

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ASHCOMBE SCHOOL

Dorking

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125264

Acting headteacher: Mr D Blow

Lead inspector: Mr J Bald

Dates of inspection: 18th to 22nd October 2004

Inspection number: 268948

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: Community
Age range of pupils: 11 to 18
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 1603

School address: Ashcombe Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr M Jones

Date of previous inspection: May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much larger than most secondary schools, and is a specialist language college. It has won several awards for its teaching and for its curriculum development in modern languages, particularly in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching. Other awards include Investors in People, Healthy Schools and Sportsmark. The regional volleyball centre is located at the school. A very large majority of pupils are white, with a small number who come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very few speak English as an additional language, and almost all of these pupils have good skills in English. Standards among pupils joining Year 7 are well above average overall, although there is a very wide range in the standards reached by individual pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average, and there are fewer with a Statement of Special Educational Needs than in most schools. However, a significant minority of pupils have behavioural difficulties. The school population is stable. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but the overall social and economic circumstances of the school are very favourable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17932	John Bald	Lead inspector	French (sixth form)
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector	
22685	Natalie Moss	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language
24891	Jackie Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics (main school)
8361	Mac Burley	Team inspector	Science
1249	Joe Edge	Team inspector	Physics, Chemistry (sixth form)
31705	John Mason	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (main school); German (sixth form)
4223	Garth Collard	Team inspector	History
30114	Ann Kenward	Team inspector	Geography
18638	Chris Shaw	Team inspector	Art and design; Information and communication technology (ICT) main school
22491	Lorraine Small	Team inspector	Design and technology; ICT (sixth form)
8360	Frederick Peacock	Team inspector	Music, special educational needs.
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education
10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	Religious education
4486	Mike Weller	Team inspector	Citizenship, media studies (sixth form)
15576	David Nebesnuick	Team inspector	Business studies, work-related learning.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall quality of education is very good. Standards in Year 11 and in the sixth form are well above average, and overall achievement is very good. Teaching is very good, with outstanding features; learning is also very good, but is less consistent, particularly among boys. All pupils have many opportunities to work creatively, and to develop their gifts and talents. The acting headteacher and governors lead and manage the school very well, and have good plans to improve its work further. Value for money is very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve very well across a broad range of subjects.
- Senior and middle managers provide a high standard of leadership and management.
- Achievement is often excellent in creative subjects, and is excellent overall in science.
- Most pupils enjoy school life, behave very well, and are happy to accept responsibility.
- Boys' achievement is sometimes held back by weak literacy skills, and minor misbehaviour.
- Some teachers need to be more consistent in their use of school policies and procedures.
- The language college is highly effective, and makes excellent use of computers.
- Partnerships with parents are very good, and those with other schools and the community are excellent.

The school has shown good improvement since it was last inspected. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has almost doubled, and there have been big improvements in planning, assessment and target setting, and in the use of computers. The range of learning opportunities has been extended, and much additional support has been developed for pupils at risk of exclusion. Management systems have been improved in the main school and in the sixth form, though teachers need to use some systems more consistently. There has been good progress on most issues identified for improvement, though more needs to be done to raise achievement and consistency of learning among boys.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement is very good. The grade A* indicates that results in this category were in the top five per cent nationally. Achievement and standards in Years 9 and 11 and in the sixth form during the inspection were similar overall to these examination results. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils do very well, and there is much excellent work in music, drama and art. Boys do better than in most schools nationally, but could improve their GCSE and A-level results by a more consistent approach to work in and out of lessons.

Pupils' **personal qualities**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Most pupils have very good attitudes to work and school life, and develop a strong sense of service to others. A minority only work and behave as they should when they have a strong lead from the teacher. Attendance is average in the main school, and good in the sixth form; some pupils are too often late for lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is very good.

Teachers use their detailed knowledge of their subjects to plan a wide range of activities to interest and challenge pupils. They present and explain work very clearly, and make very effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). Learning is also very good overall, but some pupils' learning is held back by their own misbehaviour. Teaching assistants are very effective. There is a significant proportion of excellent teaching, which has been recognised by regional and national awards. The curriculum offers a very wide range of learning opportunities, in and out of lessons, with particular strengths in modern languages, science and the creative arts. It provides good support for lower-attaining pupils. The school takes very good care of pupils and guides them well. It has a very effective partnership with parents, and an excellent relationship with the community and with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good, with strengths in senior and middle management, development planning, monitoring teaching and analysing performance. The work of the governors is very good overall. They are very well organised and in good touch with the school. They do not meet statutory requirements for computer-aided manufacturing, collective worship and for reporting on ICT and citizenship. The acting headteacher has been in charge for less than half a term. He provides clear direction and inspires confidence in staff. He knows the school's strengths, and the areas that need to be improved.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are closely involved in their children's education. They and pupils have a very positive overall view of the school. A significant minority of parents, and a larger number of pupils, felt that some pupils' behaviour needed to be improved. This view was borne out by inspection evidence.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Take further action to improve the standards reached by boys, particularly in their written work.
- Take further steps to improve teachers' use of policies for promoting good work, behaviour and attitudes.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Make provision for computer-aided manufacturing and for a daily act of collective worship.
- Include ICT and citizenship in all pupils' annual reports to parents.

THE SIXTH FORM AT THE ASHCOMBE SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides very good education. Teaching and learning are very good, and students benefit from a significant amount of excellent teaching. Standards are well above average, and overall achievement is very good, though a minority of students could achieve more if they worked more consistently outside lessons. The range of courses fits students' needs very well in the context of other local provision, and a significant number of students join the sixth form from other schools. Students respond very well to a very good range of opportunities to take responsibility within and beyond the school. The sixth form is led and managed very well, and is growing. Since the last inspection, it has maintained high standards while extending its range of courses and students. Value for money is very good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Higher-attaining students, and those with below average GCSE results, achieve very well.
- The sixth form makes a very good contribution to educational opportunities in the area.
- Sixth form teaching is of high quality overall, and the best is inspirational.
- Arrangements for assessing standards, setting targets and tracking progress are excellent.
- Sixth form leadership and management are very good, and management systems are excellent.
- Some male students achieve less than female students because they do not work hard enough.
- Teachers in some subjects do not consistently apply school policies for promoting good work.
- There is a wide range of activities for students outside their lessons.

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	Very good in English , where teaching and learning are very closely matched to students' needs, and standards are well above average. Good in German , where teaching is well thought out and the course is well designed. Satisfactory in French , but with some weaknesses in students' writing. Work sampled in Spanish was excellent.
Mathematics	Good . Teaching and learning are consistently good. Leadership and management are very good, and progress is very closely tracked.
Science	Very good in physics, good in chemistry . Teaching in both subjects is consistently good, with some excellent teaching in physics leading to high achievement at grade A. Both subjects are very well led and managed.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory . Students are broadly average, and achievement from students' starting points satisfactory, though female students achieve more than male students, partly because of more consistent completion of coursework.
Humanities	Very good in history, geography and sociology , and excellent in work sampled in religious education. Teaching and learning are very closely

Engineering, technology and manufacturing matched to pupils' learning needs. Subjects are led and managed very well. **Satisfactory in product design.** Students achieve well in their work, but the analytic content of the course is limited, and there is too little use of ICT.

Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art and design and media studies. Highly skilled teaching leads to well above average standards and some excellent achievement in practical work. Work sampled in drama was of equally high quality.
Business	Satisfactory. Courses meet students' needs well. Most teaching is good, and the remainder is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory, but is held back by the unwillingness of some students to work hard enough outside lessons.

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

Provision is good, with very good features. Students have very good guidance on their choice of sixth form courses, and there are very effective systems to ensure a good start for those joining from other schools. Students' work and progress is closely monitored and regularly reviewed from the beginning of their course, and they have very good guidance on improving it in most subjects. Systems to ensure that students complete work well and on time are very well designed, but are not used consistently enough across subjects. There is very good guidance on higher education, and good careers guidance. Support for those with special educational needs is very good, and provision for those who need additional care is excellent. The school tracks attendance very closely, and has very effective systems to promote high attendance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good, and have outstanding features. The head of sixth form and other sixth form managers work very effectively as a team, and keep in close touch with students' progress and personal development. Systems for assessment, setting targets and tracking progress towards them are exceptionally flexible, and take very clear account of progress made during courses. Sixth form managers work closely with students, and particularly senior prefects, to promote responsibility, and to ensure a cordial and harmonious working atmosphere.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students expressed very positive views of the educational and other opportunities open to them in the sixth form, and in particular of the quality of teaching, guidance and support they received from their teachers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are well above average and achievement is very good throughout the main school and sixth form as a result of very good teaching. There are no variations in the achievements of pupils from different backgrounds, but some pupils, mostly boys, could achieve more in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form with more consistent application to their written work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently well above average in comparison with those of similar schools.
- There is very good, and some excellent, achievement in art, music and drama; achievement is excellent overall in science.
- Lower-attaining pupils do very well at GCSE in response to carefully targeted support.
- A minority of boys in Years 10 and 11 achieve less than they should in their written work.
- The language college is boosting achievement in modern languages, particularly in the main school.
- Very close monitoring of standards makes an important contribution to achievement.
- Male students tend to achieve lower A-level results than female students, and to work less consistently outside lessons.

Commentary

1. Pupils join the school with well above average standards overall, though individual pupils' standards range from very high to well below average. There are some weaknesses in pupils' starting points in subjects not included in national tests, including design and technology and physical education. By Year 9, standards in national tests and in most other subjects are consistently well above average, and pupils' achievement is very good. There is little difference in the standards reached by boys and girls at this stage, and standards and achievement are unusually consistent across subjects. Standards are well above average in almost all subjects, including English, mathematics and science, and very high in art and design. The only subject in which standards are not above average in Year 9 is physical education, where pupils begin with below average standards in Year 7 and reach average standards by Year 9. This level of achievement is the result of very good teaching, combined with very careful management of departments, and close monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by senior managers.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	37.6 (35.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	39.4 (38.4)	35.4 (34.7)
science	37.8 (36.0)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 259 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Overall, achievement in Year 11 is very good as a result of very good teaching and continued hard work on the part of most pupils. GCSE results, based on pupils' eight strongest subjects, are well above average in comparison with those of similar schools. Standards are particularly high in art and design and in science, where there has been a recent strong improvement in the number of pupils reaching A and A* grades. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, and in pupils' confidence and competence in using ICT. However, while boys achieve more than in most schools, the achievement of a significant minority is held back by a lack of care in their written work, which prevents them from reaching very high grades in subjects that depend heavily on literacy. This was a weakness at the last inspection, and steps to tackle it have yet to be consistently carried through in all departments.
- With this exception, achievement is very good among all groups of pupils, including lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, who benefit from taking a slightly reduced range of subjects, with additional support from a wide range of teachers. These pupils achieve very well in home economics (food) and child development, where there is a high pass rate, often at grade B and above. Overall, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good over their time in the school, though in a minority of lessons their learning and achievement falls off where work is not matched closely enough to their needs and the school is not able to provide additional support. Pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, achieve very well. The wide range of learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, in academic subjects and in all areas of the arts, ensures that their achievement is very good overall, and at times excellent.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	79 (80)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96.0)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	44.6 (45.4)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 231 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Improvements in teaching, learning and management have led to significant improvements in standards in several subjects since the last inspection, with very strong improvement in art and music, where pupils were reaching only average standards and now reach well above average to very high standards. There has also been good improvement in standards and achievement in ICT, and particularly in pupils' ability to apply their skills across a range of subjects. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs has shown good improvement in response to more specific individual education plans, though there is scope to improve this provision further for pupils who do not have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Results in 2004 were similar to those in 2003, but national comparative data are not yet available. The rate of improvement at GCSE to 2003 was a little below the national trend, but

this statistic needs to be considered with caution, as the starting point for these results was very high, and as the school has a policy of entering pupils for slightly fewer subjects than other schools in order to focus on their personal, social and health education. The school met all GCSE targets in 2003 and 2004. Overall, the improvement in standards and achievement since the last inspection has been good. The school is very well placed to make the improvements in boys' work-rate that needed to raise standards further.

Sixth form

5. Most students join the sixth form with above average standards, but the school takes a flexible approach to admission, and a significant minority are accepted with GCSE results that just equip them to take on their courses. Overall, results are well above average, and significantly better than those of most schools whose students have similar starting points. Achievement is very good overall, as a result of very good teaching and learning in lessons, and the very good attitudes and hard work of the vast majority of students. In 2004, all Year 13 students achieved at least two A-level passes. Close monitoring of standards by senior management makes an important contribution to achievement by identifying strengths and weaknesses clearly, so that action can be taken where necessary.
6. Achievement was good to very good in almost all subjects that were fully inspected, with some outstanding achievement in media production and Spanish literature, and included very good achievement from lower-attaining students in mathematics and science subjects. There are, however, some gaps in achievement caused by inconsistent work outside lessons, most significantly in business studies and in French, where some written work is weak. Most, but not all, students in this position are male, and the issue is a significant factor in male students achieving less than female students, as they were during the last inspection. Overall, the school has maintained its well above average standards and very good sixth form achievement since the last inspection, and its flexible admissions policy is extending opportunities for achievement to students from a wide range of backgrounds.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	95 (94.7)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	52 (43.7)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	353.4 (369.8)	258.2 (254.5)

There were 101 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Provision for their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils enjoy school life and work, have positive attitudes and behave well.
- Pupils are willing to accept responsibility, and many have a strong sense of service to others.
- There is very good provision for spiritual and cultural development, particularly in the arts.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is carefully planned and effective.
- A minority of pupils, mostly boys, only work properly when they have a very strong lead from their teachers, and often waste time with petty misbehaviour.
- Most tutorial periods are not used effectively, and some pupils are too often late to lessons.

Commentary

7. Most pupils have good attitudes to their studies and behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand and accept that they have to work hard and do their best. They are willing to accept responsibility, and to contribute to decision-making. Most participate very well in lessons, and this is reflected in their achievement. They listen attentively to their teacher and to each other and enjoy discussions and exploring ideas.
8. A significant minority of pupils, especially boys in Years 10 and 11, creates difficulties for teachers and for other pupils through their unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. Most teachers handle the problem well, but in a minority of lessons, poor behaviour holds back achievement and creates unpleasantness. Behaviour around the school follows a similar pattern, with most pupils behaving well, but a minority wasting time and engaging in minor misbehaviour, that is often calculated to fall just below the level that would be referred to a senior member of staff. Deliberate and minor uniform violations are prevalent. With some exceptions, tutorial periods are not used effectively to promote good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds are, on the other hand, fully and harmoniously involved in all aspects of the school's life and work.
9. Some parents were concerned about bullying, but almost all said that it was dealt with quickly and firmly. No bullying was seen during the inspection, and pupils had confidence that it would be tackled effectively. There has been only one permanent exclusion since the last inspection, and fixed-period exclusion is used only in cases of persistently poor or dangerous behaviour; it reinforces the school code strongly. Nevertheless, the pattern of behaviour across the school confirms concerns expressed to inspectors by a minority of parents and by almost half of the pupils, and the acting headteacher has rightly identified the need to improve the consistency of behaviour across the school. When the school was last inspected, pupils' behaviour and attitudes were very good, with only occasional lapses. While this is no longer the case, the school is in a good position to improve the situation.

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	1529	85	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	38	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0

Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	0	0

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

10. Attendance is broadly average, with little unauthorized absence. The school has very good monitoring systems, and patterns of absence and late arrival are quickly identified and acted upon, especially in Years 10 and 11, where attendance is marginally lower. A significant amount of absence is caused by term-time holidays, which the school discourages, and by the persistent absence of a very small number of pupils, which is tackled in co-operation with the education welfare officer. Pupils often have a long walk between classrooms, but the school allows time for this. Some pupils take much too long, and this often leads to a ragged start to lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.6
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

11. The overall quality of provision is good; it is strongest in cultural and spiritual development, but has some weaknesses in the consistency of provision in moral and social development.
12. Teachers across the school encourage reflection, seek opinions, and listen to answers. A maths classroom, for example, was described as a 'joy to be in' because of its lively and colourful display that prompted pupils to reflect and think. In religious education, pupils reflect deeply on issues such as whether we can prove that God exists. Assemblies cover a range of moral issues and there is regular input from the local clergy. Because of this good provision, pupils are genuinely reflective, can clearly think beyond the material world and show respect and tolerance for all members of their community
13. The school gives pupils a growing range of meaningful jobs and other responsibilities, including the school council and opportunities to help younger pupils. It works hard to provide pupils with a range of opportunities to develop their social skills and has good systems to teach right from wrong and to help pupils to make moral choices. There are strong contributions to this work from citizenship, personal, social and health education and religious education. However, the school is not using its systems consistently enough to deal with the undercurrent of immature and unsatisfactory behaviour that frequently makes teaching and learning difficult and life around the school less pleasant than it should be. There is a particular weakness in tutorial periods, most of which are not used effectively to promote good behaviour and attitudes.
14. The school makes extensive and often exciting provision for cultural development. Strengths in art, music and drama give pupils interesting insights into their own and other cultures, as well as frequent opportunities to take part and to perform. As a

result, pupils develop a good appreciation of their local culture and a growing understanding of the different cultures found in Britain and in the wider world. Many pupils take part in foreign exchange trips to France and Germany, and pupils taking part in trips to China, Romania and Tanzania give interesting reports of their work to the school on their return. This makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of world citizenship.

Sixth form

15. There is a very positive atmosphere in the sixth form. Relationships between teachers and students are very good overall, and at times excellent. Sixth formers provide good role models for younger pupils and have a strong commitment to their school. They feel that they are valued and respected, and many give important service to the school as senior prefects. Sixth formers have a wide range of opportunities to learn and to develop their personal and social skills outside lessons. Many take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, and in exchange trips to countries such as Tanzania and China. They spoke movingly about these experiences in assemblies during the inspection. They have regular opportunities to discuss and share their views in events such as the debates that form part of the general studies course.
16. Virtually all students work hard in lessons, and most keep this up in their independent study and coursework. However, a significant number do not use their time outside lessons as consistently as they need to if they are to do well at A-level. The school has a very well designed system to identify and tackle these weaknesses, but it is not used quickly and consistently enough to nip problems in the bud, and some students' achievement suffers as a result. Attendance is good, but a few students arrive late to lessons and registration.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides very good education, both in the main school and in the sixth form. Teaching, learning and assessment are all of very good quality, and the curriculum meets pupils' needs very well, with extensive opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. The school takes very good care of pupils, and provides them with good guidance. Very good links with parents, and excellent relationships with other schools and the community, make an important contribution to standards and to pupils' personal development.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is very good in the main school and in the sixth form. There is a significant amount of excellent teaching in a wide range of subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their very good knowledge of their subjects to plan interesting lessons.
- Teaching and learning are excellent overall in science, and are often excellent in modern languages.
- Teachers offer pupils very good, and at times excellent, opportunities to work creatively.

- Teachers in the main school make very good, and sometimes excellent, use of ICT to promote learning.
- In the vast majority of lessons, teachers manage classes very well, and promote very good relationships.
- Learning in a few lessons is held up by boys' misbehaviour, which was not always tackled quickly enough.
- Very good assessment ensures that work is almost always very well matched to pupils' needs.
- Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to teaching, learning and behaviour.
- Teachers do not always follow up weaknesses in written work, particularly among boys, closely enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 173 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
15 (9%)	64 (37%)	72 (42%)	22 (13%)	0	0	0

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

17. There is a high level of consistency in teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects and lesson planning. Pupils' work is very well assessed and marked, so that teachers know what they need to learn next, and can pitch work at the right level. Effective feedback ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve, and target setting in Years 10 and 11 is closely and effectively linked to GCSE requirements. In most subjects, teachers make very good use of the school's extensive ICT facilities to widen the range of learning activities, clarify and support explanations, and match work to individual needs. They use techniques from the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 very well, particularly to explain learning goals to pupils and to assess and reinforce learning at the end of lessons. Homework is almost always regularly set and completed, and teachers make very effective use of praise to reinforce learning and to promote good attitudes. These strengths, with senior management's consistent commitment to monitoring and improving teaching, and to providing support where it is needed, lead to a pattern of learning that is very good, and are the foundation of very good long-term achievement.
18. The school's best teaching is inspirational, and has attracted numerous awards. The fifteen excellent lessons seen during the inspection included several subjects, with the largest number in modern languages, where the use of ICT to engage pupils' interest and promote independent learning is a major strength. The excellent overall quality of teaching and learning in science is leading to high achievement among all groups of pupils at GCSE. Excellent and very good teaching in art, music and drama ensures a strong element of creativity in pupils' learning, engaging all pupils in this dimension and providing outstanding opportunities to the talented.
19. Most pupils appreciate their teachers' efforts to make their work interesting, challenging and enjoyable. They work hard, at school and at home, and help create a good working atmosphere. A significant minority, mostly boys, only co-operate in

response to a very strong lead from the teacher, and some set out to irritate teachers with persistent minor misbehaviour. Teachers almost always deal with this in a way that minimises its effect on learning, and have very effective support from senior colleagues. However, some do not use the school's behavioural support systems quickly enough. This issue is the main barrier to overall excellence in teaching and learning.

20. Overall, teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well, particularly in specialist lessons and in additional support in Years 10 and 11. Significant improvements in the quality of individual education plans since the last inspection have helped teachers match work to individual needs, and the schools' well qualified team of teaching assistants is consistently effective in promoting good learning and behaviour. In a minority of lessons, however, some pupils with special educational needs learned less effectively than they could, because work was not adapted closely enough to their needs and they had no additional support. No lessons seen during the inspection were unsatisfactory, but analysis of pupils' written work showed that teachers, particularly in Years 10 and 11, sometimes accept weak written work, particularly from boys. This is a factor in boys' lower performance than girls at GCSE. Pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds are fully engaged in lessons and teaching meets their needs very well.
21. The last inspection found that teaching was good overall, and that it was very good or better in just over a quarter of lessons. The present picture shows a very good improvement on this position. The amount of very good and excellent teaching has almost doubled, and the range of resources, including ICT, and teaching techniques has been greatly extended. Assessment procedures have become more consistent across the school, and pupils are much better informed of what they need to do to improve their work. The school is very well placed to tackle the issues that remain to be improved.

Sixth form

22. Sixth form teaching is very good, and has outstanding features, particularly in teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects and their use of this to match work to the needs of a broad range of students. Lucid explanation and very well designed learning tasks are features of many lessons. The use of ICT is, on the other hand, less consistent than in the main school. Higher-attaining students have a very good level of challenge in all subjects, and work is often equally well matched to the needs of students who begin with GCSE results that are just adequate to enable them to meet the requirements of their courses. Relationships and the working atmosphere in the sixth form are very good overall, and most students understand the need to work as hard outside lessons as they do in lesson time. Teachers in some subjects, however, do not pick up quickly enough on work that is not completed to a good standard, and this leads some students to work properly only when they are supervised, either in lessons or in catch-up classes. Overall, the pattern of improvement in sixth form teaching, and the issues that remain to be fully addressed, are similar to the picture in the main school.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is very good in the main school and sixth form. Courses meet pupils' needs and interests very well, and there is a very wide range of enrichment opportunities. The school is well staffed, and has good resources for learning. Accommodation is adequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum enriches pupils' lives, and prepares them very well for later life and study.
- The language college provides a very wide range of learning opportunities throughout the school.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very carefully thought out.
- The contribution to learning across subjects from ICT is very good.
- The school's outstanding website acts as a focus for learning within and beyond the school.
- The sixth form curriculum meets students' needs very well, in the context of other local provision.
- The school is well staffed with qualified teachers, managers and support staff.
- The study centre is well used, but some aspects of its stock need to be renewed.

Commentary

23. The curriculum makes a very good impact on learning, and prepares pupils very well for further study and for life in modern society. Its breadth and quality are very good, and have been significantly improved since the last inspection. It provides equally well for the needs and interests of boys and girls, both in the choice of courses it offers and in its enrichment activities. Management has struck a very good balance between enabling pupils to achieve high standards in examinations and provision for their personal development. This is particularly well thought out in a personal, social and health education programme that equips pupils with practical skills, notably in cookery and nutrition, as well as promoting responsibility. The new subject of citizenship has been introduced well, and is supported by a wide range of opportunities to exercise citizenship outside lessons. The curriculum is enhanced by a systematic and well-managed programme of drama in Years 7 to 9. The development of the language college since the last inspection has greatly extended learning opportunities; each pupil has the opportunity to learn at least two languages, and up to four may be taken at GCSE. The Chinese programme has involved visits to China for the past six years, resulting in close co-operation with a Chinese school. The curriculum makes good use of national strategies, adapted to the needs of the pupils, and is particularly strong and innovative in its use of ICT to promote teaching and learning.
24. Overall, the curriculum enables pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress, particularly at GCSE, and there is a good programme of additional teaching outside lessons. In a minority of lessons, however, pupils with special educational needs who do not have a Statement of special educational needs do not have work that is closely enough matched to their individual needs. Some parents expressed concern about this before the inspection, and their concerns are partly borne out. There are effective systems to provide additional support for pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, and for children in public care.
25. The curriculum is very well adapted to the needs of different groups of pupils. Higher-attaining pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, are effectively identified and challenged in almost all subjects. Lower-attaining pupils benefit from a flexible and well-

organised system of option support that boosts their chances at GCSE. A small number attend vocational courses at a local college. These courses are successful and popular, but constitute a narrower range of vocational provision than in most schools, and there are no vocational GCSE courses. The school allows some pupils to take two subjects from the same suite of syllabuses in design and technology to give them additional practical work; this is, however, not recommended by the examining boards because of overlap between the syllabuses. Provision for design and technology makes some provision for computer-assisted design, but not for computer-assisted manufacture; this has some impact on learning opportunities and achievement in design and technology. Careers education is very good, and benefits from a high level of community support and very well organised work experience. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship, but provision for spiritual development is strong in other respects, and assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' personal development,

26. Opportunities for enrichment beyond lessons are very good. Pupils respond well to the school's encouragement to take part in sport. There is extensive participation in art, music, and dramatic productions. High numbers take the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, many completing Gold Awards. There are many trips and visits, in Britain and many countries, often involving a strong element of service.
27. The school is well staffed with qualified teachers, middle and senior managers. Teaching assistants are very well qualified and experienced for their work, and administrative, technical and maintenance staffs are strong and efficient. Senior management take great care over the appointment, welfare and career development of staff, including the provision of equal opportunities, and the workforce agreement is fully in place. New staff are very effectively supported.
28. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, though its quality varies widely between subjects. Sports accommodation, including the new sports hall is excellent, and the involvement of the acting headteacher and other senior staff in designing new accommodation has contributed to important recent improvements in accommodation for science and ICT. Accommodation for the arts is cramped, but new purpose-built accommodation is soon to be built. Resources for learning are good overall, with very good resources for ICT across several subjects. The study centre is heavily used and well organised, with a very good range of activities to promote reading. It has a good stock of fiction, but some of its non-fiction no longer meets students' needs, particularly in sixth form subjects, and the school is reviewing and replacing stock where necessary.

Sixth form

29. The sixth form curriculum meets the needs of students very well, particularly in the context of local vocational provision in further education. There is a wide range of AS and A-level courses, and an effective range of additional short courses. The sixth form is expanding, and offers opportunities to a range of students who join from other schools, sometimes on the basis of lower grades than are expected for their courses. The curriculum meets these students' needs well, though those falling behind with their work are not quickly enough referred to the catch-up classes. A very high proportion of sixth form students complete their courses successfully, and their experience prepares them well for higher education and for further work or training. There are very good enrichment activities for sixth formers. Accommodation is restricted, but is used responsibly.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Pupils receive good personal guidance, and the school has good arrangements to take account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils well and provide very effective support for them.
- Senior and middle management of care provision is well-organised and very effective.
- There are very good arrangements for pupils joining the school.
- Excellent care is provided for sixth form, and there are very good induction arrangements.
- Very good use is made of a range of support, including external agencies.

Commentary

30. Teachers and support staff are committed to all pupils' well-being and achievement. The pastoral system is very well structured, and tutors and heads of year build up good relationships and a depth of understanding and knowledge about the pupils in their care. These are reflected in a high standard of attention to individual needs, and the school accepts that this needs to be extended more consistently to tutorial periods. Careful monitoring of learning and personal development identifies problems quickly, and support is put in place from a wide range of options. There is close and effective support for pupils whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion. Child protection is well managed. Many staff have first aid qualifications and the school nurse is a valuable member of the school community. Good priority to risk assessments and inspections of equipment ensures that pupils work in a safe and healthy environment; two minor issues were, however, pointed out to the acting headteacher. Overall, the management of care, welfare, health and safety is very good.
31. The school council provides an effective voice for pupils and is looking closely at ways in which it can improve the involvement of everyone by making communication between it and all pupils more efficient. Pupils evaluate their courses and participate in questionnaire surveys on initiatives the school have identified for action. The school's use of pupils' evaluation of science courses is excellent.
32. There are well-established and supportive arrangements for ensuring that new pupils settle quickly in Year 7. Primary pupils have good opportunities to visit the school and meet senior staff on primary visits so that the stress of moving to a new school is greatly reduced. Sympathetic care is taken in organising Year 7 tutor groups to balance a mix of pupils from different schools. Pupils have good guidance in their option choices at GCSE, and progress in Years 10 and 11 is particularly well monitored. Work experience is very well organised and involves all pupils. While flexible learning arrangements are available only to a small group of pupils, they are effective and help these pupils to retain their positive approach to school. Lower-attaining pupils also benefit from a high level of flexible guidance and help in the option support programme; this contributes strongly to their achievement at GCSE. Careers guidance is good, though it does not yet begin the start of pupils' school career. It has several

very good features, including excellent participation by local businesses and the community at the biennial careers event.

Sixth form

33. Guidance and support for sixth form students is very good, and its organisation is excellent. Staff know students very well, and their personal support and guidance is highly valued. Personal interviews for students joining the sixth form, and a very well organised system of guidance for those coming from other schools, ensure that they are well informed about available courses, and that there is a good match. The school promotes opportunity in the sixth form by a flexible approach to assessing students' ability to complete their courses, and all students taking A-level in 2004 achieved at least two passes. On the other hand, teachers in several departments do not use the very well planned system of catch-up classes quickly enough to prevent a minority of students from developing weak work habits, and these arrangements are too often seen as a detention. Sixth form students undertake leadership roles in the school very well and senior prefects are well respected.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has well established and very good links with parents and carers. There are excellent partnerships with the community, and with schools and colleges, both locally and nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Newsletters, the website, and the prospectus are informative, readable and attractively designed.
- Parents are very quickly informed if concerns arise about their children's safety and well-being.
- Annual reports on pupils' progress have good features, but do not meet all statutory requirements.
- The school has wide-ranging and excellent links with business and the community.
- The language college takes a leading local and national role in promoting language teaching.
- Strong links with other schools at senior management level provide a powerful basis for co-operation.

Commentary

34. Parents think the school does a very good job in educating their children; they support it and are proud of it. Almost all told inspectors that their children liked school and were encouraged to do their best, so that they made progress. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have problems or concerns. They attend a wide range of functions as well as attending consultation evenings and curriculum events. They are kept well informed about what is happening by regular letters and a very well produced magazine that reports a wide range of pupils' achievements and contributions to the community. The Parent Teacher Association provides valuable support to the school in social and fundraising activities.
35. The prospectus and governors' annual report are clear and comprehensive. Pupils' annual reports have good information on standard in most subjects, but need to provide more information on ICT and citizenship. Brief interim reports on their progress and response to work are valued by parents. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work, and to set targets for improvement, but often these are too general to be helpful. Pupils' planners provide an effective link with home and help parents to become involved with their children's work, especially homework. Complaints from parents are dealt with fully and efficiently. Parents receive very good information on the sixth form and its courses.
36. Partnerships with a range of local schools and colleges are extremely well developed. Through languages initiatives such as the Dorking Schools Languages Group, and also in other subjects, the school provides well-targeted and valuable support to primary schools and other schools in the area. Staff expertise is also shared with the community. For example, Chinese lessons have been held in primary schools, and are offered to adults and children in the community. The school's contribution to language teaching nationally, through the free seminars it offers to other schools, and its heavily-used website, has been recognised by several major awards. The school's open policy on the use of sports facilities benefits the whole area. Parents were pleased with the way their children were helped to settle into their new school; the excellent links with primary schools give an extra and valuable dimension to success of the transfer process. Headteachers of local primary and secondary schools had much praise for the acting headteacher's personal contribution to inter-school co-operation.
37. As at the time of the last inspection, the contribution of the community to pupils' achievement is excellent. An impressive range of opportunities has been accessed and used with great effect by the school and community organisations. Local companies and organizations are involved with a range of competitive and educationally valuable games, and help sixth form students prepare for university and job interviews. Pupils training to support others through counselling receive training from Child Line. There are very good and supportive links to local agencies, the community police officers and clergy. Pupils enjoy an exceptional range of experiences that add greatly to their broader education and enhance their life skills and personal development. Out of school activities include an extensive programme of excursions and overseas visits, including work in Tanzania and Romania.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed very well. Leadership, management and governance are each very good, and there are several excellent features in leadership and management. The school does not meet the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship, or for computer-aided manufacture. While provision for citizenship is good, the school does not fully meet reporting requirements for this subject or for ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher leads and manages the school very well, and builds the confidence of staff.
- Development planning is very well adapted to the diverse needs of a very large school.
- The work of senior and middle managers is very good, and the best is excellent.
- Excellent leadership of the language college is contributing to language teaching locally and nationally.
- Monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses.
- Some teachers do not use the policies for promoting good attitudes and behaviour consistently enough.
- There are excellent systems to support new staff, including newly qualified teachers.
- The organisation of sixth form management systems is excellent.
- Governors are very closely and effectively involved in all aspects of the school's life and work.

Commentary

38. The last inspection team reported that the headteacher, senior managers and governors provided "clear direction and vision, backed by very effective management systems", and described the school as "a thinking and reflective institution". These strengths remain the driving force behind the school's success in maintaining and extending high levels of achievement, combined with providing equal opportunities for all of its pupils. The acting headteacher sets a calm, thoughtful and considerate tone that quietly inspires all staff to give their best, knowing that they will receive support if they need it and that their achievements will be recognised. Senior staff also take effective action to tackle weaknesses in teaching. The school's exceptionally favourable Investors in People report includes many appreciative comments on its management style from staff ranging from senior managers to newly-qualified teachers and support staff.
39. The school's monitoring, planning, and evaluation of its own work have shown very good improvement since the last inspection. Monitoring of teaching, learning and standards is now very thorough and effective. Development planning has an excellent combination of broad aims and operational detail, and school priorities are systematically included in subject development plans. Standards and progress in each subject are closely tracked using a system that makes very effective use of ICT to blend national data with the school's own very effective analytic techniques. The school's shared approach is very consistent among senior and middle managers, several of whose work has been recognised nationally and internationally. Outstanding leadership of the language college enables it to take a leading role in promoting language teaching in local schools and, through its system of free seminars, to help other secondary schools across the country. On the other hand, while serious concerns

about behaviour are managed well, systems for promoting good attitudes and behaviour among all pupils in and out of lessons are not used consistently enough. Discussions with the acting headteacher and senior management team during the inspection showed that they were fully aware of these weaknesses and were beginning to take action to address them.

40. Governors combine a high level of organisation and professional experience with clear vision for the school, so that it is constantly extending and improving its services to pupils. With the acting headteacher, they ensure that national initiatives are used in the light of the school's own needs, and they are fully involved in monitoring progress and setting targets. Governors and the acting headteacher are particularly closely involved in developing the school's somewhat cramped site, ensuring that new building is carefully designed to meet pupils' needs. Policies for race equality and special educational needs are properly drawn up and monitored. Financial planning and control of high quality enable the school to manage its budget while providing effectively for long-term developments such as ICT facilities, the sports hall and the new arts block. Staff, parents and pupils are effectively consulted and the governors understand and apply best value principles very effectively. Governors have done all in their power to provide a daily act of collective worship, which is particularly difficult in this very large school. They are very well placed to deal with the other breaches of statutory requirements.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,139,162	Balance from previous year	-13,165
Total expenditure	5,035,627	Balance carried forward to the next	90,370
Expenditure per pupil	3,382		

Sixth form

41. Leadership and management in the sixth form are very good, and governors give a full measure of attention and care to its development. Courses are carefully planned to meet students' needs, and to complement other local provision, including the extensive vocational provision in colleges. Teaching, standards and achievement are closely and effectively monitored by the acting headteacher, sixth form managers and other senior staff. The planning and organisation of management and assessment systems in the sixth form, including tracking of pupils' progress and attitudes, and management of provision for their personal development, are excellent. Where monitoring is the responsibility of the sixth form managers, it is closely and effectively carried out. Monitoring of the system of catch-up classes by teachers in each subject, however, is not their responsibility, and is not systematic enough; as a result, its aim of detecting and dealing with weaknesses at a very early stage is not fully achieved. Sixth form managers work closely and very effectively as a team, and there are very effective systems of communication between tutors and managers.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

The effectiveness of work related learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work experience is well established in Years 10 and 11.
- There is an effective increased flexibility programme in both years.
- An annual business week provides many opportunities for developing relevant skills.
- The biennial careers fair receives excellent support from local companies.
- A school audit of subject contributions has not yet been taken.

Commentary

42. Work experience is well planned and the school works closely with the Trident Trust to ensure that all Year 11 pupils have a wide range of placements to choose from. These include working in supermarkets, restaurants, local radio and a French ski resort. Pupils are well prepared for their placements and the learning from the work placement is adequately developed through the PSHE lessons. Most obtain their first choice.
43. The increased flexibility programme allows 30 pupils in Years 10 and 11 to take a vocational course at East Surrey College. Three courses are currently studied: a NVQ in hairdressing and in motor vehicle repair and engineering, and a vocational GCSE in engineering. There is close liaison between the college and the school and the programme is well managed. The pupils are very enthusiastic about these opportunities and several pupils want to continue their studies in their chosen vocational area.
44. An annual business week for the Year 10 pupils provides good opportunities to develop their interview skills, to take part in business simulations, to improve their financial literacy and to develop their job application skills. Pupils see this week as effective preparation for their work experience in Year 11. Every two years, an evening careers fair is held for all pupils from Year 9. This is very well supported by local firms and provides a very good opportunity for pupils to gain an understanding of employment opportunities.
45. These opportunities are well led by different teachers in the school. However, while current arrangements meet pupils' needs adequately, there is no overall policy for work related learning in the curriculum. The school has plans to consider this issue in the context of the review of educational provision for pupils aged 14 to 19. Statutory requirements are met.

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 enjoy English, reach well above average standards and learn well.
- Very good lesson planning involves pupils effectively in lessons.
- Teaching and learning are very good and sometimes excellent.
- Very good leadership and management have led to improving standards in recent years.
- A minority of pupils, mostly boys, do not work hard enough in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

46. Standards are well above average in Year 9, and in English and English literature at GCSE. The standard of work seen during the inspection was similar in Year 9 and Year 11. There is little difference in the standards reached by boys and girls in Year 9, but there is a significant gap in Year 11, where a minority of boys do not do as well as they should because they do not work hard enough. Overall, however, achievement remains very good. Pupils with special educational needs make good overall progress. They do very well in response to specialist teaching, though there is not always enough support for them in lessons. Higher-attaining pupils are well challenged, average pupils are helped very well to reach their full potential and lower-attaining pupils are very well supported by their teachers.
47. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Most pupils are articulate, speaking fluently and with a sense of style appropriate to their audience. They communicate with confidence and teachers present them with many good opportunities to practise and perfect different styles of speech. They also listen well, to their teachers and to each other. Pupils read very well, with a high level of understanding. The school's recent focus on reading skills has been very productive; pupils read widely and with interest as a result. By Year 11, most pupils are able to analyse literary texts with a degree of ease. Pupils' written work is generally well organised and standards of presentation and levels of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar are, with some exceptions, very good.
48. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and pass on their enthusiasm and energy to their pupils. Lessons are planned very well, using that the national strategy for pupils from Year 7 to Year 9. Pupils work frequently in pairs and small groups so that everyone is actively involved. Lessons begin with a clear statement of purpose and end with a check as to whether that purpose has been achieved. Teachers also use many varied methods to hold pupils'

interest, to challenge them to deeper knowledge and to encourage them to further effort. Pupils enjoy this challenge and learn quickly through their contributions to lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils are usually very good. Homework is used well and frequently.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent planning, combined with excellent relationships and skilful use of a wide range of teaching techniques, enabled all pupils in a mixed ability Year 7 class to refine their approach to persuasive writing.

The lesson was planned to seem spontaneous but, in reality, to ensure a very high level of achievement. Basic revision was made fun by the use of slogans promoting 'strawberry bonbons', illustrating alliteration and repetition as persuasive methods. From the start, the teacher cajoled and encouraged by convincing all pupils that they were successful, special and capable of a high level of effort: 'You are now working at the same level as Year 9'. She used deliberate mistakes and pretended lack of knowledge to arouse enthusiastic response from the pupils as they corrected her. This quickly achieved a very high degree of involvement from all. Relationships were excellent, and the teacher expertly managed the transition between primary and secondary classrooms, keeping the pupils so engrossed that misbehaviour never crossed their minds. Pupils were encouraged to work out new techniques for themselves, such as 'Strawberry bonbons are delightfully delicious', so that vocabulary was extended in an imaginative and exciting manner. Lower-attaining pupils were helped by individual attention and prompting. The teacher deliberately made boys and girls work together for specific tasks, a strategy that encouraged the boys to speak. The atmosphere was one of friends enjoying working together, and reluctant to leave when the lesson finished.

49. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a clear vision for the department and understanding of the way forward. She shares this with other teachers, and teamwork is excellent. Assessment is very good, so that the progress of individual pupils is closely tracked. Marking is consistently detailed and helpful; pupils are clearly aware of their progress against national standards and know what they can do to improve further. Opportunities for pupils to extend their learning outside the classroom are good. The use of ICT is currently not as good as it might be, but will be soon, with the new equipment currently being installed.
50. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards of work have improved steadily, programmes of work for pupils in each year have been revised to focus more clearly on what pupils should learn, the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 has been well implemented, teaching and learning have improved and the monitoring and evaluation of the teachers' and pupils' work is thorough and productive. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development through its choice of literature.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Standards in literacy are well above average. Support for improving literacy is developing well across most subjects. The school is constructing a whole school policy, under the direction of the head of the English department. Already many worthwhile initiatives have been put in place, such as 'process- write' or proofreading of work, the use of writing-frames and other scaffolding aids in subjects such as physical education, food technology, mathematics and drama. There is an insistence on the mastery of different kinds of writing for different purposes and a literacy area on the school's network. In most lessons, pupils have good opportunities to develop their oral skills. Pupils talk effectively to each other when working in groups and can speak confidently to the whole class. A wide range of reading is encouraged throughout the school, and many pupils make good use of the study centre for research and to pursue their own reading interests. Writing for a variety of purposes is evident in most

subjects, though teachers in some subjects still accept lower standards in boys' than in girls' writing.

Modern foreign languages

French and German were fully inspected, and provision for Spanish was sampled. The overall quality of work sampled in Spanish was very good, and the subject is increasingly popular among pupils. All pupils have the opportunity to take Spanish, and do very well on the basis of limited teaching time, with additional lessons at lunchtime.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall, and a significant proportion is excellent.
- Teachers make excellent use of ICT to interest and excite pupils in languages.
- The language college provides excellent enrichment activities for the school and the community.
- A very broad curriculum allows pupils to take up to four languages at GCSE.
- Except in some lower sets, where boys can be disruptive, pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.

Commentary

52. The school offers a wide range of language courses, but most pupils take GCSE in French and German. Overall, results and provision in are similar in both of these languages. In 2003 and in 2004 results in French, overall, were very high. In German they were well above average in 2003 and average in 2004, when provision was affected by staffing difficulties. Standards observed in the inspection in both languages are well above average in Year 9: pupils speak and write using a range of tenses accurately. In Year 11, standards are very high: pupils speak confidently and write using complex structures well, higher attaining pupils showing flair in expression. In line with the picture nationally, boys' standards and achievement are not as high as girls'. Inspection evidence indicated that this was partly due to poor attitudes from some boys. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils achieve well.. Overall, achievement is very good.
53. Teachers have a very good command of their languages and set high challenges by using them frequently throughout lessons. Lesson planning is excellent, employing a wide range of techniques to ensure concepts are well learnt and can be used increasingly in unfamiliar contexts. Very skilled use of ICT enables pupils of different ability to work at their own pace and with awareness of the accuracy of their work; this was a major factor in much of the most successful teaching. Disruptive behaviour among some boys in lower sets is kept well in check, so that it does not interfere with other pupils' learning. On the other hand, support for pupils with reading and writing difficulties in lessons where computers are not used is insufficient. Homework is regularly and constructively marked. Methods of assessment motivate pupils, and clear targets help them to improve. Relations between teachers and pupils are very good, based on strong mutual respect. Independent reading is not yet a regular feature of the courses, although other aspects of literacy are very well taught.

Example of outstanding practice

Very carefully designed tasks, combined with highly effective use of German, enabled all pupils in a Year 7 mixed ability class to name subjects of the timetable and to say when they take place.

The teacher modelled her approach on the dynamic interaction of the ICT games used extensively in the department. Confronted only with German, pupils responded to the teacher's and each other's gestural communication to know whether they were right or wrong. Irresistible routines were established in every activity in the lesson, so that vocabulary and structures were acquired and consolidated with complete clarity. The days of the week in German, for example, were sung to *London's Burning*, and anagram puzzles consolidated their spellings. Picture cards of school subjects were the basis of many more challenging games: *Chant this ...now faster ...Which is this?... Which is missing? ...Is this correct? ...faster!* Teachers always ensured that pupils used sound and associated symbols before teaching spelling and writing, so that within a very short time pupils could enjoy long and complex words such as *Naturwissenschaften*, speak them accurately, link them into meaningful phrases and respond to questions. The electric pace of the lesson captivated the pupils throughout, the beaming teacher reflecting the responses and achievement of the pupils.

54. The department is very well managed, and its leadership is excellent. A very strong team spirit provides for the best possible opportunities and has helped the department recover very well from staffing turbulence in recent years, which has particularly affected results in German. Senior staff provide excellent role models for younger staff. The work of the language college, especially its website, has led to several national awards, and local headteachers told inspectors that it had brought important benefits to their schools. Standards reached in Year 7 showed significant benefits from collaboration with primary schools.
55. Very good provision for personal development is supplemented by courses in Italian and Chinese, and the visits or exchanges for each year group in Western Europe, Romania, Tanzania and China. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 take at least two languages and the vast majority take at least one in Years 10 and 11. The grouping of pupils from Year 8 onwards helps teachers to match work to pupils' needs. Planning for the vocational dimension of modern languages is under-developed. Overall, however, the extension of language provision, the continuing involvement of a high proportion of pupils, and GCSE results represent very good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 9 and 11 are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good, and often very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment procedures are very effective and pupils' work is marked rigorously and helpfully.
- Leadership and management are very good and teachers work as a committed team.
- The poor attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils hold back learning in some lessons.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to support learning.

Commentary

56. Pupils join Year 7 with well above average standards. National test and GCSE results are consistently well above average, and work seen during the inspection was of similar quality. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys overall, but more boys reach A* and A levels at GCSE than girls. Overall achievement is good among all groups of pupils, and often very good in Years 10 and 11, particularly among higher-attaining pupils.
57. Standards in Year 9 are well above average and pupils have very well developed numeracy skills. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, average pupils calculated the circumferences of circles using calculators and rounded the answers accurately to one decimal place. However, their investigative skills do not yet match the high standards seen in other aspects of the course. The performance of pupils in Year 11 is also high. Average pupils use trigonometric functions to calculate lengths and angles in right-angled triangles, while higher attaining pupils sketch graphs of these functions and are beginning to use the Sine Rule in calculations. Algebraic skills are not yet secure for average-attaining pupils.
58. Teaching is good overall. In individual lessons, its quality ranges from satisfactory to good in Years 7 to 9, and good to very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know the subject very well, and plan and organise lessons well. Most lessons are challenging, and teachers use resources, including ICT, and questioning very well. Most pupils respond well, so that learning is good in most lessons. In less successful lessons, despite effective planning and hard work, the immature and unhelpful response of a significant minority of pupils diminishes learning and takes up too much of teachers' time. Teachers' marking is now very good. It helps pupils assess how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve as well as providing encouragement and appropriate praise. Assessment of learning, however, is not sufficiently rigorous in some lessons, and teachers do not always check that pupils understand what they need to do before allowing them to start individual work. Regular homework reinforces and extends learning very well.
59. Leadership and management are very good and have improved since the last inspection. The head of department and second in department, for example, have significantly upgraded curriculum provision, which is now very good. Schemes of work for pupils reaching different standards have been established within the national strategy for Years 7 to 9, and a modular GCSE course has improved the consistency of challenge in Years 10 and 11. ICT is now a regular and very effective facet of the curriculum. There is a good awareness of the support of literacy. The department as a whole work very well together and are very supportive of the recently appointed new teachers. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the department is very well placed to improve its work further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Provision is satisfactory, and has good features. Following staff training, several departments, including history and geography, make good use of graphs and charts, and there is some very good use of mathematical calculation in science, for example, in work on velocity. Opportunities to develop mathematics in some other subjects are not consistently identified.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is interesting and challenging for all pupils; it includes some outstanding use of ICT.
- Standards are consistently well above average, and there is a high proportion of A* grades at GCSE.
- There is a very high pass rate among lower-attaining pupils at GCSE.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about science, and work very hard. Behaviour is often excellent.
- Excellent leadership has built strong teamwork among all teaching and support staff.

Commentary

61. Standards are consistently well above average in Year 9 and at GCSE, and there is a very high pass rate among lower-attaining pupils. In 2004, all pupils in Year 11 obtained a pass grade in GCSE science, and a very high proportion achieved A and A* grades. While pupils join the school with well above average standards in science, this represents excellent achievement over their time in the school among all groups of pupils.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and the best is excellent. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subject, and prepare lessons very thoroughly. Learning goals are clear and usually shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This allows pupils to check their own progress. Teachers make good use of praise and humour. Their expectations are very high, and constant challenge maintains interest. This, when accompanied by the enthusiasm shown by the majority of pupils, results in very good progress. Pupils have a positive attitude and behaviour is often exemplary. The quality of teaching and learning is enhanced by the teacher's skill in the use of computer projection. The variety of activities seen in almost all lessons promotes a range of learning styles, and is very well matched to the needs of pupils of differing abilities and interests. Low attaining pupils and those with special needs make similar progress to other pupils, though in some lessons teachers do not make sufficient use of specially adapted material. Very occasionally, more care is needed in choosing activities to match the interests and needs of the pupils. Much teaching makes very effective use of ICT.

Example of outstanding practice

An earth science topic was brought alive for a Year 8 class by the teacher's well thought out use of computer projection. Pupils were captivated and shared her enthusiasm for the topic.

This excellent lesson on igneous rocks was characterised by the dynamism of the teacher and the enthusiasm of the pupils. Learning goals were made abundantly clear and referred to as the lesson progressed. Its first main topic was carefully selected computer images of rocks, which were compared to real specimens, leading to a lively discussion about their characteristics. The teacher moved the pupils at rapid but appropriate pace through a range of further activities, constantly challenging them think carefully about their answers to questions. She directed questions skilfully at individuals, fully aware of the range of standards they had reached. Pupils were further excited by well-chosen video clips of volcanic eruptions, which led to the teacher explaining the origin of and the difference between intrusive and extrusive rocks. Pupils carried out, very competently, a simple yet highly effective experiment to illustrate the different ways in which rocks cooled. Throughout the lesson the teacher used her excellent subject knowledge and lively personality to engage pupils, who responded with an eagerness to learn. A carefully conducted final discussion session cemented the excellent achievement of the whole class.

63. The head of department's excellent leadership and management is a key strength. He has fostered a climate of commitment to excellence, and built outstanding teamwork between teaching and support staff. Excellent use of assessment to track progress and set targets makes a crucial contribution to the high standards reached in Year 11. The development of provision from the very good standards seen during the last inspection constitutes excellent improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from an exciting and challenging curriculum.
- ICT is very well used across subjects, with excellence in modern languages and some science lessons.
- Achievement in the full GCSE course is very good, but there are some weaknesses in the short course.
- Assessment is very good in GCSE courses, but could be refined to increase challenge in Years 7 to 9.
- The attractive website makes a very effective contribution to learning.
- ICT is a major element of the school's teaching and learning strategy, and is very well led and managed.

Commentary

64. Standards are well above average in Year 9 and Year 11. This represents good achievement by Year 9 from pupils' above average starting points. By Year 11, achievement is very good in the GCSE course, and in pupils' use of ICT in their work in other subjects. Achievement in the short GCSE course has suffered from staffing

problems, but remains satisfactory. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The overall pattern of achievement is very good.

65. Teaching and learning are good, and sometimes very good. There is some excellent ICT teaching in other subjects, particularly science and modern languages. Teachers always make learning goals clear to pupils, and set a good pace of work. Where teaching is very good or better, tasks are very challenging, and expectations very high. Teachers use assessment very well in GCSE courses to provide pupils with an exact analysis of their work and progress, and to set targets based on the course requirements. Pupils use this information assiduously to improve their submissions. Assessment in other classes, and in Years 7 to 9, gives the school a good picture of overall standards, but is not used consistently to set work that fully extends the highest-attaining pupils.
66. Leadership and management are very good, both within the subject and in the school's overall strategy, co-ordinated by the acting headteacher. This has included good use of LEA and other consultants to help evaluate and refine the provision. The decision to teach much of the ICT curriculum through subjects has been very effectively managed, and has led to high standards, a wide-ranging and relevant curriculum, and very good staff involvement. Problems with maintaining the school's very wide range of equipment are minimised by a high level of skilled technical support. Overall, resources for learning are very good, and include an attractive and well-designed website that is heavily used by other schools. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection in standards, teaching, learning and the curriculum

ICT across the curriculum

67. Very good provision, with excellent features, leads to well above average standards in Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils learn to collect, analyse and handle information using a wide range of applications across all the subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious studies and citizenship. Excellent work in modern languages, and in some mathematics and science lessons, makes an important contribution to standards and achievement, and has been recognised by several major awards. Gifted and talented pupils have very good opportunities to design Internet pages, and computer clubs are well attended by all pupils.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent use of ICT in Year 7 French enabled the teacher to match work to a wide range of abilities in the class, engage and sustain pupils' interest, and build a sound basis for future learning.

The lesson began with the teacher reinforcing pupils' earlier learning of the French for various parts of the computers by giving directions in French, which were clearly understood. Pupils then worked on a wide range of activities related to domestic animals, with scope to select those with which they felt most comfortable. The software available provided all with interesting and attractive work, enabling higher-attaining pupils to extend their learning beyond the immediate topics they were working on, and allowing those with special educational needs to consolidate their understanding without becoming bored. The teacher ensured that pupils did not become too dependent on the computers by introducing new animals orally, and reinforced their understanding by using short written passages in

familiar language. By the end of the lesson, all pupils were showing good understanding of the early stages of French, and higher-attaining pupils were beginning to apply the structures they had learned to slightly different contexts. Pupils spoke highly of their work in French, both in this and in their primary schools, and were well placed for success in the language in the longer term. This lesson was typical of the department's use of ICT.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching, learning and assessment engage pupils and promote high achievement.
- There is very effective use of ICT, including a new computer suite for the department.
- Some boys' achievement at GCSE is held back by weak writing skills.
- The scheme of work is well thought out, and makes very effective use of resources.
- Standards in fieldwork are very high in Years 10 and 11, but younger pupils could do more of it.
- Opportunities for reflection on difficult issues make a very effective contribution to personal development.

Commentary

68. Standards are well above average in Year 9 and Year 11. Girls do a little better than boys at GCSE, reflecting the slightly higher starting points of boys and girls taking geography. Pupils do particularly well in fieldwork in Years 10 and 11, and their overall achievement is very good.
69. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to very good; it was very good in three-quarters of lessons seen, and is very good overall. There are many strengths. Boys in years 10 and 11 were particularly willing to contribute orally to discussion and showed a good understanding of the subject matter, though this was not always expressed as effectively in their written work, a factor that was likely to limit their achievement at GCSE. Teachers are very enthusiastic and committed to improving standards. They plan lessons in very good detail, and make very good use of ICT. They assess and track progress thoroughly, and set good individual targets, though these could usefully be extended to include specific targets for boys' writing. Teachers give good support to pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they understand their work and can complete it. The choice of topics in lessons makes a very effective contribution to pupils' personal development by encouraging reflection on real problems, such as the impact of flooding on people's lives.
70. Leadership and management are very good, and there is a strong sense of teamwork in the department. Schemes of work are being updated to reflect current interests such as the geography of sport, and work is increasingly varied to match the full range of pupils' needs, though there is at present too little outdoor work in Years 7 to 9. Teachers help pupils to focus on the world outside by excellent wall displays and by participation in local geographical events. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good, but further improvement is needed in boys' written work.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11.
- Very strong leadership and good management are raising standards.
- The best teaching actively involves and challenges pupils.
- Assessment and target setting for pupils are very effective.
- Some work in Years 10 and 11 is not matched closely enough to the needs of individual pupils.
- There are limited arrangements to enrich the curriculum in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

71. Standards in Year 9 are well above average and achievement is very good. Very good teaching and strong systems of assessment enable pupils to achieve very well. High numbers of Year 9 pupils choose to study history at GCSE. GCSE results were well above average in 2003, and above average in 2004; the increasingly wide range of pupils choosing the subject accounts for these variations in standards.
72. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11 because of very good assessment and a strong focus on examination technique. Some lower-attaining pupils, however, do not yet have work that is closely enough matched to their learning needs, and standards could be improved more generally if pupils were provided with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. There are no significant differences in the achievement of those who speak English as an additional language or those pupils with special educational needs. Most boys and girls achieve equally well but, at the time of the inspection, the poor attitudes of a significant minority of boys adversely affected their achievement.
73. The overall quality of teaching is good, and the best is very good. Most lessons are well planned, and teachers build good relationships that encourage pupils to play an active role in their learning. Sensitive questioning allows pupils of all abilities to play a full part in lessons, and most work is closely matched to individual needs. Where teaching is very good, teachers have very sound knowledge of their subject, set clear learning objectives and make effective use of a wide variety of historical teaching resources. However, in a few lessons, mostly in Years 10 and 11, some pupils are insufficiently challenged and teachers provide too few opportunities for them to work independently. Individual enquiry work is, however, now supported by an impressive, newly developed subject website. A strong emphasis is placed on improving literacy. Specialist vocabulary is learnt when new topics are taught. This, together with the use of guided writing structures, gives most pupils the confidence and expertise to write more extended pieces of work. Marking and assessment is very good and pupils are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve their work.
74. The subject is very well led, and management strategies are good. There is a clear vision for improvement and a strong team spirit. Self-analysis, through close monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress, is a strength. However, some other aspects of management, including planning to meet the full range of learning needs in a class, need to be made more consistent. Pupils have access to a comprehensive range of resources, but those in Years 7 to 9 have too few

opportunities to take part in organised historical visits. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the department is very well placed to make further progress.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons challenge pupils to think beyond the obvious, and are taught with enthusiasm and humour.
- Pupils work very hard, and show clear commitment to their learning.
- Standards are well above average in Year 9, and very high in GCSE courses.
- Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Commentary

75. Standards are well above average in Year 9. Results in both the 2003 short course and full course GCSE examinations were very high. 2004 results and the quality of work seen during the inspection show similar standards. Achievement is very good among all groups of pupils. All parents whose children are not following GCSE courses have exercised their right to withdraw them from religious education.
76. By Year 9, pupils have very secure knowledge and understanding of the key beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other world faiths represented in Britain and can appreciate the ways in which such faiths affect daily life. They use specialist vocabulary with growing confidence. Most pupils have developed high-level skills in empathy and reflection. All pupils move beyond the externals of religion to probe deeper questions of meaning and morality. Throughout the year groups there are examples of lengthy and sensitive writing. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build very effectively on existing skills and knowledge. They form their own ideas on a wide range of ethical and religious issues and can apply their understanding to current situations.
77. Teaching is very good overall, and has excellent features. This has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and the quality of their learning. Enthusiasm and humour are present in all lessons and intellectual demands are high. This means that pupils enjoy their lessons and rise to the challenges they face. Clear explanation, coupled with judicious questioning and prompting makes pupils think beyond the obvious. A significant strength of the teaching is the clear emphasis on reinforcement and consolidation of learning – this equips pupils very well to reach their potential.

Example of outstanding practice

Challenging tasks and very effective teaching enabled all pupils in a Year 11 class to show their understanding of environmental issues and of the Christian concept of stewardship.

The lesson centred on the theme of environmental damage. An initial discussion of ideas presented on cards enabled pupils to think about their personal views on what damages the environment the most. This was followed by a whole class discussion where pupils listened to each other's views and built on each other's answers. Pupils of all abilities did this very well, showing large amounts of energy, enthusiasm and knowledge. They were prepared to challenge each other's answers, yet showed tolerance of differing opinions. One pupil,

for example, spoke very eloquently about the issue of litter and disagreed with some of her classmates who thought that the lack of litterbins might be an excuse. The teacher asked very challenging questions, such as *Who owns the world?*, and the pupils responded with carefully thought-out answers, often backed up by scriptural support. They particularly enjoyed the poem called *Reverse Creation*, which showed the world ending in seven days, one pupil pronouncing the accompanying photos as 'really cool'.

78. Leadership and management are very good. There is clarity of vision and a shared commitment to improve. No issues were raised at the time of the last inspection, but standards and teaching have nevertheless improved significantly. The department is keen to increase the number of pupils who take a GCSE course and thus reduce the very large number in Years 10 and 11 who exercise their right to withdraw from religious education. The subject makes a very good contribution towards pupils' spiritual development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are above average, with good achievement in electronics and graphics courses.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have too few opportunities to develop design skills.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their work in the majority of lessons.
- ICT is under-used, and pupils do not gain experience in computer-aided manufacturing.
- Work is not adapted well enough for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' work is not marked regularly enough, and marking gives them too little guidance on improvement.

Commentary

79. GCSE results are above average in 2003, and remain broadly similar in 2004. Pupils achieve better results in graphics and electronics than in resistant materials. Standards in Year 9 are above average. Pupils work with a satisfactory range of materials. Most do well in formal drawing and freehand sketching in Years 7 to 9, but the structure of the work gives them too few opportunities for pupils to develop their own design skills. Year 11 pupils develop good presentation and making skills. They are beginning to use ICT well to present their portfolio work and to process the data they collect from potential users of their products. Although pupils apply the process of designing, they do not show how their research has influenced their designs. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.

80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and good in some lessons. In Years 7 to 9, teachers prepare a good range of practical activities, which enable pupils to use both hand and machine tools to make a range of good quality products. However, there is less opportunity to develop pupils design skills, and learning in this aspect is barely satisfactory. Computer aided design is underused to upgrade the quality of design work. Teachers provide good individual support for pupils and foster good relationships in lessons and this creates a good climate for learning. Otherwise, too little is done for pupils who have special educational needs because teachers do not adapt the work to suit their individual learning needs. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils

develop both design skills and practical making skills well. Teachers use the examination mark scheme well to guide pupils through the design process. However, pupils do not follow examination criteria closely enough to secure the full range of marks for each section of their coursework. For example, very few pupils analyse what they have learned from their research before writing a specification for design. The school does not provide opportunities for pupils to experience work in computer-aided manufacture and they are disadvantaged in the scope of their learning opportunities, particularly in coursework. The frequency and rigour of marking is not sufficient to support pupils in their learning.

81. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, and have good features. The head of department has established good working relationships amongst staff, and has led it well through a period of staffing difficulties, including the long-term recovery from a major injury by a senior member of its staff. The department is now focused on raising standards further. However, teaching time is barely adequate in Years 7 to 9, and marking and assessment are underdeveloped. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 take two design and technology GCSEs; this narrows their curriculum, as all design and technology syllabuses share the same design element. More use could be made of data analysis to target work more precisely to pupils' individual learning needs, and to evaluate the impact of what is provided on the learning. Overall, standards and the quality of work are broadly similar to those seen during the last inspection, and improvement is satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design, music and physical education were inspected fully, and work in drama was sampled by observing three lessons

82. The quality of work sampled in drama was very good overall, and included one excellent lesson. Standards in the Year 11 classes were well above average, and reflect the school's high GCSE results. All of the teaching and learning seen was good or better, and the best was excellent. Teaching is based on a very effective scheme of work that carefully builds pupils' knowledge and understanding of dramatic conventions and their sense of style. Teaching is energetic and demanding, encouraging pupils to think hard. As a result, almost all develop good attitudes, though a lack of discipline among some younger boys was not always effectively tackled.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent relationships and planning enabled a Year 11 class for pupils with a wide range of abilities to refine their dramatic techniques in preparation for examinations in improvisation.

The teacher's expertise was apparent from the start of this excellent lesson, in her modelling of the body language of children, her use of a 'warming up' exercise for the main lesson, and her approach to practising improvisation for GCSE examinations. The teacher concentrated firmly on reinforcing and widening pupils' appreciation of the potential of techniques such as freeze frames and the use of a narrator. As a result, pupils steadily realised the wide and telling purposes to which these could be put. Using Tell me it's not true a song from a film pupils had recently seen, the teacher skilfully created a pathway for pupils to present their personal ideas of tragedy in a story line. No pupil was able to avoid full and whole-hearted participation. The teacher introduced new techniques as if by accident, and these were immediately picked up and used well. It was exciting to see so many pupils released from their normal, assumed attitudes, and working unselfconsciously to produce moving and heartfelt sequences. The very high level of challenge offered by the teacher and her boundless expectations of pupils resulted in a series of acted storylines, which were full of perception and imagination. Pupils were determined to refine and improve their work in order to win the teacher's approval. Throughout the lesson, the teacher intervened at an excellent level, in an unassuming

manner, but with an assurance that resulted in extremely productive learning. The lesson was an inspiration in demonstrating the teacher's power of quietly facilitating pupils to work to their best.

83. Leadership and management of drama are excellent. The head of department, a specialist teacher with great subject expertise, ensures that good practice is shared. She is not satisfied with anything but the best, either in teaching or in pupils' achievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The subject does much to contribute to the enrichment of school life, through productions and theatre trips, and even more to develop pupils' social and cultural understanding of the world.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and often excellent teaching leads to very high standards and very good achievement.
- Pupils enjoy art and respond with enthusiasm and maturity to the exciting teaching they receive.
- Overall, boys do not achieve as much as girls, because of weaknesses in organisation and attitude.
- Teachers and pupils have to work hard to overcome constraints in accommodation and resources.

Commentary

84. Standards are very high in Year 9 and Year 11. This represents very good achievement at all levels. Pupils come into the school with above average knowledge and skills in art. They also have very good language skills and listen well. They are prepared to give of their best nearly all the time. Teachers are not complacent about this and build on these strengths, with commitment and ingenuity, to challenge and involve the pupils. This leads to consistency in teaching and learning, and to the very high achievement. Lower-attaining pupils achieve equally well because teachers take care to include all pupils. Boys generally achieve less well than girls because they are often less focussed and organised.

85. Teaching and learning are very good and sometimes excellent. The enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers are infectious. Lessons are always lively and challenging. Pupils respond to the high expectations and well-deserved praise to produce thoughtful, exciting work. In many lessons the serious shortage of space means that teachers and pupils have to take great care to look after their work and struggle to make prints or sculptures. Excellent relationships, and the high level of cooperation and trust between pupils and teachers, ensure that the most complex processes are carried out with minimum fuss and maximum fun.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 11 lesson art lesson about developing ideas in still life drawing through monoprinting made excellent use of pupils high levels of drawing skill, co-operation and self-discipline.

"This can be a very messy process, so you'll all have to be very careful," began the teacher. She was not kidding! Pupils closely followed her lively demonstration. There were gasps of amazement as the teacher drew

the first print from the rolled out ink and great excitement as pupils struggled into old shirts to protect their uniforms. The teacher was clearly confident that the drawing skills the pupils had learned earlier would be transferred to this new medium; the pupils were clearly itching to try it. The confidence and trust that the teacher had in the pupils was rewarded by an intense period of activity. Despite the crowded space and competition for ink and rollers, high levels of co-operation and good humour enabled boys and girls alike to experiment and develop their ideas with increasingly imaginative use of line, tone and colour. News of a newly discovered technique quickly spread round the room, whilst there was equal admiration for those who chose to develop their drawing through a more limited range of media. At the close, as they examined some of the results, pupils and teacher could be sure that the bulging racks of drying prints would provide inspiration for weeks to come.

86. Teachers use assessment very well to track progress and to provide targets for improvement. In GCSE classes, the system is carefully based on the examination criteria; homework is also a vital part of the process, as is working to deadlines. Whilst assessment in Years 7-9 works well, pupils in Year 9 would benefit from a clearer understanding of National Curriculum levels.
87. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader is committed to raising and maintaining standards and to creating a cohesive and dedicated team of teachers. Close monitoring of standards and exam results produces careful planning for developments. These include the development of teaching and learning, and very good preparation for GCSE submissions. Media are imaginatively used and exploited, despite limited accommodation and storage space. Pupils use computers effectively to combine and explore images taken on digital cameras as a basis for painting. Visits to national galleries have a big influence on their work of pupils taking examination courses.
88. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, particularly in Years 7 to 9, where standards have risen dramatically. All classes achieve consistently well due to the shared planning and very good teamwork as well as the close monitoring of teaching and learning.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high standard of teaching encourages pupils to learn really well.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Many pupils in Year 10 choose music as one of their option choices.
- Standards in GCSE are well-above average but there are few A* grades.
- Because some lessons run out of time there is no opportunity for reinforcement.

Commentary

89. Standards are well above average in Year 9 and Year 11 and achievement is very good. There is much enthusiasm for music – many pupils learn instruments, sing and take part in the wide range of opportunities available. Pupils of all abilities including those who have special educational needs achieve very well and talented pupils play a leading part in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. The vibrant musical life of the school contributes very well towards the personal development of all pupils.

90. Teaching is very good throughout the department, and pupils are inspired to do their very best. As the emphasis is on a wide range of musical experiences pupils have a secure background that raises their standard of learning. They answer searching questions on the quality and appropriateness of their work and spell and explain musical terms with confidence that also supports their literacy skills. Pupils are exposed to experimental forms of music as well as Mozart minuets as a foundation for more advanced work later on. Assessment is very good and pupils' self-assessment reinforces how well they are progressing. Many pupils, including a large number of boys, choose music at GCSE because of the wide range of musical styles such as electronic music and club dance being taught. Consequently all pupils are very focussed and work hard in lessons. Since the department has very good resources including a technology suite pupils make very good use of the facilities available. Occasionally, lessons run out of time and the opportunity for reinforcement is lost, but this is a small issue in the context of so much enthusiasm and excitement.

Example of outstanding practice

Imaginative use of a wide range of sounds to create music, and of improvised techniques to record it, led to very high achievement in a Year 7 class.

Vocal sounds representing wind, rain, bird calls, dogs barking and bells tolling were used by a Year 7 class for their group improvisations on a churchyard theme recorded the previous week. The lively brainstorming of the elements of music with 'how' and 'why' questions asked by the teacher helped pupils prepare for appraising their recorded work. The keenness and vitality of the answers was largely due to the interesting way the teacher posed the questions. The teacher's piano demonstrations led to graphic signs being proudly drawn on individual white boards to portray these musical sounds. There were smiles of admiration as each group's recording was played and pupils were very attentive and supportive of each other. Some talented pupils directed their groups with flair and listeners used musical language well to paint word pictures to which all could relate. Again insistence on answering in sentences raised the standards of learning. Throughout this lesson there was much respect and rapport between teacher and pupils that created an excellent atmosphere for promoting learning.

91. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong vision for the department, backed by a high degree of teamwork and co-operation. Schemes of work are realistic and very well matched to pupils' needs and interests, with a very strong contribution to their knowledge of their own and other cultures. Teaching is monitored very well, and there is good support for the other members of the department. There has been a very good improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE are very high.
- Achievement and the quality of learning benefit greatly from teachers' very good professional skills.
- Leadership is outstanding, and management is very good.
- Indoor accommodation is excellent, and includes the regional volleyball centre.
- Pupils have good, and often very good, attitudes and behaviour in lessons.
- Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of how well they are doing.

Commentary

92. GCSE results in 2003 were very high, particularly at A* and A grades. Results for 2004 remained above average, but were lower as a result of the weak performance of some boys. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average, but this represents good achievement from pupils' starting points, which are below average overall. All pupils make very good progress in Years 10 and 11 and reach above average overall standards. Pupils make very good progress in their evaluative and choreography skills and use technical vocabulary well. Overall, the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good.

93. The quality of teaching is very good, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their subject very well, enabling pupils to gain new skills and knowledge. Planning is very good, with clear learning goals that are consistently shared with pupils. Classes are very well managed, and the brisk pace of lessons ensures that pupils are fully exercised and develop very good attitudes. Teaching in GCSE theory classes is consistently very good. In a minority of lessons, tasks and learning resources could be more closely adapted to the needs of all of the pupils in the class, and pupils would benefit from more opportunities to apply skills they have learned. Pupils' progress is monitored very well, but they are not kept fully aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.
94. Leadership of the department is outstanding. This has been recognised through involvement in a DfES publication on "Professional Development in Physical Education" and a presentation to the pre-Olympic Congress in Thessaloniki. Management is very good. Very clear departmental procedures enable teachers to work very effectively as a team. Regular monitoring and team teaching keep all members of the department in touch with each other's work, with a clear focus on quality. There is a very clear vision for improvement and a strong philosophy to extend the achievement of all pupils. Provision for learning beyond lessons is very good, and is based on a philosophy of "sport for all". The excellent quality of indoor accommodation allows the school to offer a wide range of activities, and makes an important contribution to its work with the community. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, with significant advances in standards, teaching, learning, leadership and the department's accommodation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The programme is very well thought out and involves all of the resources of the school.
- Pupils learn a wide range of practical skills and receive very good information.
- Teaching promotes a responsible and thoughtful attitude among all pupils.
- Day-to-day and strategic management of provision are very effective.

Commentary

95. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good and clearly reflects the ethos and values of the school. PSHE is seen as an important pastoral tool in enabling pupils to develop the appropriate skills, attitudes and values concerned with their personal development. A team of experienced teachers, led by a very effective head of department, teaches a very carefully planned and comprehensive programme. This is delivered through subjects such as food and nutrition, child development and information technology. Drugs awareness and sex education are taught in a sensitive and informative manner. Teachers deal very well with sensitive issues. Outside speakers from agencies such as the police supplement the programme very effectively. Because of this provision, students are well informed and knowledgeable about a range of topics such as smoking, how to cook a well-balanced meal, and how to prepare for parenthood.

96. Teaching of PSHE is very good overall. Teaching is enthusiastic and challenging with high expectations of pupils. All pupils are treated with respect. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils create a very good climate for learning. Both teachers and pupils express very positive opinions about this aspect of personal development.
97. Leadership and management are both very good. Schemes of work and other documentation are thorough, supportive and non-bureaucratic. The head of department has a very clear view of what is needed to develop the subject further.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and stimulating resources lead to lively informed discussion and promote understanding.
- Very good leadership has raised the profile of the subject.
- The school provides very good opportunities for active citizenship beyond the classroom.
- There are still some weaknesses in assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress.

Commentary

98. Standards are above average in Years 9 and 11, and achievement is good. Pupils are interested in the topics covered and show good knowledge and understanding, for example of the electoral system and human rights. Most pupils have developed good skills of enquiry and communication. Year 9 pupils can compare and contrast the policies of different political parties and make informed judgements on how to vote. Year 11 pupils participate well in discussion considering opposing arguments for and against the death penalty. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and can present their opinions clearly. Higher attaining pupils are challenged in lessons and argue a point of view articulately and persuasively.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good teaching. The very good preparation and provision of resources such as information packs, questionnaires and videos, and effective classroom organisation into varied groupings, result in lively, informed debate. Pupils are particularly interested when they realise that they are forming opinions based on 'real life' material such as extracts from current political manifestoes. They are also encouraged to evaluate their own learning and achievement in lessons, although some need more guidance with this. Where learning is less effective, group activities are less carefully structured, and all pupils do not contribute to group decisions. For example during a mock election in Year 9 some pupils were already preparing press releases and posters before their party's policy had been decided.
100. Very good curriculum leadership and management have led to effective professional development, and a team of specialist teachers has given the subject a high profile.

There has been a thorough audit of how the subject is taught, but the school has not yet evaluated the quality of teaching and learning of citizenship in other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own learning, but there is a need to develop assessment systems further, and requirements for the subject in pupils' annual reports are not fully met.

101. The school has developed very good opportunities for active citizenship beyond lessons, for example through the school council, mentoring of other pupils, charity projects, the youth council, visitors to school from the local council, the police and other agencies, assemblies on human rights and school visits to Tanzania and China. The introduction of this new subject has been successful.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	22	86.0	80.0	64.0	20.0	43.0	29.9
Biology	25	92.0	65.2	36.0	11.1	36.0	20.6
Business studies	36	94.0	76.4	31.0	16.3	36.0	26.2
Chemistry	11	90.0	72.7	38.0	13.9	36.0	24.1
Communication studies	42	88.0	86.4	52.0	100	42.0	32.0
Design and technology	17	82.0	74.9	18.0	15.1	29.0	25.3
Economics	14	93.0	73.6	27	27.0	29.0	26.4
English literature	54	94.0	82.9	50.0	28.7	42.0	28.7
French	5	100	78.2	0	18.9	30.0	30.0
Geography	32	84.0	74.3	38.0	19.8	36.0	26.5
German	2	50.0	81.5	0	19.3	15.0	28.9
General studies	146	82.2	73.9	34.2	17.8	33.2	25.7
Government and politics	16	100	69.7	56	16.7	43.0	24.1
History	52	90.0	80.7	38	38.0	38.0	28.6
Information technology	12	92.0	67.0	8.3	10.9	29.0	21.4
Mathematics	27	85.0	61.9	59	17.1	42.0	22.1
Music	9	89.0	86.5	22.0	21.4	30.0	30.7
Physics	32	78.0	68.6	44	44.0	14.5	35
Psychology	16	88.0	69.7	44.0	16.7	39.0	24.1
Religious studies	7	100	80.2	43.0	22.6	43.0	29.8
Sociology	39	77.0	71.8	31.0	18.4	31.0	25.4
Sports/PE studies	14	100	73.2	21.0	11.4	39.0	23.1
Theatre studies	18	89.0	86.5	28.0	19.6	35.0	30.6

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	10	100	98.6	80.0	50.2	102.0	87.7
Biology	17	100	94.0	41.0	39.2	76.5	78.6
Business studies	28	93.0	98.7	32.0	36.8	72.9	80.1
Chemistry	14	93.0	97.6	43.0	49.0	78.6	84.9
Communication studies	15	100	99.4	80.0	37.8	100.0	82.1
Design and technology	6	100	97.8	33.3	35.0	70.0	77.9
Economics	6	83.0	98.9	33.3	52.0	73.3	88.3
English Literature	30	100	99.5	83.0	46.5	100.0	86.5
French	3	100	98.8	33.3	51.5	80.0	87.6
Geography	30	97.0	98.7	60.0	70.0	86.0	84.0
German	1	100	98.3	100	47.9	120.0	84.8
General Studies	98	91.0	94.7	45.8	44.0	76.1	73.1
Government and politics	10	100	97.4	70.0	42.7	102.0	81.8
History	31	100	99.0	55.0	44.6	94.9	84.6
Mathematics	18	94.0	96.7	56.0	55.6	84.4	88.8
Music	5	100	98.8	100	38.9	108.0	81.1
Other languages	1	100	64.5	100	96.9	100.0	93.8
Psychology	6	100	97.4	67.0	42.7	90.0	81.8
Physics	29	86.0	97.7	52.0	45.0	76.6	81.7
Religious studies	4	100	98.8	0	46.7	70.0	85.6
Sociology	10	90.0	98.2	60.0	44.3	88.0	83.6
Sports/PE studies	8	100	98.0	50.0	30.9	87.5	75.2
Theatre studies	6	100	99.5	17.0	40.1	63.0	83.6

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

English literature

Provision in English literature is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and a willingness to work help students make very good progress.
- Examination results at AS and A levels are well above the national average.

- Good leadership and management enable all students to reach their full potential.
- A minority of students make less good progress because they are not active participants in lessons and too reliant on their teachers' ideas.

Commentary

102. A-level and AS results are consistently well above average, and a high proportion of pupils complete A-level successfully. The standard of work seen during the inspection was also well above average. By Year 13 students are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the texts they study. They research and plan essays carefully. Written work is full, presented persuasively and well supported by textual evidence. Students take notes avidly and are generally well organised. The majority are very positive in attitude and work hard outside and inside lessons. As a result, they make very good progress. They study a demanding range of texts with enjoyment and thought. Occasionally, a minority of students fail to respond to teachers' questions and to class debate, preferring to take what teachers offer them on trust. Overall, however, achievement is very good.

103. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, are enthusiastic and conduct lessons at a lively pace. They plan lessons carefully to ensure that activities are varied and absorbing and that students are fully engaged. Teachers have strikingly good relationships with their students; A-level lessons frequently resemble a university tutorial rather than a sixth form. Above all, teachers do much to encourage students to think for themselves and to absorb social and cultural background to aid their textual study. Assessment is very thorough and closely tracks students' progress. Detailed marking gives all students clear indications about the standard of their work, shows them how to improve it.

104. Very good leadership and management ensure that students experience the same high quality of teaching throughout the course. They are given a very clear overview of examination requirements and are well informed about the course prior to joining the sixth form, so that they make rapid progress in Year 12. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, both in examination results and in the quality of teaching and learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

105. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are well above average overall. Students meet the language and literacy demands of most subjects well. They speak confidently and relevantly and work well together in groups. A minority, who mostly begin with average and below average GCSE results, do not always complete their written work to a good enough standard, and the school could usefully address this more quickly. The growing use of ICT for research purposes extends the range of many students' reading, but the library has too few books to support private reading in several subjects.

Modern foreign languages

The focus of the inspection was on French and German. Work in Spanish was also sampled. The quality of teaching in Spanish is excellent. Standards observed in Year 13 are

very high, students studying literature with insight and understanding. All sixth form students have the opportunity to learn Spanish as part of the school's entitlement programme. Standards in Year 12 are average, with students progressing very well.

Example of outstanding practice

The teacher's outstanding knowledge of Spanish literature, combined with excellent explanation and a close match of work to individual needs, led to very high standards in A-level coursework.

To a student less used to researching her interests in literature, the teachers' desk, piled with plays, commentaries new and old, and articles printed from Spanish websites, might seem overwhelming. This student is entirely at ease. The teacher's passion for the plays of García Lorca is infectious. The student has already risen to the challenge of reading two of the author's plays and has acquired a thorough knowledge of historical and political movements in Spain in the twentieth century. Now she is guided into interpreting the plays and understanding how literature parallels society. Reading a lucid Spanish article on "La Casa de Bernarda Alba", the student is challenged with questions in Spanish which oblige her to link episodes in the play to key events in Franco's dictatorship. Every response demands advanced Spanish skill, as well as careful reflection on the A-level topics. By and by she is expressing opinions that enable her to critically appraise in Spanish performances that she is due soon to see, and is practising advanced linguistic structures, such as the imperfect subjunctive. Very high levels of linguistic and cultural awareness are achieved.

German

Provision in German is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are very well motivated and achieve well.
- Extensive use of German in lessons sets high expectations of students.
- The library has too few resources for independent reading and study, particularly of new German spelling.
- Students need to improve the rate at which they learn and collate new vocabulary.
- Due to good leadership and management, student numbers have risen markedly in recent years.

Commentary

106. Only one student took A level in 2003, obtaining an A grade. The first sizeable group for some years took the AS examination in 2004, gaining results which were above the national average. As the current Year 13, they maintain above average standards, achieving well. They speak accurately, some at near native speaker standard, and express themselves in writing on contemporary topics by manipulating grammatical structures well. Most understand challenging texts. The larger size of the Year 12 group shows growing interest in the subject. Standards are above average and achievement is good. The transition from GCSE is effectively managed. Most students use German confidently and reflect on grammatical accuracy when expressing opinions. However, content in prose writing is better than grammatical accuracy. They deduce unfamiliar vocabulary well from context and linguistic pointers. A high proportion of pupils complete their courses, and overall achievement is good.

107. Teaching and learning are good, and students have very good attitudes to their work. A strong team spirit among the young teachers underpins the drive in recruitment and standards. Students speak very positively of teachers' support: near-native speakers

receive responsibility, the less confident extra help. Teaching is well adapted to examination requirements. It engages all students in discussion through extensive use of German, even if teachers make occasional minor errors. A good variety of activities brings structure to learning, but insufficient rigour in the collation of vocabulary, genders and plurals of nouns in particular, slows the pace at which students improve their grammar. Lessons on contemporary issues in Germany use good original materials to complement course books, but poor timing of related activities sometimes reduces their effectiveness. Students are guided well in the use of dictionaries. Work is regularly and constructively marked, though marking is at times inconsistent in identifying errors.

108. The subject has improved well since the previous inspection, and the recent appointment of a coordinator for sixth-form languages reflects the department's intention to consolidate this further. The recent growth in numbers means that German is now better established, and the excellent ICT resources of the language college give opportunity for independent learning and research. However, the library has too few resources to support learning in the subject.

French

Provision for French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are interested in the subject, and work well in lessons.
- Listening and reading skills are good, but some students lack confidence in speaking.
- Some students work hard outside lessons, but others do not do enough.
- The best written work is of a high standard, but some is inaccurate, and not marked in enough detail.
- ICT is under-used, and library stock does not support the current A-level course.

Commentary

109. Too few students took A-level in 2003 and 2004 to allow results to be compared with those of other schools. In 2004, two students achieved A grades, and two passed with grades below C. The school's analysis of AS results in 2004 suggests that standards were above average. The standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly average, with strengths in listening and reading, but weaknesses in some students' speaking and writing skills. The best written work of higher-attaining students, which is sometimes wordprocessed, is well organised and accurate. Some written work, however, contains basic grammatical errors that prevent it from making sense, and these are not corrected consistently, so that students do not know where they are going wrong or how to improve. The department has recognised this weakness and some recent marking is better.

110. Overall achievement is satisfactory. The standard of work seen during the inspection represented satisfactory achievement from students' starting points, and was consistent with broadly average A-level grades, though a minority of students had a lot of ground to make up to achieve this. Recent A-level and AS results also indicate satisfactory overall achievement, with examples of good achievement among higher-attaining students.

111. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but have features requiring improvement. Teachers know the subject well and include a variety of interesting tasks in each lesson, making good use of a well-chosen textbook. Written tasks, however, are not consistently designed to tackle weaknesses that have been identified in students' work, and some involve too much copying. Students work well in lessons, and some approach their independent work with equal commitment. Others, however, do not realise the need for consistent hard work when they are

not being directly supervised, and rely too heavily on their teachers for support. This limits their longer-term achievement. There is little use of ICT in lessons. Teachers provide good levels of support outside lessons, but do not use the school's system of catch-up lessons quickly enough when students fall behind with their work or have difficulty with it.

112. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department has recognised the areas that need to be improved, and has begun to address them, though this process needs to be pursued more consistently, particularly in marking. There are good resources for learning in the teaching rooms, but library stock is not relevant to the current A-level course. Numbers taking French have begun to recover from very low levels, and students told inspectors that they were happy with the course and with the support they received. Sixth form French was not reported on in detail in the last report.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in mathematics because of good, rigorous teaching.
- There is a high pass rate, and students who begin with modest GCSE results achieve well.
- Good schemes of work and effective monitoring and evaluation ensure consistent teaching and learning.
- Very good leadership and management lead to a high level of consistency in the department.

Commentary

113. A-level results are above average, and represent good progress from students' AS results, which are broadly average overall. The school's close analysis of each student's progress shows that many achieve better than their predicted grades at A-level. The quality of work seen during the inspection was consistent with these examination results. In all lessons, the challenge that students were presented with matched their needs closely. Overall, achievement in mathematics is good.

114. This is the result of consistently good teaching and learning. Schemes of work give good guidance on the methods to use, and teachers use this well, resulting in consistency between different teachers when teaching the same topic to different groups. Staff know their subject very well, and this enables them to plan challenging tasks. In addition, they know their classes very well because of their very good marking and assessment. This means that in lessons, teachers can ensure that their questioning of students takes account of each student's capability, strengths and weaknesses to ensure that they are stretched just enough. In one lesson, an effective technique allowed students to decide for themselves how confident they were on a particular topic and to choose between a routine exercise and a more challenging one. In all lessons, teachers support pupils well as they move around the room to check on work rate and to handle misconceptions. However, they sometimes focus too much on technical aspects of the work, leaving students too little time to consolidate their understanding of the underlying ideas.

115. The head of department has a clear vision of how the department should be run, with an appropriate emphasis on rigorous teaching and assessment. Monitoring and evaluation of the department's work is rigorous through analyses of test and examination results, discussions with staff and pupils and direct observation. The department also emphasises the contribution that mathematics makes to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through, for example, imaginative displays and participation in mathematical events. Very good leadership and management enable the department to maintain a consistent approach, and has been a significant factor in its good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

116. Standards are above average, and there is good attention to the mathematical content in all courses where this is relevant. There is particularly effective application of mathematics in calculations in physics, though some business studies students are reluctant to tackle aspects of their courses, such as accountancy, that require complex calculations.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was on physics and chemistry. **Biology** was sampled by observing a lesson and analysing students' work. Teaching, learning and achievement in the work sampled were good.

Physics

Provision in physics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved steadily over recent years, and are now well above average.
- Students with modest GCSE results achieve very well, and higher-attaining students work at a high level.
- Expert teachers explain complex ideas clearly, so that students can understand and apply them.
- Work is very carefully assessed and marked, and students receive very good guidance.
- Students present all of their work beautifully, and take pride in it.
- Leadership and management are very good, and there is very effective teamwork in the department.

Commentary

117. Standards are well above average in examinations and in students' work; there was a particularly high proportion of A grades at A-level in 2004. This is a significant improvement on 2003 results. There is a very high pass rate, even when students begin with modest GCSE results, and overall achievement is very good. The transition from GCSE to AS and then to A-level is very well managed, and few students show signs of finding their new courses too difficult.

118. Teaching and learning are very good. Where teaching is excellent, very difficult ideas are presented with such clarity that students tackle them and succeed, some doing so almost unaided. A key strength is the very high expertise of the teachers. This is the basis for the effective assessment of progress in lessons followed by precise, clear guidance to the student about how to improve. Teachers supplement this with very thorough marking of students' work. Learners focus very strongly on their work both in lessons and otherwise. They have a strong capacity for independent work. Students' folders are beautifully organised, a requirement set by teachers and responded to whole-heartedly by students.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 12 physics students were taught a complex new calculation so clearly that they understood and used the idea with ease.

The goal of the lesson was to find the gravitational constant by knowing the velocity and distance travelled of a thrown object. The physics and the mathematics were new ground for the students. The lesson succeeded because the teacher had planned how to simplify the steps in the calculation in excellent detail. Each phase in the presentation was supported by vector diagrams projected from the computer to reinforce the key concept, which was to be the basis for the calculation. The students understood because the teacher said little, but just enough, as he had planned. The board work and the projected images were beautifully laid out. Each phase on its own was simple, so the teacher used question and answer to check if they understood and to boost their confidence. The students coped with ease and confidence when a practice question was set, some almost unaided. This represented excellent achievement.

119. Leadership and management are very good. The staff team work together consistently and effectively. The schemes of work are in very good order. Assessment procedures are accurate, provide sufficient oversight of progress, and are used well. Well-designed new accommodation is an asset. Resources for learning match the curriculum very well, and recent enhancements, particularly in ICT, are being used to very good effect. Standards, progress and learning have shown very good improvement since the last inspection.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and overall achievement is good.
- Higher-attaining students do very well, but some others do not understand all of their work.
- Teachers are expert in the subject, and teach difficult parts of the course confidently and well.
- Some students do not take enough care over their work, and could benefit from more thorough marking.
- Very effective leadership and management have led to recovery from a recent dip in standards.

Commentary

120. A-level results since 2002 have ranged from well above average to broadly average. Year 13 work during the inspection was above average, and showed evidence of recovery from a recent dip in examination results.

121. Overall, achievement is good. Each year, some students enter the courses with borderline GCSE grades. Most of these students achieve well in relation to their starting points, and gaps in their understanding are tackled effectively in lessons. Some, however, do not take enough care with their work, and as a result do not fully understand it; the department does not do enough to tackle this issue. A combination of demanding teaching and good work outside lessons leads to good and some very good achievement among higher-attaining students; a good proportion of these show very secure understanding of A-grade work. Male and female students do equally well.
122. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very high levels of subject knowledge and understanding enable them to teach the harder parts of the courses well. Teachers accurately assess the progress made by each student, and know how to provide help. However, the quality of marking varies from adequate to very good, and this sometimes limits achievement among lower-attaining students. Lesson planning, the variety of work for students, and the range of resources used in lessons are all good. Students concentrate well in lessons, and work confidently.
123. Leadership and management are very good, and the staff team work together very effectively. Assessment procedures measure progress accurately and regularly. Students value the readiness of staff to give time to help them. Schemes of work are in good order, and teaching time is allocated wisely. There are ample resources for chemistry, used well. Accommodation is good. When the school was last inspected, standards were higher, but the subject is now attracting a wider range of students. There have been improvements in the use of ICT and in the overall quality of learning. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students increase their range of ICT skills well.
- Teachers prepare a good range of learning resources.
- Very good relationships provide very good conditions for learning.
- Some lessons are not based on fully up to date information on ICT.
- Some students do not complete coursework on time.

Commentary

124. The AS course was inspected. This is a relatively new course, and students have achieved average results in the past two years. Girls achieve higher grades than boys. Standards seen during the inspection were similar. Students start the course with broadly average standards, and achievement overall is satisfactory. Students gain good knowledge of the specialist software before they attempt the necessary coursework and are able to apply this knowledge to a variety of challenging tasks. Work shows a good level of analysis, and all students establish a client for their work, which provides a more realistic context for the development of information systems needed for the examination coursework. They have a good understanding of the concepts involved in solving problems relating to information systems.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, and teachers are well organised. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and students benefit from structured and specific guidance and support which is well matched to individual needs. Teachers set clear objectives in lessons to guide students with their learning. Teachers cover the knowledge to good depth and explain the information well. However, some lessons do not provide information relating to the most recent developments in ICT and this has a negative impact on learning. Students are given good support when teachers discuss specific points for development with individuals, which help to consolidate students' own plans for their coursework. However, there is a need to follow up students' progress in their coursework assignments more rigorously in order to keep all on target to complete them. Most students have above average skills in numeracy and literacy and complete work to an appropriate level. In some lessons, however, students are passive and there are fewer opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers establish very good relationships with students, which create a very good learning ethos in which there is mutual respect.
126. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The AS' level course is now established and there is now a focus on raising standards. There is a good level of co-ordination between staff delivering the course. There are no female students taking the course this year, and there is a need to review how it is promoted. The subject was not reported on during the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

127. Provision is good and standards are above average. Students can collect, analyse and handle information using a range of applications employed in all subjects, though there is less systematic use of ICT in some subjects, notably modern languages, than in the main school. Students apply their ICT skills very well in their coursework.

HUMANITIES

History, geography and sociology were fully inspected, and psychology and religious education were sampled. The quality of the **psychology** lesson sampled, carried out via video-conference, was very good. The students were highly motivated, showed a high degree of independent learning and were reaching above average standards. The quality of work sampled in **religious education** was excellent, leading to an enthusiastic response from students and to very high standards.

Example of outstanding practice

Carefully planned challenge in Year 13 developed students' understanding of the Christian concept of stewardship and led them to consider Aristotle's likely views on animal experimentation.

The lesson centred around Christian views on the morality of animal experimentation. An initial discussion of views presented on cards made a very effective review of the previous lesson, and was quickly followed by pair work to consolidate what students had learnt. In the subsequent whole class session, the teacher demanded clear exposition and challenged students to provide scriptural references to support their statements. In the last part of the lesson, students were asked to speculate on what Aristotle might have said about the issue. After some prompting from the teacher, the students were very enthusiastic about this exercise, and considered Aristotle "so cool". They were then able to examine Aristotle's opinion that humans have intrinsic value whereas animals have instrumental value and to arrive at well-argued speculations on

what he might have thought.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very well adapted to the wide range of learning needs among the students.
- Excellent assessment and tracking of students' progress enables all to achieve very well.
- Integrated fieldwork and coursework in Year 13 promote high levels of understanding and achievement.
- ICT is used well, and the school has recently invested in excellent new facilities for the department.
- The subject is increasingly popular. It offers very good opportunities to students with modest GCSE results.

Commentary

128. Standards are well above average, and the subject is attracting a broad range of students. Year 12 work shows good achievement by all students. By Year 13, male and female students achieve very well in relation to their starting points, and those who begin with limited GCSE results do particularly well. Overall this represents very good achievement and an important contribution to educational opportunities for these students.

129. All the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better. It showed excellent use of resources, good pace and detailed focus on what was needed to maximise examination success. Teachers design interesting and challenging work for students, and strike a good balance between providing structure and encouraging independence. Teachers make excellent use of the department's very good ICT facilities, using multimedia systems to deliver their lessons in an attractive and engaging way. Their detailed focus on tracking and assessment of work with suggested targets for improvement ensures that areas of weakness are addressed, thus raising final grades. Students' coursework showed very good progress over their time the sixth form; by Year 13, they routinely answer A-level questions with the highest grades. Both teaching and learning are very good overall.

130. The department is very well led and managed by the new head of department. She is rigorous in monitoring teaching, and has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the department clearly. The department has made good improvements in its work since the last inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results are well above average, and students have very good research skills.
- Teaching is well informed, meticulously planned and challenging.
- Strong leadership and management ensure clear direction and strong teamwork.
- Very good relationships contribute to a very strong working atmosphere in the department.
- Very good assessment and target setting are helping to raise standards.

Commentary

131. Examination results in 2003 and 2004 were well above average, and the standard of work seen during the inspection was equally high. The subject is very popular and a wide range of students choose the course, including many male students of average ability. As a result, some male students tend to reach lower standards than female students. Nevertheless, there is a high pass rate, and overall achievement is very good among all students. Higher attaining students' coursework showed significantly above average historical understanding, combined with good notes and very well written essays. Students collaborate well, and work purposefully when tackling independent research and enquiry.
132. This strong pattern of achievement is based on very good teaching and learning. Teachers know the subject very well, and communicate great personal enthusiasm to the students. Relationships between students and teachers are very good, creating an atmosphere where students are confident to test out their own ideas and take risks. Students are encouraged to undertake their own enquiries and this prepares them for further study after they leave school. They benefit from the department's close attention to course planning and study techniques, which enables them to meet the challenges presented by the different work patterns required in the sixth form. Students have a very good knowledge and understanding of historical concepts, are able to interpret and evaluate a range of sources, and are developing their capacity for critical thinking. There is very clear progression in the quality of research and analysis from Year 12 to Year 13.
133. Strong leadership and management is a key factor in promoting higher standards. Teachers collaborate very well and share high expectations. Monitoring and evaluation of students' progress are a major strength, and are used to provide very clear guidance to on ways of improving work. Students have access to a comprehensive range of resources, including an excellent website, and benefit from well planned enrichment opportunities. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection, and this is reflected in its excellent working atmosphere and in its very high standards at A-level.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average, and achievement is very good.
- Teachers and pupils work very effectively, in and out of lessons.
- Students respond very positively to the relevant and challenging curriculum.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

134. Standards are well above average, both in recent examination results and in work seen during the inspection. Students in Year 13 build very well on what they learnt in

Year 12 and are beginning to develop a very good understanding of sociological theory, which they are beginning to apply to unfamiliar situations. Students in Year 12 have made a very good start to the course. They have not previously studied this subject and have already made very clear gains in their knowledge and understanding. Achievement in both years is very good.

135. This happens because of very good teaching and because students want to do well and are prepared to work hard. Lessons are challenging and teachers work hard to ensure that content reflects current issues and concerns. The new head of department, for example, has introduced a world sociology unit that looks at development issues across the globe. Teachers are particularly good at providing students with the right degree of support so that they develop independence within a secure environment. As a result, students clearly enjoy their lessons and work hard.
136. Leadership and management are both very good. Teachers work well together, sharing good practice and expertise. The head of department has a clear vision of how to improve the department and has a very good understanding of how to achieve this. Sociology does not have its own classroom; this limits opportunities for students to display their work and to have easy access to books and journals. There are too few books in the library. The subject was not reported on at the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Product Design

Provision in product design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in the A-level course.
- Students have very good attitudes and work well independently; relationships are very good.
- Students do not experience computer-aided manufacture, but they use ICT well for coursework.
- Students do not analyse their research before formulating a specification for design.
- Teachers have limited strategies for ensuring all students' participation in lessons.

Commentary

137. A-level and AS results were above average in 2003, but dropped in 2004. The standards of work seen during the inspection were broadly average. In the work seen during the inspection, students follow the main stages of the examination mark scheme. This means their coursework follows a logical sequence, but very few analyse the findings of their research before formulating a design specification. They show good skills in designing and making. Graphics skills are highly developed, and students show the development of their ideas, with detailed explanation and annotation at each stage. Work is very well presented, and ICT is used well for this purpose. Consideration is given to both standard production and mass production systems. The school has no resources for computer-aided manufacturing, and this limits achievement in some coursework. Students work well independently, using teachers mainly as a support and guide.

138. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject and the examination requirements ensures students are fully prepared for each task they undertake. Teachers place a good level of emphasis on individual achievement and ensure that learning is focused on individual needs. Lessons are well structured, with a good mix of whole group activities and opportunities for students to work independently. The quality of practical work is good, and students develop products in a broad range of contexts. Teachers support students well and extend their basic knowledge and skills by using a range of materials and processes. Work is monitored and marked regularly, with helpful comments for students on how to improve further. Homework is set regularly and often involves work related to the final course work projects. Very good relationships between students and their teachers have a very positive impact on learning, and students discuss their work in depth with their teachers. However, teachers use only a limited range of strategies to ensure students become more active in their learning in theory lessons.
139. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has maintained continuity and stability and has fostered good liaison between teachers covering the course. Teachers work well as a team to deliver a structured course. Systems to monitor the achievement of students are in place. There are regular opportunities for students to discuss their work outside lesson time. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design was fully inspected, and provision for theatre studies was sampled.

140. The quality of work sampled in Year 13 **theatre studies** was very good. Standards were above average, and achievement very good as a result of very good teaching, commitment and students' own enthusiasm. Students were doing particularly well in stagecraft, including performance, direction and improvisation; there were, however, some inconsistencies in the analytic quality and accuracy of their written work. Teaching and learning were based on very high levels of professional knowledge and understanding. Lessons used a wide range of imaginative teaching methods, constantly encouraging independence and concentration. Leadership of the department is inspirational, and management outstanding, with a very carefully designed curriculum that meets students' needs very well. Arrangements for assessment are excellent, with careful monitoring of each student's progress and excellent personal guidance. Teachers do much to ensure that students have every opportunity to experience visits to theatres and other theatrical events.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department and his colleagues have created a powerful department, based on intellectual and personal commitment and creativity.
- Standards are consistently well above average, and very high in the present Year 13.

- Teaching and learning are very good and often excellent.
- Students take a high level of responsibility for independent work, and relationships are excellent.
- Accommodation and resources are barely adequate, but are to be replaced.

Commentary

141. Standards are consistently well above average, and are very high in the current group of Year 13 students. This represents very good achievement from students who, although they generally are above average on entry, come with a variety of experience and interests. Their work is diverse and imaginative, and usually informed by a strong social and intellectual approach. Most students are female, but male students achieve equally well.

142. Teaching and learning are very good. The teaching encourages a high level of skill and analytical research, while developing individuality and creativity. The best lessons are characterised by criticism and debate, during which students are given clear guidance on how to improve their work and methods. The department's very good tradition of observational drawing underpins the work of nearly all students. Teachers work well as a team, with different teachers developing different strands of the course with the same group. The use of assessment is very good. Teachers give students clear instruction on the way their work will be examined. Students respond with enthusiasm and commitment. The Year 13 students have their own 'studio' in an old mobile classroom that is busy most of the time, with new work regularly added to the displays.

143. Leadership and management are very good. There is strong teamwork among all teachers, and the department monitors standards and examination results closely, using the outcome to help decide future developments. The work of the art department is highly valued within the school, and excellent displays of students' work have been a factor in the very substantially increased numbers on this year's AS course. Teachers continue to maintain high expectations and excellent relationships. The good curriculum is constrained by the lack of space, and consequent limitations on resources, but has sufficient breadth to provide interest and motivation for all. The department will be moving into new, purpose-built accommodation soon, and the leader has been able to use his experience and expertise to influence its design. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, both in standards in the popularity of the subject.

Media Studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in students quickly learning new skills, concepts and terminology.
- Standards in media production are very high.
- Very good leadership and management have raised the profile of the subject and the numbers of students choosing it.

Commentary

144. Results are consistently above average in all examinations, and the standard of media production seen during the inspection was very high. A good number of short films, trailers and posters produced by students are of near professional quality. Some students, however, are less highly skilled in analytic work. Achievement by all students is very good. Highly attaining or gifted and talented students are fully challenged so that several achieve full marks for production techniques. One student achieved the top five marks nationally in 2004.
145. This high achievement is a result of very good teaching and learning. Students quickly learn new skills, concepts and terminology. Teachers help students to become independent: putting theory into practice, researching and making notes for themselves. They are given very clear criteria for success matched closely to the examination assessment objectives. Lessons are very well structured, with a good balance between demonstration and explanation by the teacher, discussion and activities based on students' work.
146. Leadership and management are very good. The quality of teaching and learning and students' progress is carefully monitored. Expertise is shared among a team of specialist teachers. There is an appropriate improvement plan based on an analysis of need. As a result standards have improved, the subject has a higher profile than when it was initially introduced, and more students are choosing media study courses. Although resources are generally good, and the school study centre subscribes to several media journals, students feel that there are insufficient books available for wider reading around the subject. There are very good opportunities for students to use ICT and opportunities for enrichment beyond lessons such as visits to the London Film Festival. The subject was not reported on following the last inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

A-level **physical education** was sampled. Teaching and learning in work sampled were good, and pupils were achieving above average standards. A-level results in 2003 were well above average; there were fewer high grades in 2004, but all students passed. Provision is very well organised and managed.

BUSINESS

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in most lessons, but some students do not do enough work outside lessons.
- In some lessons, students are allowed to rely too heavily on the teacher.
- Marking is thorough, but advice and guidance are not sufficiently targeted at individual needs.

- There is a good use of ICT, particularly for coursework in the intermediate vocational course (GNVQ).
- The school has developed a good range of courses to meet students' needs.
- There are too few books in the library to promote independent reading and research.

Commentary

147. A-level and the intermediate vocational course (GNVQ) were inspected. AS and A level results in 2003 were broadly average, and the quality of work in Year 13 during the inspection was similar. The standard of work seen during the inspection was also broadly average, in both A-level and GNVQ courses. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Among groups of pupils it ranges from good to just satisfactory, particularly among lower-attaining pupils, some of whose study skills do not equip them well for independent learning. There is good use of ICT particularly in the GNVQ course work, both for presentation and for research; this helped several students achieve distinction in some modules last year.
148. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In most lessons, teaching and learning are good. Teachers in these lessons know the subject well, and present interesting work that engages students, who generally work hard. However, many students rely too heavily on their teacher for note making, which sometimes involves copying and dictation, and do not work hard enough outside lessons. Marking follows examination requirements, and is thorough; it enables progress to be closely tracked. Suggestions for improvement, however, are not followed up consistently enough, either by students, or by the use of catch-up classes by staff.
149. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, and has good features. The department is well organised with a clear scheme of work, and teaching and learning are regularly monitored. There is a good range of courses, including AS, A and GNVQ intermediate and the subject is very popular. There is no permanent base for the GNVQ course, and this limits the use of display. There are too few business resources in the library. The subject was not reported on when the school was last inspected.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Pupils' achievement	2	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	3	4
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well pupils learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	2	2
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	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1	1
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	2
The effectiveness of management	2	2

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

poor (6); very poor (7).