation and intonation are very good and standards are well above average in all skill areas.

84. Provision in **German** was also sampled; three lessons were seen and written work was scrutinised. Standards in the 2004 GCSE examinations were above average. The proportion of candidates attaining A*-C grades was well above average; results in German improved very significantly between 2003 and 2004. Pupils achieved relatively better in German than they did in French if pupils' performance across the board is taken into consideration. Though lessons seen were satisfactory or better, in the sample of work scrutinised the quality of marking was unsatisfactory overall; work was unmarked for lengthy periods and there was often little indication to pupils of the standards attained or sufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve. Unsatisfactory marking was brought to the attention of the school. Standards in lessons seen were below average; pupils write fairly accurately and can construct simple sentences to communicate their ideas on a variety of topics but the range of language and structures they use is limited. There is little evidence of pupils writing imaginatively or creatively. They describe events in the past, present and future and give their opinions but rarely compare and contrast their ideas.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of writing, reading and listening are well above average.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive and behaviour is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good; teachers work well as a team.
- There is scope to use assessment information more effectively to plan for the progress of groups of differing ability within lessons and raise standards further.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to use the language themselves in lessons and lack confidence in speaking and responding spontaneously.

Commentary

85. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards in French have improved: examination results are now well above average. Good leadership and management have resulted in a good degree of consistency in the quality of marking and the use of assessment but there is still scope to use assessment more effectively in lesson planning to improve standards further.
86. 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 entered for examination gained an A*-G grade. The proportion of B grades was above average and of A*-A grades average. Since the school enters a greater proportion of pupils for examination than is the case nationally, results represent very good achievement, particularly for lower-attaining pupils; no candidates attained less than an E grade in examinations. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' results. Results in 2004 are better than in 2003.
87. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average; pupils achieve well. By Year 9 pupils can describe events in detail in the past, present and future and express opinions and are beginning to give reasons for their views and identify the main points and detail from extracts of speech and short texts. They display a good understanding of grammar and write accurately using a good range of vocabulary and structures. However, this is not the case in speaking and responding; most find difficulty in manipulating the language on the spot without reference to notes and models. Because of this their pronunciation when working independently of the teacher is often approximate, being adversely affected by their dependence upon the written form of the language.

88. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average; pupils achieve well. By Year 11, pupils can write at length and in detail for a variety of purposes and in doing so they use a very good range of vocabulary and structures and link sentences effectively to compare and contrast ideas. However, although their listening skills are well developed as a result of extensive exposure to very good role models in lessons, their responses are very brief and they lack confidence in speaking and responding without recourse to guidance from the teacher or notes. Opportunities for pupils to use the language themselves are too often limited in both time and scope, so that they do not get enough chance to practise and use new language on a regular basis.
89. The most able pupils make very good progress; they have the opportunity to study up to three languages and transfer skills from one language to another. They are very well supported outside the school day and especially through interactive computer programs designed to enable them to extend their own learning.
90. Teaching and learning are good. Activities and resources are well matched to pupils' capabilities and sequenced well to enable pupils to build on previous learning; the needs of the least and most able are effectively addressed and these pupils achieve very well in examinations. Teachers have a very good command of French and usually use the language effectively to conduct activities. In the best lessons higher attaining pupils are challenged to interpret more complex instructions for others. Clear presentations of new language allow pupils to identify and apply patterns and enable pupils to rapidly understand and use new language themselves. Sensitive and supportive questioning enables all pupils to respond successfully. Starter activities are used well to consolidate previous learning and games and pair work activities are effective in increasing pupils' confidence and competence. In Year 11 a good lesson enabled pupils to make good progress in speaking. The lesson was well planned with clear steps in learning. Pupils began by revisiting previously learned school vocabulary and ways of expressing opinions. This was followed by a clear demonstration followed by effective questioning in French to show pupils how to link ideas together effectively to compare and contrast their opinions of school subjects. They were given opportunities to practise informally in pairs and, as a result, rapidly increased their confidence in producing more complex sentences. In contrast, an otherwise satisfactory lesson in Year 7 left pupils unsure about how to ask and answer each other about their leisure activities because steps in learning were not planned clearly enough and pupils had too little time or opportunity to practise key elements of the dialogue beforehand.
91. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They listen attentively, concentrate on tasks set and work productively in small groups and pairs. They have good relationships with their teachers and are concerned to do well. In a minority of instances they become restless and lose concentration during lengthy teacher-led activities where they are not directly involved themselves or when they find tasks too difficult. When they have had the opportunity to practise informally they are keen to participate in class oral work but when this is not the case they are reluctant to volunteer in class.
92. Leadership and management are good. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are good, examination results are analysed regularly and appropriate action is taken to raise standards. Marking is consistent across the department and teachers make good use of assessment information to inform pupils how to improve their work. However, there is still scope to use assessment information in lesson planning so that all pupils achieve their potential and raise standards further. Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory; although a large proportion of lessons are taught in specialist rooms, many are taught in inappropriate rooms without access to specialist resources and at a distance from the languages area. This restricts the range and variety of learning opportunities which can be provided since teachers have to carry equipment and resources across the school. Classes involved do not benefit as they should from display to reinforce the use of French in lessons. This arrangement also makes the monitoring of teaching and learning very difficult and slows development. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural

and social development, particularly through contact with native speakers, use of the Internet and opportunities for study trips abroad.

European and Community languages

Provision in languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's provision supports diversification of languages.
- Provision in French in Years 7 to 11 is good (see subject report).
- Standards in Spanish are well above average whilst in German they are below average (see samples above French report).
- The department has very good links with local schools.
- Few students continue with a language in the sixth form and standards are only average (see subject report).

Commentary

93. The school does not offer any community languages because very few pupils have a community language (a language other than English most likely spoken at home). The school offers three European languages, French, German and Spanish, from Years 7 to 10. Currently, French and German are offered in Year 11.
94. Curriculum arrangements are complex and permit all students to study a minimum of two languages. This year, as a pilot exercise, the top half of the ability range in Years 8 and 9 compulsorily studies three languages. Students with special educational needs are withdrawn from the second taster language so that they can receive directed support for their special needs. The school has made it possible for the most able linguists in Year 10 to study all three languages. This has been very successful; standards are high and pupils are very well supported outside the school day in extra lessons and through independent learning using ICT programs.
95. Uptake of a language in Years 10 and 11 is very good. However, only about one in fifteen pupils currently takes two languages. The successful introduction of Spanish has had a positive impact upon pupils' attitudes towards language learning; increasing pupils' opportunities to experience learning three languages in Year 9 has led to a significantly higher proportion of pupils now indicating they will take two languages in Years 10 and 11. Few students continue with a language into the sixth form and numbers taking German are low.
96. The modern foreign languages department makes a valuable contribution to teaching French in a local primary school and trains the primary teachers. Teachers in this school also teach well-attended evening classes in French and Spanish to parents and local businesses. Good relationships exist with other schools; for example, sixth formers helped Year 11 students to revise for their GCSE oral component when a school experienced staffing difficulties. The head of department does outreach work in the borough one day per week. The school has recently heard that it has been awarded Language College status. It is already making good plans to improve provision, for example in the use of ICT, next year.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is well above national averages.
- The high expectation of teachers effectively supports pupils' learning.
- In some instances there is insufficient variety in the range of teaching strategies used.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

97. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. GCSE results have consistently shown a marked upward trend. The results in 2004 were well above national averages and the proportion of grades at A*-A significantly exceeded national averages.
98. National test results at the end of Year 9 surpass the national improvement trend. In 2004 the proportion achieving the highest grades represents the best set of results achieved by the department. In comparison with both national and similar school data the attainment is well above average. The department rigorously focuses upon attainment and this is reflected in the recent results. Standards on entry of the current Year 7 were above average.
99. Standards seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 11 confirm the recent test results and pupils achieve very well. By Year 9 pupils are able to competently use trigonometry and lower-attaining pupils work successfully well on angles and constructions. By Year 11 pupils' work in lower ability groups is extensive and of high quality, including secure work on angle theorems. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well; the support they receive in lessons is very good and work is appropriately crafted to their needs by teachers and support assistants. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve as well as others. Clear evidence was seen of the use of mathematics as an investigative tool but the use of ICT is insufficient to support pupils' learning. The coverage of the Key Stage 3 framework and GCSE is thorough and pace is such that ample time can be devoted to examination revision.
100. Teaching and learning are very good. In the best lessons explanations are clear and questions are probing, demonstrating the high expectations teachers have. Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning and are encouraged to reflect on their work and evaluate and write comments about their understanding of it. In a Year 9 low-attaining set, pupils listened well to accurate explanations about simplifying algebraic expressions. As a result of questions matching the direction and pace of the lesson, all pupils were involved and able to explain their own ideas. Similarly, in a high-attaining Year 11 class, a range of questions laced with a very lively presentation totally engaged pupils. Very good use of an interactive white board supported the complete understanding of angles in circles. Pupils were visibly enjoying their work and were obviously very well motivated. However, where teaching was less skilled the style and balance of the lessons focused upon mathematical routines at the expense of opportunities to encourage pupils to openly think and take forward their own learning.
101. Leadership and management are very good. Documentation is sharp in detail. Analysis of test and examination data gives support for reflection and amendments to planning. Assessment is good and pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve. A well-used merit system recognises pupils' achievement. Retention of samples of pupils' work over a number of years helps the department plan improvements and successfully prepares individual pupils for examinations. The head of department is keenly aware of the need to further broaden curriculum, teaching and learning strategies to help pupils take the leap into post-16 mathematics.

102. Mathematics is currently taught in widely spread areas of the school; this impairs communication between teachers and mutual support.

Mathematics across the curriculum

103. There is a very clear policy for mathematics across the curriculum. Pupils' competence is very good in support of their other subjects. In science confident use is made of a range of ways of presenting numbers, for example graphs. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 handle measurements well, correctly apply units, take recordings from experiments and appropriately compare data. In design and technology, pupils are confident in the use of drawing scales and weighing, and can effectively estimate size and quantity. Pupils in music recognise rhythmic patterns, scales and retrograde inversion. Numeracy is prominent in ICT through programming and pupils are also very competent in the use of spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests and at GCSE are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall and pupils achieve very well.
- Teachers use ICT very well to both help teaching and to develop pupils' ICT skills.
- Though resources are good overall, there are insufficient to support higher level thinking skills.
- Creativity in Science and Technology (CREST awards) and Thinking Skills work are both successful in raising standards and understanding.

Commentary

104. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Standards, teaching, leadership and management are all much better. Unsatisfactory accommodation issues are currently being resolved through a programme of new building.
105. Standards on entry in Year 7 are currently above average. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 appear well above average and likely within the top five per cent of similar schools. Results significantly improved over the previous year. The trend over the last three years has shown steady improvement above the national trend. Results have generally been better than those in English, but not quite as good as those in mathematics.
106. GCSE results were well above average in 2004 and have shown an improving trend in recent years. There is a high proportion of A*-B grades. Boys' results in this school are similar to girls', which is opposite to the national picture.
107. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average and pupils achieve very well. By Year 9 pupils can interpret evidence systematically, measure accurately, and complete practical exercises effectively to obtain consistent results, work out symbol equations, and draw appropriate graphs from their own practical results. The thinking skills lessons in Years 7 and 8 extend the way pupils approach science and contribute to their understanding and ability to interpret evidence. This process is enhancing the quality of science learning throughout the school.
108. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and pupils continue to achieve very well. Boys' achievement is similar to that of girls. By Year 11, pupils can complete complex and accurate calculations, understand complex scientific principles and apply them to new situations, and use very good applications of ICT to enhance their learning. Work shows good examples of pupils applying ICT skills to extend their science knowledge and understanding, with some very good examples of research projects where pupils have used a number of

references to add to their own material. The introduction of triple science (biology, chemistry and physics) has extended the range of opportunities for pupils in science; the standard of work seen in these classes is very high, with very good motivation of pupils contributing to this level of work.

109. Teaching and learning are very good overall; they are very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. There are very good relations between teachers and pupils. In Year 7, in an excellent lesson on cells and reproduction, pupils showed they understand the life cycles of both fish and humans. They developed their own stories about fish and frogs, using the principles learned in the lesson, and showed good literacy skills. In Year 9, in a very good lesson on displacement of metals in solution, pupils completed a practical exercise working out how much heat was produced in a series of reactions. They showed they could design an experiment, carry it out, and measure results accurately. In Year 11, in an excellent lesson on waves and radiation, the teacher used a camera to show a demonstration of wave motion to the whole class. This enhanced learning and added a new dimension to using the interactive whiteboard, an excellent example of use of ICT by teachers.
110. Very good support by learning support assistants ensures pupils with special educational needs achieve success; the team of dedicated learning support assistants is well integrated into the work of the department. The most able pupils are supported well in extending their knowledge and understanding; teachers direct specific questions to ensure they are thinking of new ideas and other applications. However, there are insufficient resources to help stimulate this type of thinking.
111. Leadership and management are very good. A strong team of teachers works very well together to provide a good science experience for all pupils. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been well adopted to make lessons more focused. There is a good development plan with priorities established for the future. Resources are good overall and are used very effectively to provide plenty of practical science. Teachers are supported through peer assessment and monitoring, with in-service training opportunities taken up to improve skills. The science department successfully uses the facilities in the library with books being prepared for project work to add to other resources in lessons. Assessment is good and teachers use data effectively to monitor pupils' progress at all stages. Pupils are set targets and teachers revise them according to recent information about performance provided from tests and marked work.
112. The adoption of new laboratories in the very near future will solve problems of accommodation and provide more specialist spaces, storage, and teacher work spaces as well as specialist ICT facilities. Currently, lessons out of laboratories are well planned to extend learning and ensure there are no limitations for pupils. Very good support is given by the team of technicians, who work hard under current difficult circumstances.
113. Pupils are aware of moral and social issues relating to science, particularly in health and environmental topics, and teachers encourage them to develop their own ideas and attitudes. This makes a positive contribution to their understanding of their roles as citizens. The sixth form organises a science club on a weekly basis, which is very popular and effective in raising pupils' interest. Pupils are introduced to industry links through Creativity in Science and Technology (CREST) awards, and this type of work, specifically to promote work-based learning, needs to be developed more universally.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in the Business and Communications Systems course is well above average.

- Pupils' attitudes to their learning in ICT are excellent.
- The teaching of ICT is good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The use of ICT in subjects is good and is developing rapidly.
- Work in Year 9 is not developed as well as it might be.
- There are insufficient company links within the vocational context of the GCSE courses.

Commentary

114. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards in GCSE examinations have improved. Management is more effective. The use and impact of ICT across subjects has improved.
115. Teacher assessments show that attainment by the end of Year 9 in 2004 was average. Standards have improved over the last three years, in line with the national trend. The introduction of the ICT strand of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has supported the school's improvement.
116. GCSE results in 2004 were above average in the Applied ICT course and well above average in the Business and Communications Systems (BCS) course. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was high and the proportion attaining an A*-G grade was very high. Attainment on both courses was well above average compared with similar schools. Pupils on both courses experienced only two-thirds of the teaching that is recommended for these courses. These results therefore represent very good achievement for these pupils. Results in ICT subjects at GCSE have been consistently above average in recent years.
117. On entry, pupils' experiences of ICT cover a very wide range. The standard of work in Years 7 to 9 is close to national expectations and better than that seen in many schools. There is scope for the further development of the new national teaching units in Year 9, which will raise standards further. By Year 9 pupils can explore a financial model on a spreadsheet and use 'goal seek' to calculate a target level. They can identify bias in information sources and form and explore hypotheses. They can design a seating plan for a theatre booking system following an analysis of the required functions. They can undertake complex searches using Boolean logic. Pupils' achievement is good. Gifted and talented pupils produce outcomes that reflect their higher ability and depth of thinking, whilst pupils with special educational needs benefit from the guidance provided by teachers.
118. In Years 10 and 11 standards are above average on both GCSE courses. Pupils' achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment, especially considering that they experience less teaching than is recommended. By Year 11, pupils can create a database application on the subject of mobile phones including data validation routines. They can design and build a member database for a video shop and create a user guide using a range of IT applications. The vocational context required for these studies is partly provided by work experience but the development of links with local companies and organisations would further improve the quality and context of learning.
119. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good and satisfactory teaching. In a lesson judged as very good, the confident, in-depth approach by the teacher enabled pupils to understand how to program a database application with built-in validation and the use of queries. Good concentration and responsiveness characterised effective learning; this was underpinned by pupils' excellent attitudes and a good level of independent working. In a similar lesson, skilful questioning drew out a good understanding from pupils about devising and testing hypotheses relating to a dataset. Pupils were able to recognise and explain the nature of bias in forming questions. The lesson successfully promoted ICT capability and thinking skills at the higher ICT levels. Leadership for ICT is good. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in improving ICT provision. Senior staff have participated in a

national ICT leadership course (SLICT) and there is strong direction to ICT developments. There is now an above-average number of computers in the school and these are used to good effect by pupils.

120. The management of ICT is good. Substantial energy has gone into introducing new courses, providing ICT accreditation for all pupils at GCSE level and improving the quality of experience in Years 7 to 9. ICT teachers have made a significant response to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy in adapting teaching materials and developing their own expertise in some new areas. The current standards reported at the end of Year 9 can be expected to rise further as teachers develop the Year 9 units of work to the ambitious levels that can be expected from pupils in this school. Three well qualified technical staff manage a large, reliable network of computers, ensuring that teachers can make use of ICT, confident that there will be few technical problems.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

121. The use of ICT to teach and learn in subjects across the curriculum is good and is fast developing. There are currently examples of ICT used for learning in all subjects. Pupils have a good degree of access to school computers and many have the use of ICT at home. At lunchtime many pupils use the computer rooms for study and recreation. The Internet is used extensively by pupils for background research to their subject work. The use of ICT is improving the quality of presentation of their work, for example in geography. Pupils, a high proportion with special educational needs, following a vocational studies course in Years 10 and 11 follow ICT units of work which lead to accreditation; all pupils in one Year 11 class attained a distinction in word processing.
122. All teachers have access to ICT and many have laptop computers. The purchase of a large number of interactive whiteboards is a recent investment that is raising staff confidence and enthusiasm for using presentations to underpin their teaching. Particularly good use of whiteboards was seen in science. Most departments have identified ICT opportunities in their schemes of work and often use ICT areas for lessons. E-Learning Credits have allowed the school to acquire a good range of software. The impact of ICT use on pupils' learning is significant in design and technology and in music technology. Across design and technology subjects, pupils experience ICT for design, CAD CAM, computer control, digital photography (in food technology) and a computer microscope for investigating textiles. In art and design, pupils make use of photo-editing software but not often enough. Good use is made of the medium of ICT in English. The physical education department make use of a digital camera for the analysis of performance.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in both full and short courses at GCSE.
- Good teaching and learning engages pupils' interest and encourages them to work hard.
- There are very good attitudes to learning by all pupils.
- ICT is not used frequently enough to support learning in the classroom.
- Fieldwork opportunities in Years 7 and 9 are not extensive enough.

Commentary

123. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen. Assessment is now good. It is now one of the most popular optional subjects in Years 10 and 11 and is enabling more pupils to continue to A-level.
124. Standards on entry are average although, as pupils come from a large number of primary schools, they display a wide range of geographical expertise. By the end of Year 9 standards of work of both boys and girls are above average. The gap between the standards of boys and girls is smaller than the national pattern and ethnic minority pupils do equally well. In 2004, GCSE results for both short and full courses were well above national averages; boys did particularly well. In the full course almost all pupils attained an A*-C grade and almost twice as many attained A*- B grades as the proportion nationally, though the proportion of entries was half the national too, so comparisons need to be moderated to some extent.
125. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good and it is very good in Years 10 and 11. In relative terms, boys' achievement is slightly better than that of girls, whose achievement is, nevertheless very good. Pupils' attitudes are very good and particularly so in Years 10 and 11. The mutual respect between teachers and pupils creates a purposeful and harmonious atmosphere in classrooms.
126. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. The most successful lessons seen were those in which pupils were able to learn in a variety of ways and in which they were given opportunities to work independently and collaboratively. Year 9 pupils exploring contrasts in economic development and Year 7 pupils investigating settlement are able to discuss, select and present ideas confidently and articulately. Year 10 and 11 pupils are able to balance the positive and negative effects of transnational companies on less economically developed countries and to analyse the differential effects of coastal erosion with precision and perception. Pupils are encouraged by the challenging and sensitive support of their teachers. Learning was most secure when pupils were able to review and evaluate their progress with their peers and there is scope to extend this good practice to more lessons. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and provides helpful comments to enable improvement to be made and assessment arrangements are good.
127. Teachers recognise and provide for the differing needs of pupils and teaching assistants work with them effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use ICT very effectively in lessons and there were very good examples of pupils' use of ICT, especially in GCSE coursework. However, use of ICT as a support for learning in lessons is limited.
128. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department is an enthusiast and the increasing popularity of the subject as an examination choice reflects this. The head of department has very effectively managed temporary cover arrangements. There is an informative departmental handbook, and a clearly expressed development plan and schemes of work are detailed, although they still need some adaptation to meet the range of learning needs. The use of ICT as an aid to learning is underdeveloped, although access to equipment is a problem. Although there are opportunities for fieldwork, those in Years 7 to 9 are less good than those in Years 10 and 11. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The department's rooms are scattered and several are temporary rooms; this limits the amount of display and the use of ICT. Resources are satisfactory overall with some particularly good text books for GCSE.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 and standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11.
- GCSE results are very high in the full course but only slightly above average in the short course.
- Very good relationships with teachers underpin pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
- Very good leadership and management ensure continuing improvement and a rising trend in standards.
- ICT should be used more by pupils.

Commentary

129. Improvement since the last report has been very good. GCSE examination results continue to remain very high, with most pupils now achieving A*-C grades. In 2004 there was also double the national proportion of A*-A grades amongst the 36 pupils following the full course.
130. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning; they collaborate well and contribute actively to their own learning. By Year 9, pupils attain above average standards and they achieve well. Standards are raised to well above average by Year 11 for those who take a full course GCSE; standards in the short course are a little above average. Overall, pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11. In the work seen and lessons observed in Years 7 to 9, it is very evident that pupils demonstrate a good sense of chronology. They use historical skills of enquiry and interpretation well and the more able are developing high levels of research and recording skills. They work well as independent learners, as noted in their portfolios of work on 'working conditions in the nineteenth century'. In Years 10 and 11, pupils not only cover the examination syllabus content thoroughly but also build strongly on their previous knowledge and understanding to improve skills of inference, interpretation and cross-referencing. They use technical language very well and interpret and evaluate how sources present different accounts. They use information to identify reasons and explain events very well. Higher ability pupils are supported very well through additional resources and research opportunities whilst pupils with special educational needs are enabled to achieve as well as their peers, receiving additional support if necessary. There was little evidence to indicate that pupils make substantial use of ICT to help their learning.
131. Teaching and learning are very good overall; they are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a very good command of their subject and they know their pupils well. Their varied methods, including detailed planning, a fast pace and effective challenge, keep pupils engaged and on task, enabling pupils to acquire new historical knowledge and deepen their understanding. Teachers teach historical terminology and skills systematically and cover examination requirements very well. They have high expectations of both behaviour and standards of work. For example, in a briskly paced lesson in Year 11, the teacher asked pupils from different ability groups to make one-minute presentations, about specific elements in the education of girls and boys in Nazi Germany; their classmates listened carefully and then responded well to questions. There is good ongoing assessment, a special feature of it being pupils reviewing each other's work, which broadens historical interpretation. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard to enrich teaching and make better use of resources to help learning. Literacy is well supported through opportunities for lengthy writing in portfolio work.
132. Leadership and management are both very good. Leadership is very enthusiastic, bordering on to the inspirational. The department's work is well monitored. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make comments on how to improve it but do not indicate National Curriculum levels, which would, for example, make pupils' self evaluation more rigorous. There is a clear

vision about what needs doing and how to go about it; very good team-work and supportive relationships amongst staff provide good role models for pupils. The scheme of work is broad and balanced and makes good links with other areas of the curriculum. However, links with citizenship education are not always made explicit. History contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision is further enriched through visits to places of historical interest. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills or of the relationship of history to citizenship is not overt enough in planning. The department makes good use of the available accommodation for teaching and displays, which include pupils' work.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well due to very good teaching.
- The use of ICT is very good, and supports pupils' learning.
- The amount of time allocated in Years 7 to 9 is less than the national average and reduces the range of experiences that are offered to pupils.
- Day-to-day assessment in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory and pupils are unsure of how to improve.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory. In some lessons, pupils do not have access to all necessary resources.

Commentary

133. There has been very good improvement since the time of the last inspection, particularly in standards and teaching.
134. The 2004 Year 9 teacher assessments were accurate and indicated above average standards. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below those expected, as they have had little experience of the subject. All pupils make rapid leaps in gaining an understanding of design, making and evaluation processes. This is due to very good teaching. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
135. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, standards were well above the national average overall and had improved from previous years, particularly in the proportion attaining A* to C grades, which was well above average. The proportion of pupils who gained A* to G grades was average. The proportion who attained A*-A grades was almost twice the average.
136. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are well above average overall. Staffing problems, now partially overcome, have adversely affected standards and achievement by Year 11 pupils in resistant materials technology. However, by Year 11, pupils' projects are very well presented, and closely follow the design specification.
137. Teaching and learning are very good overall and underpinned by teachers' secure subject knowledge. Teachers have very high expectations, which lead to a high level of motivation by pupils. Lessons are very well planned, and no time is wasted, which contributes to the very good progress that pupils make in their learning. Teachers use questioning very well to foster explanations of ideas by pupils and encourage them to answer problems they encounter. Workshop practices are thoroughly taught, as demonstrated through the confidence with which pupils use equipment and tools in the workshops and kitchens. The use of ICT is very good; for example, Year 7 pupils produce work competently with computer-aided design and manufacture programmes (CAD/CAM). Leadership is very good and management is satisfactory. The department is divided into two material areas; this fragmentation militates

against the smooth running of this subject. Assessment is very good in Years 10 and 11, where pupils know in detail how to improve. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are not assessed according to National Curriculum levels in all areas, and they are unsure how to improve. The time allocated in Years 7 to 9 restricts the range of experiences that pupils receive, particularly in resistant materials, graphics and electronics. This results in time having to be spent in Year 10 on some basic skills that would normally be covered in Years 7 to 9. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, as the department is in separate areas of the school, and rooms are used where resources needed by the pupils are not available, which hinders the progress that they make.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

138. Three lessons in **drama** were sampled. Teaching was good and pupils made good progress. Drama is taught fortnightly to pupils in Years 7 to 9. Standards of work by Year 9 are average and by Year 11 are above average. GCSE results for 2004 were comfortably above average compared with those in all schools. Leadership and management of the department are good. A good programme of drama activities outside lessons enriches pupils' learning.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently well above average.
- Standards and achievement are very good in Years 7 to 9; they are good in Years 10 and 11.
- In Years 7 to 9, the quality of teaching is very good; it is good in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are of above average ability achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils do not use ICT enough for image manipulation.

Commentary

139. Overall improvement since the previous inspection has been good; the department has maintained the high standards and improved planning and assessment arrangements.
140. Attainment is average on entry; pupils have basic drawing and painting skills and knowledge and understanding of art. Progress is rapid and by Year 9 attainment is well above average. National Curriculum teacher assessment results are accurate and consistently well above the national average. GCSE results have improved from above average to well above average in 2004. The proportion of A*-C grades was well above average and, though there were no A* grades, the proportion of A grades was very high. There were more girls than boys; no significant variation is apparent in relation to gender or ethnicity.
141. Standards are well above average and achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9; pupils make rapid gains in learning skills, they have a well-established knowledge of a wide range of artists and cultures and confidently explore ideas in a broad range of media. Pupils' use of literacy is particularly strong, pupils write knowledgeably about art and their sketchbooks are full of high quality investigative work. Standards are above average in Years 10 and 11 and achievement is good; pupils express their own ideas well. They link their work meaningfully to artists and use a wide range of media confidently. Most pupils have strong observational skills and draw well. Across all years pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to flexible and supportive teaching. Above average ability pupils respond well to the challenging teaching; they achieve well and explore and express their own ideas. Attitudes and behaviour are consistently very good.
142. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are very good; at its best teaching is well structured, explanations are clear and very high standards of discipline are maintained. For example, in a

lesson on Cubism, Year 7 pupils were taught how to draw an accurate self-portrait from direct observation using mirrors and measurements; they were then shown how to rearrange the image and how to paint it in the style of Picasso. Pupils respond very well; concentration during lessons is very good and they willingly devote much of their own time to the challenging homework. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching provides a well-structured programme with varied and interesting activities, and expectations are very high. During the inspection good use was made of a visiting speaker who talked about the designing of the Lloyds building. Pupils listened attentively and asked perceptive questions in the plenary. Their work-related to this shows commitment and extensive research and development into the work of artists such as Leger and Delaunay. Year 11 teaching ensures pupils are well prepared for their GCSE examination; in one lesson they proceeded with confidence and were conscientious, enthusiastic and imaginative. A strong emphasis is placed on self-evaluation, which ensures pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and know what they need to do to improve.

143. The department benefits from very good leadership and management. Particular strengths include the planning and provision for the Year 7 to 9 curriculum, and excellent assessment practice which provides pupils with extensive useful information about their performance. Though the department is short of space it is very well organised and works efficiently. The provision and use of resources is generally good but insufficient use is made of ICT for image manipulation; teachers find it difficult to access the ICT network room for lessons.
144. The department engages very vigorously with external agencies and makes a very strong contribution to the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the school; pupils have won many prizes and competitions. Many visits to places of artistic interest have taken place and visitors come to the school to provide workshops for pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well because of very good leadership and management, teaching and learning.
- Both the number of GCSE pupils and their examination results are well above the national average.
- Pupils' learning and personal development are enhanced by very good extra-curricular opportunities.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have no opportunities to use music ICT programs.

Commentary

145. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards, achievement, teaching and learning have all improved and effective assessment is now in place. There is much better provision to support pupils of different capabilities and resources are better. Although ICT facilities have increased, their constant use for music technology in the sixth form means that pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not gaining any competencies in computer music programs.
146. Pupils' standards on entry are average. Standards by Year 9 are well above average and all pupils gain at least National Curriculum Level 5 in teachers' assessments. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is very good. Standards by Year 11 are well above average. GCSE results in 2004 were well above average, with an almost one hundred per cent pass rate at grades A*-C

and a high proportion of A-B grades. This was an improvement even on the very good results

in 2003. Achievement by the unusually high numbers of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good.

147. Teaching and learning are very good across Years 7 to 11. Learning is both rigorous and enjoyable because pupils are challenged and stimulated by a very good range of topics and practical activities which develop performing, composing and listening skills. However, keyboard technique is not as good as it could be for all pupils by Year 9, with the result that some pupils who then choose to take music in Years 10 and 11 are initially slightly disadvantaged. Pupils communicate well because they have regular opportunities to read and perform from musical notation and to analyse and evaluate using a very good range of technical language. Learning is progressive and the increasing demands teachers make on pupils of all levels of attainment are supported well by the adaptability of tasks and the personal help pupils receive from their teachers and fellow pupils. Some recent teaching in Years 7 to 9, although good, is very inexperienced in managing pupils' learning. Assessment for learning, which is very good especially in Years 7 to 9, makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress.
148. The majority of pupils show very positive responses to the quality of their learning and their concentration, collaboration, productivity, enthusiasm and determination to do well was outstanding in some classes observed. Well above average numbers of pupils learn instruments in the school and participate in a wide range of very good musical activities, which often culminate in public performances. The quality of teaching and coaching is very good. Overall, music makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development and to the reputation of the school.
149. Leadership and management are both very good. Music has a high profile and status in the school and its popularity, as indicated by pupils' own views and the numbers who choose to continue in Years 10 and 11, is remarkable. There is constant commitment to strategic development and improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9 as a result of good teaching.
- Over the past three years the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grade passes in the GCSE short course has improved and in 2004 was 95 per cent.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and, as a result, the quality of provision in physical education has not improved enough.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and results in a productive atmosphere in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
- Very good opportunities to take part in competitive fixtures throughout the year extend pupils' learning experiences.

Commentary

150. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.
151. Standards by the end of Year 9 are average; pupils achieve well in relation to their below average standards 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 the activities they follow. In swimming, for example, boys are able to adapt their front crawl style to the style required for water polo. In gymnastics, girls are developing their individual skills well and applying these successfully in pair work balance and sequence work. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils continue to build upon the quality of their work in previous years and achieve satisfactorily. Across all years pupils

have a good knowledge and understanding of the principles and procedures for warm up and cool down. However, the quality of evaluation of both their own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of their peers is not developed well enough across all activities.

152. In Year 11, groups of pupils are entered for the GCSE short course. The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grade passes has been high and in 2004 ninety-five per cent attained A*-C grades. There are no national comparisons for this course. Standards of work seen in the short course in Year 11 are above average and most pupils are achieving well. Pupils are now able to opt for the GCSE full course, with the present Year 10 group being the first. Standards of work seen are average and most pupils are achieving satisfactorily in developing their knowledge and understanding of health-related fitness. There are no significant gender differences.
153. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are better in Years 7 to 9. Lesson outcomes are shared with pupils at the start; pupils are immediately engaged and know what is expected of them. Good planning for structure, pace, progression and challenge involves pupils in pairs and small groups. Teachers have high expectations in terms of discipline, behaviour and the ability of pupils to work hard. This, along with the very good behaviour of most pupils in lessons and extra-curricular activities, helps create a productive learning atmosphere, though the strident approach of some teachers detracts from this. Effective use of questioning enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills and enables teachers to gauge level of pupils' understanding. There is, though, not enough support for pupils' literacy development in indoor lessons; whiteboards and chalkboards, for example, are not used to highlight terminology and key words.
154. Effective breakdown and demonstrations of skills, usually involving pupils, ensures they understand further what to do to make progress. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to be involved in peer coaching and evaluation – this would deepen pupils' understanding further and help them refine and develop their own practice. In a Year 7 girls' dance lesson, for example, too much teacher direction inhibited pupils' creativity. Teachers circulate well and their effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils aware of their capabilities and what they need to do to improve but no reference is made to physical education National Curriculum levels or what pupils need to do to reach these. There are not enough opportunities for the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in practical lessons. In the best plenary sessions, for example, in a Year 7 boys' gymnastics lesson, pupils are involved in discussion as to what they have learned and what they need to do to improve. GCSE theory work, though marked consistently, varies in quality because pupils are not always being told what to do to improve their work and comments, as regards missing work, are not followed up.
155. Unsatisfactory leadership and management have resulted in a lack of focus and direction for the subject and have been slow in building on the provision at the time of the previous inspection, for example, in introducing accredited courses such as full GCSE. The present short course taught over two years does not provide enough challenge for pupils and results in too much time being spent on revising and consolidating their knowledge and understanding of the theory aspects of the course. Documentation does not reflect or effectively guide the work of the department. Assessment of pupils' practical work in the common course at the end of Year 11 lacks clarity; it is not recorded and pupils are unaware as to how well they are performing.
156. Teachers give freely of their time to provide very good extra-curricular provision throughout the year, particularly competitive fixtures. This broadens pupils' learning opportunities, enhances their personal development and extends the learning opportunities for the more physically capable. As a result, teams have had success at local, district, regional, national

and international levels, particularly in volleyball for girls; seven individuals have achieved volleyball regional representative honours and three have achieved national representative honours.

157. The timetable structure of the school means that unless pupils take part in extra-curricular activities, it is not possible for them to experience two hours of quality physical education per week. This is particularly the case in Years 10 and 11. The physical education department has some data to show how many pupils take part in extra-curricular activities during the year but not for all activities and no data was given to inspectors. As a result, the government's target for 75 per cent of pupils taking part in two hours' quality physical education per week may not be met. The physical education department has plans to be involved in a local schools sports co-ordinator partnership scheme with a local sports college but has yet to become formally involved in the wider Physical Education School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCL).

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business Studies

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils studying the Businesses Communications Systems (BCS) GCSE examination attain above average standards and achieve well.
- Pupils' achievement in the GCSE Business Studies course is just satisfactory but not consistently so for all pupils.
- The department's readiness to offer a range of courses, including vocational ones, benefits the school.
- The inability of a part-time head of department to be a strong subject leader means that the current development of the department is hindered.

Commentary

158. No judgement can be made on improvement in business studies since the last inspection as the nature of the provision has changed since the previous report.
159. GCSE results in business studies have been variable over the past few years. In 2003 the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher grades was below average when compared to other schools but in 2004 they were well above. Boys did particularly well. Pupils achieved well compared to their prior attainment. Standards of work in the current Year 11 are broadly average. Although pupils understand the main elements of the course, they do not demonstrate good evaluative skills or awareness of the intrinsic links between the various aspects. This will limit their ability to obtain an A* or A grade. Overall, most pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Standards of work and the achievement of current Year 10 pupils are relatively higher.
160. The department jointly teaches the BCS course, which is a combined ICT and business studies GCSE. The results were well above average in 2004 and pupils' achievement was very good. Work in Year 11 is above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils make good progress on this vocational, skills based course. This is because of good, on occasions very good, teaching and the systematic management of a curriculum that focuses on short-term tasks and success. This style of work is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs.

161. Overall, teaching and learning in the GCSE business studies course are satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Better practice was seen in a Year 11 lesson where pupils made good progress as a result of a well structured lesson; they participated fully in discussions about the functions of Trade Unions. In another Year 11 lesson, the lack of a skilled response by a teacher to the challenging behaviour of a few pupils resulted in unsatisfactory learning. Teachers prepare good teaching materials that are a solid basis for revision and learning but lesson plans do not finely match the learning needs of pupils; the most able are insufficiently challenged and tasks are not sufficiently differentiated to improve the understanding of the less able or those with specific special educational needs. The course supports the development of numeracy well, with pupils using figures and charts competently. Assessment is satisfactory and in accordance with the requirements of the examination board.
162. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A part-time head of department has successfully implemented the BCS course, thereby maintaining the subject's ability to offer courses that cater for a wide ability range. However, other important facets of the leadership and management role are not strong. Part-time leadership means team building is difficult and problems are compounded by some teachers having additional roles. Although examination results are analysed effectively, other aspects of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not rigorous. Peer and self-review procedures are underdeveloped and there is an acceptance of schemes of work that do not relate in sufficient detail to new developments such as citizenship. They do not refer to opportunities for pupils to benefit from a range of visits and visitors, nor outline a range of teaching and learning styles nor state the differentiated tasks that would match the learning needs of a range of pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

163. Opportunities for pupils' **personal, social and health education** are good and meet statutory requirements.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Citizenship is now established well in dedicated lessons and other curriculum subjects.
- Pupils have good opportunities to practise active citizenship within the pastoral system, school council and community initiatives.
- The lessons seen did not make clear what standards pupils in different years and of differing capabilities should achieve.

Commentary

164. Citizenship is established well in the curriculum through dedicated lessons within personal, social and health education and throughout other subjects, notably, English, religious studies, history, geography, science, ICT and drama. The course is in its third year, which means that pupils in Years 10 and 11 missed the early years of learning. In the lessons seen in Years 8 to 11, standards of work were broadly average and demonstrate satisfactory achievement.
165. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but lessons were good where pupils had opportunities to discuss issues in ways which promoted understanding of different points of view. It was not clear what standards are expected from pupils of different ages and learning was not sufficiently adapted for those of lower or higher attainment. Dedicated lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers, some of whom are not always wholly confident or comfortable with sensitive issues, or cannot cope well if pupils respond differently from expectations indicated by the scheme of work. The majority of pupils' attitudes were good and they value the opportunities that the citizenship curriculum provides. However, in some

lessons pupils with particularly strong views or forceful personalities were allowed to dominate at the expense of contributions from other pupils. However, lessons are blocked in each year group to permit staff experienced in a particular aspect to teach across it or for all pupils to benefit from a visiting speaker.

166. The scheme of work and pupils' work books ensure conformity in work but the amount and continuity within it is limited by fortnightly rather than weekly lessons. Evidence from other subjects in the curriculum indicates that where the citizenship relevance of a topic, module or learning activity is made explicit, for example in English and religious education, pupils' learning is good or very good. In other subjects, however, good or very good opportunities are lost because pupils are not made aware of citizenship aspects.
167. Both leadership and management are good overall as diverse staffing and opportunities for citizenship have to be considered. Effective tracking is in place to monitor pupils' own evaluations of their citizenship development. This includes recording activities within and outside the school which can provide real opportunities for them to practise active citizenship. The monitoring of teaching and learning, identification of what standards the school expects pupils to achieve, and staff training all need further development.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	2	100.0	63.5	50.0	10.4	0.0	19.4
Business studies	3	67.0	75.3	0.0	15.4	20.0	25.7
Chemistry	3	66.7	70.3	0.0	13.2	20.0	23.0
Drama	5	100.0	86.6	20.0	19.8	37.5	30.9
Economics	5	60.0	71.6	0.0	18.6	14.0	25.8
English/English language	6	100.0	85.3	33.3	16.1	41.4	29.0
English literature	8	100.0	86.2	50.0	17.4	32.0	29.7
French	5	60.0	79.8	0.0	19.4	15.0	28.2
Geography	5	80.0	75.5	40.0	20.4	37.5	27.0
German	4	75.0	81.6	25.0	18.8	26.7	28.8
Mathematics	6	83.3	79.8	0.0	16.9	21.7	27.5

Other social studies	5	100.0	67.8	20.0	15.1	32.0	23.2
Physics	6	83.3	66.4	16.7	14.8	31.7	22.4
Religious studies	6	100.0	82.2	33.3	26.1	41.7	31.2
Vocational studies	1	0.0	56.7	0.0	8.9	0.0	18.0
Total	70	77.1	73.3	17.1	16.6	28.3	25.3

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	
Biology	11	100.0	96.6	38.5	40.0	81.5	79.3	
Business studies	16	100.0	98.9	12.5	39.4	60.0	81.8	
Chemistry	10	90.0	97.9	40.0	50.0	70.9	85.7	
Drama	10	100.0	99.6	20.0	42.8	72.0	85.1	
Economics	5	100.0	98.8	0.0	54.3	56.0	89.8	
English/ language	English	26	100.0	99.2	50.0	36.4	80.8	81.1
English literature	23	100.0	99.4	34.8	44.9	80.9	85.5	
French	10	100.0	99.0	40.0	53.1	86.0	88.9	
Design and technology	4	100.0	97.8	50.0	35.0	85.0	77.9	
Geography	9	100.0	98.8	44.4	46.4	88.9	85.2	
German	6	100.0	98.6	33.3	49.6	80.0	86.3	
History	17	100.0	99.0	47.1	45.6	91.8	85.1	
Mathematics	9	100.0	96.8	33.3	56.6	75.6	89.5	
Music/Music Technology	12	100.0	98.2	25.0	37.1	76.7	79.5	
Other social studies (Politics)	13	100.0	97.4	84.6	42.5	100.0	81.6	
Physics	6	100.0	96.7	33.3	45.3	80.0	82.6	
Religious Studies	17	100.0	99.1	52.9	49.5	91.8	87.4	
Vocational Studies	5	100.0	91.3	0.0	24.2	52.0	67.1	
Total	209	98.1	97.8	39.2	42.9	80.5	82.5	
VCE Business	8	100.0	91.6	0.0	24.1	57.5	67.9	
Information Technology VQ	13	100.0	88.3	38.5	26.9	77.7	67.8	

Total	21	100.0	91.1	23.8	25.7	70.0	68.8
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ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

168. A lesson in **English language** was sampled. Teaching was good. Students made good progress and enjoyed their work as they explored aspects of dialect and accent. Work seen was of average standard. GCE A-level examination results for 2004 were average. Those for 2003 were well above average.

English literature

Provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that students enjoy lessons and make good progress.
- Standards of work have improved since the previous inspection.
- Good leadership and management are helping to raise standards of teaching and learning.
- Students are not always clear where they stand against national standards.

Commentary

169. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Although examination results are at similar levels, students are attaining higher standards in lessons and homework.

170. A-level examination results in 2004 were average. Results were better than those in 2003, which were below average. The proportion of students attaining A or B grades was below the national average but overall the results were average. Results in 2004 do not match the standard of work seen because current students started in the sixth form with higher standards.

171. Standards of work are above average. Students achieve well. Students make good progress in lessons and achieve at least as well as predicted on earlier test and examination results. By Year 13, students write well-crafted essays that show good understanding of texts and a sharp awareness of examination requirements. Thoughtful essays evaluating the prejudices of post-Holocaust audiences compared with those of contemporary audiences for *The Merchant of Venice* typify the perceptive work of many students. Notes are carefully compiled but not always best organised to support effective revision.

172. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons the academic rigour that characterises teaching in all lessons is coupled with an explorative excitement that leads to very good learning. In a very good Year 13 lesson students were challenged to date poems from six different periods, using clues derived from language and content. Working in small groups under tight time constraints students were resourceful and enthusiastic so that they learnt very well. A lesson on Shakespearian sonnets was less exciting and learning less good. Despite a mature and reflective appraisal of one sonnet by a student, little was done to follow this up or to enlist the views of others in order to deepen learning. Students respect the very good knowledge of their teachers. They appreciate the consistent support they receive both in and outside lessons. Assessment is good. Marking is detailed and provides good support for improvement. However, students are not always clear about where they stand in relations, to national standards. They are not given sufficient guidance on effective note-making.

173. Leadership and management are good. The course is well organised so that students are very clear about examination requirements and what they need to do to succeed. Relationships

between staff and students are very good, so that a strong sense of working together is evident in lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

174. Students show a good range of skills in language and literacy. They have confident and effective oral communication skills, so that in all subjects they participate fully and readily in speaking and listening activities. Written work is generally fluent, well organised and substantially accurate. Reading skills are well developed, so that good background study and research are evident in the work of most students. Teachers show good awareness of literacy in their focus on specialist vocabulary and in their careful marking of written work.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good knowledge of French provides very good learning opportunities.
- The care and commitment shown by teachers promote a strong sense of support for students.
- Teachers do not consistently expect high standards of work from students.
- Insufficient students' work is regularly marked to provide enough feedback to them.

Commentary

175. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because work done towards Language College status has a positive influence on departmental ethos. In recent years the numbers of students taking French have slowly risen, though they remain modest at about ten per year. Results at A-level have been average, which is a decline since the previous inspection when standards were above average. However, the nature of the cohort has changed and achievement is satisfactory.
176. Few students cash in their AS results but those who do attain average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. In 2004, students at A and AS levels attained fewer higher grades than nationally and the AS results were much lower than in 2003. A-level results were average and achievement was satisfactory.
177. Evidence seen during the inspection confirms that students' work is broadly average at both levels. A very small minority of students are working at a high level. Many students, especially female, are reluctant speakers and lack the oral confidence evident at the previous inspection. More outgoing male students make systematic progress because they are willing to "have a go". Writing is satisfactory but shows insecure knowledge of language structures. Students demonstrate considerable interest in the topics and moral dilemmas they study. Many Year 12 students find it difficult to bridge the language gap between GCSE and AS level and take too long to form a firm foundation for progression to sixth form standards. Many are skilled at supporting their views and opinions by using evidence from their reading.
178. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In individual lessons teachers use very well their very good knowledge of French, though sometimes they dominate proceedings and students are not given sufficient time to practise the language. They address a good range of topic areas which match examination requirements well. The better students take responsibility for their own learning by conducting appropriate research. However, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve and rely too heavily on commercially produced worksheets, some of which target very basic language. Where students' work is marked, it is done satisfactorily. However, students make frequent language errors in work which shows no evidence of being seen by the teacher and consequently they perpetuate these errors.

179. Leadership of this area is good and management is satisfactory. The head of department has a good vision for the development of the subject and for increasing the numbers of students. She has developed several aspects well, such as visits and work experience in France which develop students' learning. The wealth of assessment information available is not analysed accurately enough and teaching strategies need further development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and confident command of the subject enables competent students to achieve well.
- The subject is increasingly popular, which corresponds with the most recent results in Year 11.
- The rate of retention beyond AS level is an issue for continuing improvement.
- The use of ICT to both teach and learn mathematics is not developed.

Commentary

180. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The number of students choosing mathematics has significantly increased, which corresponds to the significant improvement in Year 11 attainment particularly at the A*-A grades in GCSE in 2003 and 2004.
181. The 2004 results at A-level were below average and showed a decline from the results of 2002 and 2003. When compared to prior attainment, individual grades in 2004 show achievement to be satisfactory. The relatively low numbers of entries mean national comparisons do not mean much.
182. Standards seen in the inspection are above average. The current Year 13 module results confirm that students are above average and at least in line to achieve their predicted grades. Opportunities for further improvement are available when some students retake modules. The national issues surrounding AS mathematics have now been addressed and in light of this the school has amended its curriculum provision. The retention rate has been an issue for improvement but in Year 13 there are now more students than there were last year. Overwhelmingly, students in Year 12 confirmed their intentions to continue into Year 13.
183. Teaching and learning are good. Mathematical and study skills are well developed. For example, in a Year 12 lesson a student successfully presented to the group his knowledge of discrete random variables; other students responded maturely and asked and answered appropriate questions. Misunderstandings were dealt with, mathematical conventions well explained, and interjections from the teacher assisted the flow of the lesson and emphasised important issues. Teachers display a good command of the subject and students speak highly of the overall quality of teaching, including the assistance they receive outside of lessons. Note taking is of a high quality and useful for future revision. Students are aware of their progress and the means by which to improve their standard of work. Sound coverage of work was seen in books and topics were covered from first principles, which give good support to the step between GCSE and AS/A-level work. A fine example of this was calculus. No evidence was seen of the use of ICT to enhance students' understanding of mathematics.
184. Leadership and management are good. The desire to improve provision in Years 12 and 13 and thus to mirror and build upon the success seen in the main school is clearly evident. An analysis of past outcomes and knowledge of examination options and requirements is sound. As a result, the curriculum has been amended to provide opportunities to further improve standards and increase the number of students taking A-level. The head of department leads a blend of teachers who are appropriately deployed to utilise their strengths well. The overwhelming majority of students agree that mathematics was a correct choice and endorse the sound guidance given prior to undertaking their studies.

Mathematics across the curriculum

185. In A-level subjects, students have the grasp of mathematics required for the study of their subjects. For example, in physics, chemistry and biology, students competently identify the commonality within and between the subjects. In geography, statistics, in particular correlation, are used and understood well. In ICT the sound grasp and use of spreadsheets is effectively consolidated by appropriate mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

186. Lessons in A-level **biology** and in **physics** were sampled. They were very good and students were achieving very well.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers have a secure command of their subject.
- Teachers have good relationships with students, which help them learn.
- A variety of teaching approaches is used, which maintains interest and achievement.
- Students do not find out things for themselves enough.

Commentary

187. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; teaching is better.
188. Standards in A-level chemistry in 2004 were below average and below results in physics and those in biology in this school. The number of candidates was small but is growing each year. AS chemistry results were a little below average overall.
189. In current work students are achieving well and attaining above average standards. There are currently a larger number of students taking both AS and A-level and the retention onto A-Level courses is good. Standards are improving because of good teaching, which ensures students understand topics comprehensively, and supports individual students with extra advice and guidance where necessary.
190. Students work hard outside their lesson commitments to ensure they are up to date with their notes and have completed homework assignments appropriately. Students are motivated to achieve well, and have chosen chemistry on the basis of good performance in the subject at GCSE. Year 12 students show good practical abilities, measuring temperatures accurately in an exercise to measure enthalpy changes in solution, for example. They recognise the sources of inaccuracies and can make assessments of how to reduce these factors so that the final calculation is improved. In Year 13 students show a good understanding of activation energies, and can calculate the order of reaction, and the reaction mechanism from data provided. In this context they show they can apply existing knowledge to new situations to explain how a reaction will proceed. They understand how transition state theory can help explain reaction mechanisms, and apply to the different reactions they know, such as SN2 (methyl radical reacting with HCl) and SN1 (reactions involving carbonation).
191. Teaching is good, with the team of teachers having good command of the subject. They provide a good balance of experience and knowledge to give good coverage of the chemistry syllabus. There are good relations with students and they respond positively to help that is given outside lesson time. Teachers use a variety of approaches, using ICT applications well when appropriate. Work seen shows that students have compiled good sets of notes and made an effort to complete research topics on an independent basis, using a range of resources. However, such independent work is not yet established well enough.
192. Leadership and management are good. Schemes of work are well organised and include specific references to exemplar material and successful approaches to particular topics. The pathways through the subject build on specific skills in a logical progression to ensure that students are well prepared and able to succeed. The team of teachers keep themselves well informed of each other's contributions so work proceeds smoothly. Newly qualified teachers are well supported.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

193. The school offers an advanced vocational qualification in ICT. In 2004, 13 students were entered; standards were above average and there was a well above average proportion of A-B grades. These results were much better than in 2003 when results were well below average and there were no A-B grades. Lessons were not sampled but teachers of this course were seen teaching a similar vocational course; teaching was at least good and students were achieving well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

194. Students can use computers well to support their studies. There are plenty of computers available just to them and they are in use from early morning until late in the evening. Some subjects foster the use of computers better than others. The picture mirrors that described in the Key Stage 4 section of the report.

HUMANITIES

195. History and geography were inspected fully. One lesson of **government and politics** was sampled; results in A-level are typically very high and from the lesson observed and work seen, it is very clear that students' achievement is very good and that standards are improving further. Teaching and tutoring in government and politics are very effective; they enable pupils to learn very well by developing very good skills of analysing their own and each other's work.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers display an excellent knowledge of the examination requirements.
- Students have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Some students have not developed independent learning skills well enough.

Commentary

196. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Good standards of teaching have been maintained; examination results have improved and the number of students studying the subject has increased.
197. In 2004 both the A-level and the AS results were above average. Students achieved grades that were higher than their prior attainment would suggest; they did better than expected. There was no significant difference between the achievements of males and females and, notably, those who had previously followed the GCSE short course fared as well as those who had taken the full course. Grades achieved by the most able and the least able students were well above expectations, with middle ability students achieving satisfactorily. Students who joined the school in the sixth form did as well as those who had been at the school since Year 7.
198. Standards of work are above average. Achievement is good. Students in the sixth form display excellent attitudes to learning. They are confident, articulate and cooperative, making the atmosphere in lessons mature and purposeful. The respect and consideration afforded to them by their teachers contributes greatly to their achievement.
199. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best lessons seen students were challenged to produce imaginative answers that showed breadth and depth. A problem-solving approach to explain the processes of erosion on Chesil Beach allowed students not only to demonstrate their understanding of the topic but also to display the mature and cooperative demeanour that characterised all lessons. In examining statistics on world trade, more able students offered perceptive opinions and less able students were supported and encouraged through teaching that benefited from an expert knowledge of examination requirements. Most students show a well-developed capacity for independent study although some less able students require further support in this respect. Many students use their ICT skills very effectively in the production of coursework assignments.

200. Leadership and management are good. Despite staff changes and having to carry a substantial additional responsibility, the head of department maintains enthusiasm and displays an excellent knowledge of the examination system, which helps students to achieve well. Assessment is good. Students are well aware of the level at which they are working and what steps they need to take to improve further. Marking is conscientiously carried out and offers useful guidance through helpful comments. The department offers good opportunities for field work, enabling students to develop and apply their understanding in real life situations. Schemes of work are detailed and clear and the departmental development plan is sharply focused on raising the quality of teaching and learning.
201. Accommodation is unsatisfactory; many lessons have to be taught in non-specialist rooms, which makes the use of ICT and other resources more difficult than should be the case. However, the department makes very good use of its resources to ensure that the shortcomings in accommodation do not hinder learning too much.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are very high in AS and A-level examinations and students achieve very well.
- Teaching is consistently very good; teachers have very good command of their subject and a good understanding of their students' needs.
- Students work well collaboratively and independently but some require additional support.

Commentary

202. Standards achieved in 2004 in AS and A-level examinations were above average; results show a steady upward trend over the last three years. Females do better than males whereas the reverse is true in many subjects.
203. Current work improves upon these standards. Standards are well above average and students are achieving very well; they are developing as high quality historians. Students know how to address questions about historical sources effectively and can analyse different points of view, come to their own judgements and present a balanced conclusion. In Year a 12 lesson, students made very good contributions to a collaborative concept map about steps taken to tackle unemployment in Nazi Germany. Year 13 students demonstrated that they are becoming increasingly confident in analysing and expressing their views based on their own knowledge and deepening understanding of sources about Stalinist Russia. They are building a very detailed understanding of the marking requirements of A-level examinations to improve their own essay writing. In both years, students are very keen and participate fully in their learning, though some need additional prompting to improve and complete their written tasks.
204. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it well to support learning, balancing group discussions with appropriate interventions to make clear the complexity and stages within work and to consolidate and build on previous learning. They have good and friendly relationships with their students, whom they know well, and plan their lessons to meet students' individual needs effectively. Teachers engage students very well in discussions, helping them along by building on their knowledge and experiences, particularly in relation to their essays and preparation for examinations. They monitor and evaluate students' work very well and guide them on how to improve. Students are very appreciative of the quality of support and guidance provided. Teachers also provide opportunities for enrichment by trips to Italy and the USA.

205. Leadership and management are very good. There is a good system of monitoring and evaluation of students' work and relevant support is given to them for improving their performance. Students' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very well supported. Accommodation is adequate and resources are good.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Graphics with materials technology

Provision in graphics with materials technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and teachers have very high expectations.
- Students are motivated to succeed and their achievement is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students are encouraged to be independent learners.
- There are too few visits to business and industry.

Commentary

206. There is insufficient evidence to give a judgement on improvement since the last inspection. In 2004, students sat this examination for the first time. In the A-Level examinations, results were very good, with half the students gaining A and B grades. Students achieved very well, above their target grades.
207. Standards of work in Year 13 are below expectations, but this represents very good achievement by students. Standards in Year 12 are very high, and this also shows very good achievement. Each group of students began the course with very different prior attainment; work in design and technology has been improving rapidly under new leadership. All students produce coursework that is very well presented and shows an understanding of the requirements of the client for whom they are producing designs.
208. Teaching is consistently very good and demonstrates an enthusiasm for the subject and specialised subject knowledge. There is an understanding that only work of the highest quality will be accepted, to which students respond positively. They take tremendous care with making models and give reasoned explanations for decisions that they have made. Lessons are also imaginative. For example, role-play puts students into the work place, simulating the realities and vagaries of the real world. This focuses their attention onto the project, and they learn practically about designing to a tight specification. The individual attention that they receive, often as one-to-one tutorials, motivates them to drive themselves forward to attain high standards. Teachers also encourage independent learning, and this approach further motivates students to succeed.
209. Leadership and management are very good. A careful evaluation of the previous course on offer resulted in this successful course. Teaching is not confined to one teacher and this adds positively to students' understanding and knowledge about the subject. Retention is good and some students anticipate going on to higher education in an area allied to design. Visits, which widen students' understanding and give them insight into design outside the classroom, are not an integral part of the scheme of work.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

210. **Theatre studies** was sampled; one lesson was seen. Teaching was good. Year 13 students made good progress working on their devised pieces for the examination. Good directorial skills were evident in all groups and students supported one another very well. They showed particular relish for the physical aspects of their performances. Work seen was at average

levels. GCE A-level examination results for 2004 were well below the national average. Those for 2003 were average.

Art and design

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by Year 12 are well above average.
- Year 13 are achieving below average standards but achieving satisfactorily.
- Though teaching meets the needs of most of the pupils, it is not structured enough for students with below average skills.

Commentary

211. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. As in the previous inspection, examination results reflect pupils' ability in the subject. Standards are no longer consistently above average; they are average, but this reflects students' prior attainment. Students continue to research widely and use materials innovatively and experiment creatively.
212. There were no A-level candidates in 2004. In 2003 A-level results were below average compared to all schools. They appear lower than might be expected because some candidates had low prior attainment; they achieved as well as might have been expected. High and very high grades were achieved by pupils with high standards of prior attainment.
213. Standards are average overall. They range widely from Year 12, where they are well above average, to Year 13, where they are below average. However, overall, students achieve satisfactorily. Year 13 work shows insufficient development and is tentative whereas Year 12 work shows good observational skills, uses a wide range of media and is confident and expressive. Year 12 written work shows a good level of intellectual engagement and sustained development. Students' work shows they enjoy the challenge the subject provides.
214. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it meets the needs of the most able very effectively but is less effective with lower attainers. Though teaching engages students' interest it is only the most able who sustain a high level of involvement over an extended period. Most Year 12 students respond very positively to the individualised, open-ended approach to work, maintain their full involvement and produce expressive and imaginative work. Despite reassurance and encouragement from teachers some Year 13 students lack confidence. For example, whilst watching a video about the Museum of Modern Art in New York, only a few Year 13 students were able to express well-argued opinions about the work of artists such as Francis Bacon and Jackson Pollock. Year 12 respond enthusiastically to opportunities to express their ideas and views and can confidently express their opinions of each other's work. Teachers place considerable emphasis on literacy and this is evident in students' work.
215. Leadership and management are satisfactory; planning ensures that sufficient, appropriate resources and materials are provided and that students follow a well-organised course. However, Year 13 have single periods rather than double lessons; this is inappropriate as insufficient time is left after introduction and clearing away for practical work. Assessment arrangements ensure good regular feedback and helpful guidance as to the standards they are achieving and what they should do to improve. Students are very positive about the course and they enjoy the opportunity to express their own ideas but Year 13 said they did not fully anticipate the volume of work involved. They find the teaching good and they have adequate resources but Year 13 find the accommodation limiting as they cannot leave their unfinished work out or return during study periods to work.

216. The subject makes a positive contribution to students' cultural development through visits to art galleries and museums and from visiting artists and designers. It also makes an important contribution to students' spiritual development by requiring them to engage with the non-material dimensions of life through studying natural objects and marvelling at their forms.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning, including opportunities for enrichment and responsibility, are improving students' achievement.
- There are well above average student numbers in music and music technology. Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with their studies.
- Inadequate accommodation and resources cannot properly support the expansion of music technology.

Commentary

217. Two separate courses, music and music technology, are offered at both AS and A-level. Numbers of students are well above average on both courses and both enrolments and standards are rising. As a result, improvement since the previous inspection is good.
218. Students' standards of attainment on entry to both courses vary widely. Those students who gain GCSE music in Year 11 are better supported for the conventional A-level course than for music technology and standards on entry are broadly average. As there is no music technology at GCSE, students' entry standards to the advanced technology courses are below average. A-level results in 2004 were broadly average overall. In 2003 they were slightly above average. Current standards of attainment by Year 13 in music are above average and examination results are likely to show improvement on 2004. Standards by Year 13 in music technology are broadly average. Overall, students achieve well by Year 13.
219. Teaching and learning are very good overall, although marginally better in music than music technology. All staff, including the music technology tutor – technician, have excellent command of their subjects, expert musical skills, professional experience and boundless enthusiasm. Their complementary specialisms mean that students have access to an unusually wide range of skills and knowledge. In music, rigorous teaching promotes independent learning and confidence by providing very good study and thinking skills and placing a share of the responsibility for improvement on students themselves. The effective team teaching in music technology sometimes misses opportunities to reinforce and consolidate students' learning and test their understanding by involving students in questioning and critical analysis.
220. In both courses, above average group sizes and good student performing skills mean a wide range of lesson activities promotes effective collaboration. Excellent relationships and mutual respect mean that students feel valued. They in turn appreciate the level of care and guidance from their teachers. Very good opportunities for responsibilities, such as instrumental teaching, directing and accompanying ensembles and organising performances, enhance students' musical experience. Sixth form students provide a very positive role model and good influence in the subject for pupils in the rest of the school. During the inspection, students in Year 13 expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of their studies. They demonstrated outstandingly positive attitudes and commitment. Students are increasingly successful in gaining placements in higher education music and music technology courses.

221. Although overall resources just support these much larger than average sixth form numbers, specialist accommodation and resources are inadequate to sustain the rapid expansion in music technology. As a result, staff are using their own equipment to service the course.
222. Leadership and management of this much larger than average, complex and successful music department are very good. There is constant commitment to improving students' opportunities and standards promoted by effective monitoring and strategic planning.

BUSINESS

223. The main focus was on A- level but the **Advanced Vocational Certificate** was sampled. Results in examinations have been variable over the past few years, although always below those attained nationally. Achievement has been good when these results have been compared to students' prior attainment. This is still the case; the small Year 12 group are well taught and learn easily as the result of the teachers' good subject knowledge and the supportive relationships that are a feature of the class.

A-level business studies

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is just satisfactory; there is scope for improvement.
- A part-time head of department cannot offer strong pro-active leadership and there are examples of good practice which are not in place, such as a range of visits and visitors.
- Aspects of monitoring and evaluation are underdeveloped.
- There are weaknesses in both marking and guidance on how to improve work.
- Teaching materials are frequently well prepared.
- There is good teaching and learning of certain aspects of the subject, such as finance.

Commentary

224. No judgement about improvement since the previous report can be made due to the changing nature of the provision.
225. Examination results compared to national averages have been variable. A-level results were well below average in 2002, above in 2003 and well below again in 2004. Students in 2004 achieved satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Current standards of work in Year 13 are below average; students are not producing high quality evaluative answers or making well informed links between the various aspects of business although they understand the basic elements of the curriculum well. Students are achieving satisfactorily. Results in the last AS examinations were well below the average and achievement was unsatisfactory. The current Year 12 is making better progress and is achieving satisfactorily.
226. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good teaching in a Year 12 lesson led to students' quick identification of the different stages of a business cycle. Teaching and learning about finance and accounts is good. Students cover the syllabus in a structured manner and are well supported by relevant handouts. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen but learning would have been better if the links between different units of work had been made clearer. Fundamental economic and business concepts are sometimes insufficiently stressed, as are the techniques required for good evaluative answers. Marking is variable and students require stronger guidance on good strategies to improve coursework.

227. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department continues to be committed to new curriculum initiatives. However, the part-time head of department does not teach the A-level course and the development of a strong team is difficult. Students do not benefit from an annotated book list or a list of web sites to help develop their self-study skills. Although they do research as part of their course work there is not a continuous focus on reporting and evaluating current business news and a range of visits and visitors does not enhance understanding; both activities would reinforce independent learning. Examination results are analysed but other aspects of monitoring and evaluation are not common. There has not, for example, been a survey of student satisfaction to ascertain why so many do not continue to study the subject in Year 13.

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	3	2
How inclusive the school is		1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Pupils' achievement	3	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	1	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	3	2
How well pupils learn	3	2
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	3
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	4	3

The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	2
The effectiveness of management	3	2

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