

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE NOTTINGHAM BLUECOAT SCHOOL AND
TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE**

Nottingham, Nottinghamshire

LEA area: City of Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122894

Principal: Mr. M. R. Kay

Lead inspector: Mr. D. Cox

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th February 2005

Inspection number: 268983

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

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Terms used in this report

*Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools **after** Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).*

Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

Average points are calculated by attaching points scores to the levels achieved by pupils. Capped scores are based on the best eight GCSE or equivalent qualifications each pupil achieves.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Voluntary Aided
Age range of students: 11 – 18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1368

School address: Aspley Lane
Aspley
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire

Postcode: NG8 5GY

Telephone number: 0115 9297445

Fax number: 0115 9426257

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. G. Gibson

Date of previous inspection: 8th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Nottingham Bluecoat School and Technology College is bigger than most other secondary schools and educates boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18. The school is a Church of England aided, co-educational comprehensive school. The school became a specialist technology college in 1996. The school serves a widespread community across inner city, suburban and semi-rural areas. The school draws students from nearly 60 primary schools. The school is on two sites, approximately one mile apart. The Wollaton Site currently only provides for students in Year 7. The school remains popular with parents and continues to be well oversubscribed. Since the last inspection in 1999, the number of students on roll has significantly increased from 1007 to 1368. There are 247 sixth form students.

Students come from many different ethnic groups. There are 22 refugees or asylum seekers. There are 400 minority ethnic students supported through local education authority or other funding. The school population reflects a wide socio-economic background but is below average overall. The percentage of students whose first language is not/believed not to be English is high. There are 15 students who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. There is a growing number of minority ethnic students. There is a growing number of students with more significant special needs, including autism.

The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is above average. The percentage of students with statements of special educational need is below average. Most students are on the register for moderate learning difficulties, dyslexia, social and emotional and behavioural needs, speech or communication, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical or autistic needs. There are seven students in the sixth form with special educational needs. The school has a specialist unit for students with autism. Overall attainment on entry to the main school is average. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average.

The school is part of an Excellence in Cities scheme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10297	David Cox	Lead inspector	
13395	J. Illingworth	Lay inspector	
33139	M. Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics
19596	B. Treacy	Team inspector	English
4145	C. Harrison	Team inspector	Science
15208	A. Briggs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
15320	A. Penn	Team inspector	Art and design
11933	D. Driscoll	Team inspector	Design and technology
31705	T. Payne	Team inspector	Music
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography; Business studies in the sixth form
20124	J. Peach	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
22411	A. Axon	Team inspector	Mathematics in the sixth form
22590	R. Castle	Team inspector	Physical education; Citizenship
2597	C. Jackson	Team inspector	Sociology in the sixth form; Health and social care in the sixth form
11720	P. Winch	Team inspector	Special educational needs
17278	B. Abrams	Team inspector	Chemistry in the sixth form
15832	J. Vanstone	Team inspector	History; Work-related learning
33158	G. Jagger	Team inspector	English in the sixth form
28197	H. Ward	Team inspector	Autism Resource Centre (ARC)

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides a **good** quality of education and **good** value for money. Teaching, learning and students' achievement are good. The leadership of the school is very good. The sixth form is good and its cost effectiveness is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 11, reflecting students' good achievement as a result of good teaching.
- There is an ethos in the school that promotes hard work, good attitudes and equality for all.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The principal, together with the leadership team, provides clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- Students achieve very well in art and design in Years 10 and 11.
- Students achieve very well in information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 13.
- Students in the Autism Resource Centre (ARC) achieve very well as a result of the very good support they receive.
- Whilst still being satisfactory, teaching is not as good in Years 7 to 9 as in Years 10 and 11.
- In Years 7 to 9, teachers do not always use the wealth of assessment information available to them when matching work to the needs of all students.

Progress since the last inspection has been **very good**. Standards are higher and achievement is better as a result of improved teaching. Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed successfully and many are now strengths of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Students join the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are average overall. By the end of Year 9, standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory. By the time students leave in Year 11 their standards are above average and they achieve well overall.

By the end of Year 9, standards are above average in mathematics, science, art and design, German and physical education. Standards are average in all other subjects with the exception of music where standards are below average. Students achieve well in mathematics, science, art and design, history, German and physical education. They achieve satisfactorily in all other subjects.

By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are well above average in art and design. Standards are above average in all other subjects with the exception of English, French, design and technology, citizenship and business studies. Standards are below average in music. Students achieve very well in art and design. They achieve well in all other subjects with the exception of English, science, design and technology, music, French, physical education and citizenship where achievement is satisfactory.

In 2004, boys attained higher GCSE results than the girls; the difference in performance between boys and girls was the reverse of the national picture. Standards of literacy, mathematics and ICT across the school are average.

Overall, the achievement of students with special educational needs is good. Students attached to the ARC are achieving very well because of the very good support they receive.

Students' behaviour and attitudes to school are **good**, and their attendance is very good. Their values and personal qualities are very good and are successfully fostered by school's very good provision for personal development. Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Students in the sixth form have very good attitudes and above average attendance; their behaviour is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Overall, teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good in mathematics, science, art and design, history, physical education and German. They are satisfactory in all other subjects. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are very good in art and design. They are good in all other subjects with the exception of English, design and technology, citizenship and French.

It is the consistency of good teaching that students receive that enables them to achieve well during their time at the school. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are very good in the specialist areas. Teaching and learning for the ARC students are very good. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection; it is now good overall.

The curriculum is good. There is a very good range of extra clubs and activities. Provision for special educational needs and for vulnerable pupils is good. The school has a good match of staff to its needs and sufficient resources and accommodation. The quality of support, advice and guidance for students is very good. Provision for their care, welfare and health and safety is good. Arrangements to seek students' views and involve them in the work and development of the school are very good. The school has very good links with parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school by the principal and other senior staff is **very good**. Management of the school is good. There is a continuous drive for improvement. The senior team is very reflective and is always evaluating the work of the school and coming up with new ways to improve the school. The school has a good ethos. The financial management of the school is very good. The leadership of middle managers is good. Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Comments are based on those students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. Parents are very happy with the education their children receive; students are very happy.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 to the standard of that seen in the rest of the school.
- Ensure all teachers in Years 7 to 9 use the wealth of assessment information available to them when matching work to the needs of all students.

THE SIXTH FORM AT THE BLUECOAT SCHOOL AND TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a **good** education and its cost effectiveness is **good**. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The same good ethos found in the main school also permeates the sixth form.
- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching and their very positive attitudes.
- Curriculum provision is good, with higher attainers' needs catered for well. However, the lowest attainers do not yet have the same range of courses available to them.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English literature is good . Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Standards are above average. Provision in French is satisfactory . Students achieve satisfactorily because of the satisfactory teaching.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . Teaching is good overall and consequently students are well motivated and work hard.
Science	Provision in chemistry is good . The working relationship between teachers and students is very good and leads to students achieving well.
Humanities	Provision in sociology is good . Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is satisfactory . Standards are well below average although students' achievement is satisfactory.
Information technology	Provision in ICT is very good . The curriculum is very good. Standards have improved significantly as a result of excellent leadership.
Business	Provision in business is good . The range of teaching activities allows teachers to meet students' individual needs. Students achieve well.
Health and social care	Provision in health and social care is good . Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Very good attention is given to students' welfare and guidance. The school extends admirable support to students through good monitoring systems and readily available well-targeted help and advice from teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are **good**. The head of sixth form provides very good support for students. There is a clear vision of how the sixth form can expand and develop.

Management is good; courses are well organised and operate smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The sixth form has made good progress in recent years.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students in the sixth form are very happy at the school. They are particularly appreciative of the time and effort provided by their teachers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Students join the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are average overall, although this varies from subject to subject. By the end of Year 9, standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory. By the time students leave in Year 11 their standards are above average and they achieve well overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of the good teaching they receive and their positive attitudes.
- Students within the Autism Resource Centre (ARC) achieve very well as a result of the very good support they receive.
- Students achieve very well in art and design in Years 10 and 11 as a result of very good teaching.
- Whilst still being satisfactory, achievement is not as good in Years 7 to 9 as in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

1. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average in mathematics, science, art and design, German and physical education. Standards are average in all other subjects with the exception of music where standards are below average. Students achieve well in mathematics, science, art and design, history, German and physical education. They achieve satisfactorily in all other subjects. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were above average. Improvement in results over the past five years has been at a faster rate than the national trend.
2. By the end of Year 11, standards of attainment are well above average in art and design. Standards are above average in all other subjects with the exception of English, design and technology, citizenship and business studies where they are average. Standards are below average in music. Students achieve very well in art and design. They achieve well in all other subjects with the exception of English, science, design and technology, music, French, physical education and citizenship where achievement is satisfactory.
3. Students' achievement is very good in art and design in Years 10 and 11 because of the very good teaching they receive. However, in science, staffing difficulties during the school year 2003-2004 disrupted teaching and learning for students. Although students' achievement in Year 11 in science is improving and is now satisfactory, earlier difficulties mean that it is not yet as good as might be expected, given the good quality of teaching that students currently experience. In physical education, insufficient time allocated to core physical education in Years 10 and 11 constrains achievement to satisfactory despite the good teaching. The dip in GCSE results in English is explained largely through staffing difficulties. These have not yet been completely overcome but the situation is better than it was.
4. In Years 10 and 11, students' standards improve quickly and they achieve well. Results in the GCSE examinations were average in 2004. Comparison with national benchmarks indicates that students achieved very well compared against 'total

average points score' but achieved satisfactorily against 'capped average points score' given students' standards when they were in Year 9. Prior to 2004, examination results had been well above average for a number of years. The school had predicted that examination results would not be as high in 2004 because those students were not as able as other year groups and were not as motivated. The trend in the school's GCSE results is above the national trend.

5. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in Year 11, especially in mathematics and science. However, there are other features that are particularly noteworthy, and which add to students' achievements in subjects. In English and mathematics, students also study for AS-level modules. In science, a significant number of students successfully study for GCSE in three separate sciences.
6. Students' positive attitudes and the support they receive from their parents also make a major contribution to their achievement. Students achieve well because of the positive ethos that permeates the school; students come to school wanting to learn and do their best. Achievement is better in Years 10 and 11 than it is in Years 7 to 9 because of the better teaching found in Years 10 and 11. In all years, the rate of achievement reflects the quality of teaching that students receive; where teaching is good, achievement is good.
7. In all years, there are few differences between the achievements of different groups observed. However, in 2004, boys attained higher GCSE results than the girls; the difference in performance between boys and girls was the reverse of the national picture. The school takes equally seriously the performance of students according to their ethnic background. The school's analysis shows that these individuals do at least as well as their peers.
8. Standards of literacy, mathematics and ICT across the school are average. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are average and most students possess a sufficient level of skills to give them access to the National Curriculum. When they are not able to gain this access independently, students receive a good quality of support that enables them to do so. Students' mathematical skills are put to good use in other subjects. Students use their ICT skills to enhance their work and to research topics using the Internet.
9. The school sets demanding targets for improvement and usually meets these although in 2004 it fell short of its target for those students gaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE.
10. Overall, the achievement of students with special educational needs is good. Students learn to read and write better, and to carry out calculations in mathematics with greater accuracy. By the end of Year 11 they do well in GCSE and certificate examinations. Because of the very good attention to personal development, students make significant improvements in their social skills and have greater confidence in their own abilities. Students' achievements are sometimes held back by the complexity of their learning needs and their difficulty in retaining what has been learnt, but they still achieve well in the work done in the learning support faculty. Students attached to the ARC are achieving very well because of the very good support they receive.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.0 (37.5)	N/A (33.4)
Mathematics	36.8 (37.0)	N/A (35.4)
Science	34.8 (34.6)	N/A (33.6)

There were 203 students in the year group. The 2004 results have not yet been validated. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	51 (64)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (98)	89 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	35.2 (39.9)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 192 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form

Whilst students enter the sixth form with below average levels of attainment overall, attainment on entry varies from subject to subject. Overall, by the end of Year 13, standards observed are above average and students achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Students achieve very well in ICT because of the very good teaching they receive.
- Whilst achievement is satisfactory in design and technology, it is currently not as good as that seen in other subjects.

Commentary

11. In the subjects inspected in detail, students attain well above average standards in mathematics. Standards are above average in English literature, chemistry, ICT and sociology. Standards are average in French, business studies and health and social care but well below average in the design course. Students achieve very well in ICT. They achieve well in all other subjects with the exception of design where achievement is satisfactory.
12. Students achieve well overall because of the good teaching they receive. Their very positive attitudes also contribute significantly to their achievement. There are many more students with special educational needs in the sixth form than is usually seen; they do well in the examinations.
13. Results overall in the advanced level examinations were average; this represents a slight fall compared to 2003. In 2004, male students attained above average results whilst female students attained average results. Very few students fail to complete courses.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	87.1 (89.6)	92.4 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	27.2 (27.1)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	67.0 (69.0)	75.0 (74.6)

There were 87 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Main school

Students' behaviour and attitudes to school are good, and their attendance is very good. Their values and personal qualities are very good and are successfully fostered by the school's very good provision for personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to learning are good. Students are well motivated and enjoy coming to school.
- The school's attendance rate is well above average.
- Behaviour is good. The level of exclusions is below average and there is very little bullying.
- Students have very good relations with one another and with adults in the school.
- The school makes very good provision for students' spiritual, moral and social development, and good provision for their cultural development.
- The unsatisfactory attitudes of a small minority of students can restrict their learning and progress at times.
- The exclusion rate is much higher for black students than for other groups.

Commentary

14. Parents say that their children like being at school, and students' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and their discussions with inspectors support this judgement. Students' very good attendance is also evidence of positive attitudes. In the academic year 2003/2004 the school's attendance rate was well above the national average. Attendance was very high during the autumn term 2004, with rates in all year groups exceeding 95 per cent. This is a significant improvement on the school's performance at the time of the previous inspection. It is sustained by very effective systems for promoting attendance. The school has rigorous procedures for analysing statistics and identifying students whose attendance is poor. Pastoral staff monitor individuals who are absent without good cause, and work closely with the education welfare officer on measures to get them back into school. In extreme cases 'school refusers' are given an alternative, work-related curriculum in order to improve their motivation and keep them in education. Some students miss school because of family holidays. However, good links between the school and the community have greatly reduced the numbers who go for extended holiday leave in the Indian sub-continent.
15. Overall, students' good attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to their learning and achievement. Most of them are well motivated, enjoy the subjects that they are studying and are willing to work hard. They are also keen to take part in extra-curricular activities, and are very appreciative of the clubs and extra classes that the school provides. Students invariably sustain their concentration and achieve well in lessons that are well taught. They show very good attitudes when teachers or visiting speakers successfully engage their interest and encourage them to think for themselves. In contrast, some students are unresponsive and passive when the teaching is only satisfactory. They are disinclined to work and therefore do not make as much progress as they should. Lower attainers in particular are intolerant of mundane teaching. When lessons are uninspiring, these students lose their concentration and show little interest in learning. Attitudes to homework are generally good. Most students are conscientious about completing tasks to the best of their ability and on time.
16. The quality of behaviour is good. In lessons it closely corresponds to attitudes to learning. Students behave very well when teachers set interesting and challenging tasks, but become less responsive when activities are undemanding. Out of class

behaviour is good. Most students are open and courteous and show respect for their environment. They have very good relations with one another and with adults in the school. They have a genuine regard for members of staff, and they work well collaboratively in lessons. Students mix together during breaks and lunchtimes in a friendly and tolerant atmosphere. They have very few concerns about bullying, racism or other forms of oppressive behaviour. The school is effective in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct. It has very good procedures for monitoring students' behaviour, identifying individuals with problems, and taking action to address the issues. Members of staff deal promptly with instances of disruption to lessons or bullying; for example disruptive students are removed from the classroom and sent temporarily to the learning support unit.

17. The school gives very good support to individuals who have serious emotional and behavioural problems. It does much work to raise their self-esteem and to help them to control their behaviour. The learning support unit is usually successful in preventing these students from being excluded. Exclusion is used as a sanction of last resort to deal with major breaches of discipline, and with students who are persistently poorly behaved. Because behaviour is good overall, the school's exclusion rate is below the national average. In the year 2003/04 black students accounted for a relatively high proportion of exclusions. These students were involved in serious incidents that fully justified the use of this sanction. The school is aware of the issue and is working hard to address it through initiatives to celebrate black achievement and raise the aspirations of black students. Only a minority of black students gives cause for concern. Most of them behave well and have good attitudes.
18. Provision for spiritual development is very good and fulfils the school's mission of working within a Christian framework and valuing every individual. Spirituality is inherent in the positive atmosphere around the school, and in the way that students develop their own identity while respecting that of other people. There are very good opportunities for students to learn about values and beliefs through daily acts of collective worship, religious education and National Curriculum subjects such as English and history. At their best, assemblies and morning registration periods encourage purposeful reflection on moral issues and contemporary events. In general the 'thought for the week' enhances the quality of acts of worship in the classroom, but is occasionally delivered in a perfunctory way. The school makes extensive use of outside speakers to enhance students' understanding of their own and others' faiths. A very good example was observed during the inspection, when an ordinand from St John's College gave the address at the Ash Wednesday Communion service for Years 7 and 8. Students were enthralled by his talk on the true meaning and importance of this day. Muslim students have very good opportunities to observe the duties of their religion. There are designated rooms on both sites that they can use for prayer and quiet reflection.
19. There is very good provision for students' moral and social development. The school's behaviour policies strongly promote courtesy and consideration for others, and members of staff act as good role models. Students have been involved in drawing up the code of conduct and therefore have a sense of ownership of it. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and a well-developed sense of responsibility. Students get very good opportunities to use their initiative and develop their independence. In the case of their learning, they are required to assess their own strengths and weaknesses in each subject and write about them in the annual reports on progress. The school successfully fosters good relationships and develops

students' collaborative skills through group work in lessons and residential trips. Community service and consideration for other people's needs and feelings are constant themes in the life of the school. The 'house' system promotes charity fundraising, with each house choosing a charity to support. Students' enthusiasm for organising money-raising events, and their willingness to take on responsibility, demonstrate the success of the school's provision.

20. Provision for cultural development is good and enhances students' understanding of faiths and societies that are different from their own. They get good opportunities to learn about different religions and cultures through religious education lessons and assemblies. Visiting speakers, educational trips, exchange visits and special events make a very valuable contribution to students' cultural development. For example, the school has held a 'Black history week' and members of the sixth form have arranged Asian cultural awareness days. Currently the school is organising a working trip to Namibia. Subjects such as art and design make a positive contribution.
21. Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are encouraged to participate in the life of the school and to develop their understanding of the social skills required in the school community. However, their achievement in this area can be dependent on the impact of the autism on their individual functioning despite the best endeavours of staff to support their inclusion.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	686	11	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	52	6	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	12	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	16	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	78	1	1
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	194	12	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	20	0	0
Black or Black British Caribbean	142	28	1
Black or Black British - African	26	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	22	4	0
Chinese	13	0	0
Any other ethnic group	14	0	0
Parent/student preferred not to say	74	2	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded. The number of students on roll is for the current year

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003-2004) (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.5
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

Sixth form

Sixth form students have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. Their attendance and punctuality are good, and their personal development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to learning are very good. Students are keen to make the most of the opportunities that the sixth form provides.
- Students are mature and responsible, and behave very well.
- The quality of relationships is very good.
- Students make a very good contribution to the life of the whole school.
- A minority of students lack confidence and need a lot of support.

Commentary

22. Students enjoy life in the sixth form. Their attendance and punctuality are good. Most students are very keen to learn and are happy with their chosen courses. They come to lessons determined to do their best and to make good progress. The majority of them are well organised and able to work independently. However, students' motivation varies significantly between subjects. Students on the health and social care course have very good attitudes to learning. They showed excellent application to task and extremely well-developed evaluative skills in some of the lessons observed during the inspection. Attitudes were also excellent in a Year 12 sociology class. On the other hand, some design and technology students were very quiet in lessons, lacked confidence and needed a lot of support from members of staff. Attitudes to learning are best in the courses that have the largest number of students. Overall, they are very good. They make a major contribution to the good achievement of sixth form students.

23. Behaviour and personal development are very good. Students are polite, considerate and mature young people. They have very good relations with one another and with members of staff. They greatly appreciate being treated as young adults by their teachers. Students are keen to take on responsibility and to play an active role in the life of the school. They get very good opportunities to do so, thanks to the school's very good provision for moral and social development. Students are encouraged to value the ideal of service and to be good role models for their younger colleagues. All of them participate in some form of community service. For example, some become form prefects and in this capacity act as assistants to form tutors in the main school. Students also get the chance to develop their leadership qualities by serving on the sixth form committee. This body has a real influence on the running of the sixth form. Provision for students' spiritual development is very good and receives a very good response from them. They are serious and thoughtful and treat matters of religion with respect. Many of them are deeply committed to their faith, and are prepared to give up

their time to serve it. Several members of the sixth form are training to be chaplains, and Muslim students staff the Ramadan room on the school site.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality of the curriculum is good. There is very good provision for support, advice and guidance. Good attention is given to the care and welfare of students.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The quality of assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and leads to students achieving well.
- The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are very good in the specialist areas.
- Teachers manage students well which aids achievement and learning.
- Whilst still being satisfactory, teaching is not as good in Years 7 to 9 as in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers do not always use assessment data when planning their lessons in Years 7 to 9.
- Support for literacy is good in Years 7 to 9 but it is not consistent across subjects.

Commentary

24. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good in mathematics, science, art and design, history, physical education and German. They are satisfactory in all other subjects. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are very good in art and design. They are good in all other subjects with the exception of English, design and technology, citizenship and French where they are satisfactory.
25. It is the consistency of good teaching that students receive that enables them to achieve well during their time at the school. The real strengths in the teaching are best illustrated by the differences in quality between the satisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 and the good teaching in Years 10 and 11. Teachers in Years 10 and 11 have a very good knowledge, of both their subject and the examination criteria for GCSE. They also know their students well because of the good academic monitoring that is carried out. This allows them to plan lessons which they know will really test the students, at whatever level of attainment they might be. It also means that teachers can plan activities with lessons that improve students' examination techniques and guide them in their coursework to make sure they gain the most marks. As a result, students learn more than is usually the case and achieve well.
26. In contrast, teachers in Years 7 to 9 are still coming to terms with the changing nature of the student population. There are many more students with literacy problems in the lower years than there used to be in previous years. Whilst the school's approach to improving literacy is good it is not yet consistent across all subjects or teachers. Also, teachers' understanding of the level at which students are performing, in terms of National Curriculum levels, is much less secure. This means that teachers are unable to plan to meet individuals' needs quite as well as they do further up the school, so expectations are not quite as high.

27. Teachers tell students the aims of the lesson so that they know what they are expected to learn. Often these aims are particularly skilfully used at the end of the lesson to check what has been learnt and to give students the satisfaction of knowing what they have achieved. In the very good lessons, there are excellent relationships between teacher and students, with clear evidence of teachers enjoying themselves. The activities in these lessons are imaginative and ensure that students learn very efficiently.
28. Teachers are good at demonstrating ideas and in explaining what needs to be done. However, not enough use is made of the interactive whiteboards to involve students in their own learning and to demonstrate what needs to be done. In the best lessons, teachers circulate the class well, passing on their expert knowledge successfully; they manage behaviour problems effectively and ensure the pace of learning is brisk by moving rapidly from one interesting task to the next.
29. In some middle and lower attaining groups, a few students arrive at the lesson disinclined to make any real effort and preferring to chat. Teachers generally handle this well and ensure that satisfactory behaviour is maintained and students do learn. However, the teacher has to spend considerable time and energy dealing with these reluctant learners and the pace of the lesson is slowed so that the learning for the whole class, although satisfactory, is not as good as it might be.
30. A significant strength of the teaching is the sheer volume of work that students are expected to do in lessons, and also outside of normal lesson times. The scrutiny of students' work indicates that the substantial amount of homework that is set supports and extends learning. Teachers and support staff are always available to help students. Students speak highly of their teachers and support staff, and are grateful for the additional time that staff spend with them when problems arise.
31. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are very good in the specialist areas. Teachers and support assistants have an exceptionally good knowledge and understanding of the students' needs and how they learn best. Relationships are strong so that students behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. Staff plan carefully for the small group lessons and use an interesting variety of activities and resources to help students learn in small steps. They involve students actively in lessons through discussion and give instant assessment of students' work so that students learn rapidly. Teaching and learning for the ARC students are very good because the support teachers and teaching assistants have come to know them well and to understand the effects of their autism on them as individuals in order to plan effectively with subject teachers. Students with ASD are not always able to participate in all aspects of a lesson and often find it difficult to follow instructions and explanations which are delivered rapidly or which use language which is outside their experience. However, the effective planning means that teaching assistants or specialist support teachers are able to work separately with them within the classroom, but then support their participation with other students whenever this is possible.
32. The quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection; it is now good overall. Much of the school's in-service training in recent years has been about improving teaching and learning and the effects of this are now being seen in the classroom.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 214 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (1%)	57 (27%)	77 (36%)	73 (34%)	3 (1%)	2 (1%)	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.

33. The school has a wealth of high quality data on the attainment and achievement of students. The use of such data is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The picture is an improving one as a result of the school currently implementing a range of effective strategies covering all aspects of assessment, recording and reporting. Good faculty assessment practice was seen in physical education and citizenship but in some subjects the assessments that teachers make at the end of Year 9 are not always accurate.
34. The school makes good use of information provided by national and other tests taken before or just after students enter the school to identify students needing special help. It responds well to concerns expressed by teachers and parents. An up-to-date register of students is maintained which accurately indicates different levels of difficulty and how they are being tackled.
35. In Years 10 and 11, teachers make good use of assessment data when matching the work to the needs of students. For example, teachers plan work for those students who are identified as gifted and talented; this enables this group of students to achieve well. However, this targeting of work is not as apparent in Years 7 to 9 and leads to students achieving satisfactorily compared to the good achievement of students in Years 10 and 11.

Sixth form

Teaching in the sixth form is good and brings about good learning. Procedures for, and use of, assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good knowledge of their subjects ensures students achieve well in lessons.
- In some lessons there are too few opportunities for students to take a more active role.

Commentary

36. In the subjects inspected in detail, the quality of teaching and learning is very good in ICT. It is good in all other subjects with the exception of design and technology where it is satisfactory.
37. The same strengths in the teaching found in the main school are also apparent in the sixth form. Teachers possess a very good knowledge of their subjects and of the examination requirements that enable them to target lessons at specific elements of the syllabus, so maximising their students' potential. Teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects is very obvious, and motivates the students to learn. Teachers provide numerous enrichment activities for students. Teachers provide a variety of activities that enable the students to learn independently. They provide relevant research materials for the students. Students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively through paired work and group work. This allows them to share their ideas, and develop their own views. Teachers regularly praise students throughout lessons, while at the same time pushing them to greater efforts. The students' very good attitudes to work ensure that studies are taken seriously; this allows teachers sufficient

time in lessons to get around each of the students and provide them with individual feedback on their work.

38. When teaching is less effective, there are often too few opportunities for students to take a more active role in the lesson other than just answering questions. Students sit passively and rely too much on teacher input. They do not contribute their own ideas enough.
39. Procedures for, and use of, assessment are good overall. Teachers generally have good information on their students and use this well to inform them on how to improve.

The curriculum

Main school

The curriculum is good overall, with a very good range of extra clubs and activities. The school has a good match of staff to its needs, with sufficient resources and accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a particularly successful way of matching courses in Years 10 and 11 to students' needs.
- There is a very good range of extra activities available to students outside of lessons.

Commentary

40. The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9; all students receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum and religious education. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is very good. The school has developed a system of 'pathways' that students can follow. Each of these routes is specifically designed to appeal to a particular group of students, and to meet their needs most effectively. The highest attainers, for example, study for AS-levels in some subjects, while the lowest attainers spend more time on improving their basic skills. There is a good range of vocational subjects on offer. The number of design and technology courses is excellent, as befits a specialist technology college. However, the time allocated to physical education is lower than usually seen and is restricting achievement, although all students study for the Junior Sports Leader Award.
41. Overall, the provision for students with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants give good support in lessons and have a significant impact on how well students learn. In a few lessons, where teachers do not deploy assistants effectively, or where the material does not suit students' abilities, learning is satisfactory at best. In the specialist areas, provision is very good. The small group and one-to-one sessions in the learning support unit are very well taught and focus not only on English and mathematical skills but on social skills, too. In the learning support unit, students receive close individual attention and are encouraged to behave more appropriately. The general studies course for older students prepares them for a certificate course in life skills and is well matched to their needs. The provision of a modified curriculum for students with autism is good. The school ensures students with ASD have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff in the ARC are developing good strategies to ensure students have access to the full range of the curriculum.
42. Students who are gifted and talented in Years 10 and 11 have a wide variety of options which enable them to achieve well. For example, they are entered early for some or all of the AS-level courses in English and mathematics. They can attend special events in science and geography, critical thinking classes and ICT web-design. In physical education, provision is very good both during lessons and with extra activities such as the dance classes.

43. The school provides a very good number of extra activities for students; participation in the arts is good, while participation in sport is well above average. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that activities for Year 7 students are available on both sites to ensure that all have the same opportunities. The support for students' studies outside the school day is also very good, with a wide range of subjects offering extra classes after school and during school holidays.
44. There are sufficient numbers of well-qualified teachers and support staff to meet well the needs of the curriculum.

Sixth form

The curriculum is good overall, with a good range of extra clubs and activities. The school has a good match of staff to its needs, and sufficient resources and accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for higher and middle attaining students, but a restricted choice for lower attainers.
- There is a good enrichment programme.

Commentary

45. The school offers the same system of pathways in the sixth form as it does in the main school. However, the provision is not quite as good in the sixth form because, although higher attainers are catered for very well, the lowest attainers do not yet have the same range of courses available to them. This means that middle and higher attainers have very good opportunities to continue their studies from GCSE, but lower attainers have to study more demanding courses than are necessarily appropriate for them. There is a good range of extra activities on offer and design and technology provides very good support for students outside of normal lesson time; this is very important given students' well below average standards on starting the course. The school ensures all students take part in a core programme of activities that includes life skill courses, such as cookery and driving, as well as religious and physical education.
46. Students who are gifted and talented are provided for well. There is a wide-ranging programme to suit their individual needs, including the Cambridge University undergraduate shadowing scheme, and some follow Open University courses.

Care, guidance and support

Main school

The quality of care is very good. The school makes good arrangements to promote students' health, safety and welfare. It gives them very good support and guidance, and takes very good account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe and supportive environment that enhances students' learning very effectively.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting students' academic progress and personal development.
- Students receive very good help and guidance during their induction into the school.
- Vulnerable students receive very good support.

Commentary

47. The school has good procedures for promoting the health, safety and welfare of its students. Provision for child protection is good; members of staff are aware of the issues and understand the procedures that they should follow in the event of an incident. There is a comprehensive and school-specific policy on health and safety that clearly defines roles and responsibilities. The governing body is appropriately involved in the matter. A governor serves on the school's health and safety committee. The school makes good provision for first aid and for risk assessment. It is always careful to address the health and safety aspects of school trips, such as the planned visit to Namibia. The Wollaton site was in poor condition when the school took it over, posing some significant health and safety problems. These have been addressed successfully, and the campus is now a safe place for students and members of staff.
48. The school has a strong pastoral system that is very effective in meeting the diverse needs of its students, who receive very good care from their induction into Year 7 through to their departure at the end of Year 11. Induction procedures are very good. They successfully help children from as many as 60 different primary schools to get to know each other, become familiar with school routines and settle smoothly into secondary education. The school's pastoral structure provides students with good continuity of care. Pastoral teams stay with the same student groups from Year 7 to Year 11, enabling tutors and heads of year to get to know students well as individuals. Form sizes are very small, which allows students to receive much individual attention. The school appoints many non-teaching staff as form tutors in order to achieve this. The system works well and provides students with good access to alternative sources of guidance. They can seek help from form tutors, heads of year and, in the case of Year 7, from the sixth form prefects who are attached to their tutor group. Heads of year are well respected. Students regard them as very effective in dealing with problems. The house system strengthens the school's provision for support and guidance. It encourages students of different ages to mix with each other, work together and, through house assemblies and competitions, acquire a sense of community. Parents are very satisfied with the way that the school takes care of their children. Students are also happy with the quality of advice and guidance. They say that there is always someone in the school that they can turn to if they need help.
49. Vulnerable students receive very good support. The school has very effective procedures for identifying individuals whose attendance, academic progress or behaviour give cause for concern. It follows this up with action to help them to solve their problems. The staff of the leaning support unit give very good support to these students. They work with them on strategies for managing their behaviour and coping with the demands of school life. They are successful in keeping in school students who are in danger of being excluded, and in re-integrating them into ordinary lessons. The school also makes good provision for peer support, as when able students help those who have learning difficulties.
50. Staff working in the special needs areas make a very good contribution to students' personal, as well as academic, development. Strong emphasis is placed on improving social skills and providing a secure environment in which students feel free to bring their problems to staff, who are excellent role models. The learning support unit is a very good provision for students with behavioural difficulties in that students are helped to behave with greater consideration for others in the class. Individual education plans are detailed and staff use them well in their planning. Support for students in the ARC is very good through a high staffing ratio and by providing them with a 'safe' base. Support staff are very committed to giving of their time to the

students in the ARC and it is clear that relationships between staff and students are very good.

51. Support for students is securely based on rigorous monitoring of their academic and personal progress. The school maintains very good records on attainment, behaviour and attendance, which teachers and pastoral staff use effectively to give students appropriate advice and guidance and to set targets for improvement. The school has extensive arrangements for target setting. Students are fully involved and well informed about the process. They get good opportunities to discuss with members of staff their progress towards their targets. Provision is best in Years 10 and 11, where there is a programme of regular, one-to-one, interviews between students and form tutors. Selected students in Year 11 also benefit from academic mentoring that seeks to raise their attainment to a higher GCSE grade. Generally the scheme focuses support on individuals who are on the borderline between grades D and C.
52. The quality of careers education is good. The guidance that students receive on the world of work and courses of study helps them to make well-informed choices. The school briefs Year 9 students very fully on the options that are open to them in Year 10. The quality of information on further education and sixth form courses is also good. Students feel that the school gave them good advice when they were making crucial decisions on their future. The majority of them are happy with the courses and subjects that they chose. They say their choices match their abilities and career aspirations. The school makes good arrangements for work experience in Year 10. Students receive good preparation for their placements, which they are encouraged to find for themselves. This approach promotes their independence well and gives them the chance to use their initiative.

Sixth form

There is very good provision for students' educational and personal guidance. The sixth form follows the same good health and safety procedures as the main school. Students get very good opportunities to express their views and to influence the running of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students find teachers very approachable and helpful.
- Students' academic progress and personal development are well monitored and supported.
- There are very good arrangements for taking into account and acting on students' views.

Commentary

53. Sixth form students value the very good support and guidance that they receive from the school. They feel that marking of work, target setting, and one-to-one discussions with teachers help them to make good academic progress. Students are particularly appreciative of the accessibility of members of staff. They say that teachers are readily available outside lessons to provide extra explanations and help. Arrangements for monitoring students' progress are similar to those in the main school. They are comprehensive and thorough, and very effectively underpin academic support and guidance.
54. The quality of pastoral care is very good and meets students' individual needs very well. For example, members of staff are very supportive of students who join the sixth

form from other schools. They give newcomers sympathetic guidance and help them through a potentially stressful period. All students have good access to personal support and advice. As in the main school there is a system of form tutors and a programme of personal and social education. Provision for careers guidance is good. Work shadowing is a significant strength of the school's arrangements. Students receive good information on universities and colleges, and teachers give them appropriate help with completing their UCAS application forms.

55. The school has very good procedures for seeking out and acting on students' views. On an informal level, teachers value students' ideas and take their opinions into account. There are very good formal arrangements. The sixth form committee enables the school to establish the views of the student body as a whole. It provides sixth formers with effective means of putting forward suggestions and influencing decisions. Students have been able to make a significant impact on sixth form life through these channels. For example, the student officials have secured improvements to the common room and obtained more space for private study. The work of the sixth form committee and the student officials is well publicised through notices around the school and through newsletters. The majority of students are aware of what they do and what they have achieved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Main school

The school has very good links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges. It has developed partnerships that enhance the quality of pastoral care and make an important contribution to students' learning and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very satisfied with the school and give very good support to their children's learning.
- The quality of information for parents on their children's progress and on the curriculum is very good.
- The school has wide-ranging links with the community that enhance students' learning and personal development.
- The school has very good links with local employers regarding work-related learning and careers education and guidance.
- The school has very strong links with other secondary schools, and all parties benefit from them.

Commentary

56. Parents hold the school in high regard. They are very satisfied with the progress that their children make and with the quality of teaching. They praise teachers for giving a lot of extra time to the job outside of normal school hours. Overall, relations between parents and the school are very good. Parents are keen to support their children's learning. They co-operate with members of staff when there are problems with students' attendance, behaviour or academic progress. The majority of parents make every effort to ensure that their children attend school. This has a positive impact on attendance rates and consequently on students' achievement. Parents have a very good involvement in students' learning. They read and sign planners, encourage their child to do homework, and attend consultation evenings. Parents' attendance is very good at all events that directly concern students' learning and progress, such as the Year 9 'Options' evening and the meeting on preparation for national tests.
57. There are very good arrangements for consulting parents. Members of staff have good relations with students' families. They listen to parents' concerns and treat their opinions with respect. The school has very good formal procedures for consulting parents. For example, it regularly uses questionnaires to establish the majority view on important issues. Parents are consulted on major proposals, such as Bluecoat assuming responsibility for the Wollaton campus after the closure of Margaret Glen Bott School.
58. The quality of information for parents is very good. The school prospectus is very well presented and contains many excellent photographs of school life. The school publishes several very user-friendly booklets on school routines and the curriculum, such as the two 'parent handbooks'. They are described as 'the first port of call for parents to find information about the school'. These documents and copies of 'Update', the school newsletter, are available on the Nottingham Bluecoat School & Technology College website. Parents have very good access to information on their children's progress. Student planners are properly used to create a very good line of communication between home and school. They provide ongoing information on what students are learning and how well they are doing. Written reports give parents very

good summaries of their child's attainment and progress in each subject of the curriculum. They include attainment levels or grades, and targets for improvement. Students make a major contribution to the reports. They write assessments of their progress in each subject. In general they are frank and perceptive about their strengths and weaknesses. Their comments enhance the effectiveness of end-of-year reports as tools for informing parents and raising attainment.

59. The partnership with parents is inclusive. The school has successfully developed good links with the families of students from ethnic minorities. It ensures that they are well informed about their children's learning. Key information is always translated into the main community languages. The school's work has encouraged black and Muslim parents to participate in parents' evenings and support their children's learning. There are very strong links with the parents of students with special educational needs. They are kept very well informed of their children's progress via reviews, reports, and telephone calls home. They are very happy with their partnership with the school.
60. The school's numerous partnerships with local organisations contribute positively to the curriculum and students' opportunities for learning. It has developed strong links with local employers. These play an important part in the provision of work-related learning and careers education and guidance, such the programme of work experience for students in Year 10. The school has started work on an ambitious scheme to extend its links with industry through the 'Bluecoat Enterprise Village'. This is a joint project between Bluecoat School and Nottingham Business Venture. It seeks to enhance the delivery of vocational education by creating 'businesses in residence' that will interact with students, particularly those who are taking business studies and ICT. The school has very good links with religious organisations in the local area. Its contacts with churches of different denominations, and with mosques, enhance its provision for students' spiritual development and understanding of other faiths and cultures. The school has a very good relationship with the staff of specialist support services. It works closely with them over the delivery of advice and guidance to students with special educational needs.
61. There are very strong and wide-ranging links with other providers of education in the local area. Bluecoat School is a participant in several initiatives that involve close co-operation between schools, such as 'Leading Edge'. It is a member of the 'Quadrant' partnership, along with Hadden Park and Emanuel Schools. The schools have complementary strengths, and as a result all parties gain from exchanging ideas and sharing good practice. The partnership assists Bluecoat School to provide some disaffected students with an alternative, work-related curriculum. This is done in conjunction with Hadden Park School. Overall, links with secondary schools are very good and enhance students' opportunities for learning. Links with primary schools are not as strong. This is unavoidable, bearing in mind that Bluecoat School receives pupils from around 60 primary and junior schools. Despite the inherent difficulties, the school liaises very effectively with them over the induction of new students. Curricular links are not extensive, although there is good co-operation with Berridge Junior School over physical education and provision for gifted and talented students. Many local schools receive good support from Bluecoats' religious resources centre which loans them artefacts and other materials for use in religious education lessons.

Sixth form

The school has very good links with parents, the community and colleges and universities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully maintains a very good partnership with parents when their children transfer from Year 11 to the sixth form.
- There are very good contacts with the local community. These links make a major contribution to students' learning and personal development.
- The school's links with colleges and universities enhance the quality of advice on courses in further and higher education.

Commentary

62. Parents continue to be very supportive when their children move into the sixth form. The school encourages them to be involved in students' learning by providing them with very good information. Arrangements are similar to those in the main school. Parents are well briefed on the curriculum through open evenings, the school prospectus and the school website. The quality of written reporting on students' progress is very good, and parents have good access to their children's teachers.
63. Very good links with the local community significantly enhance the sixth form curriculum. They make a very valuable contribution to the school's provision for personal development. Students get very good opportunities to serve the community and develop their leadership skills, either as individual volunteers or collectively, as when sixth formers organise Christmas parties for local residential care homes. There are strong links with local employers, who make a significant input into careers education and guidance and work-related learning. Contacts with churches and other religious organisations are very extensive and enrich the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the sixth form uses St Margaret's Church for acts of worship. Students' understanding of different faiths and cultures benefits from the contribution of visiting speakers, such as the member of the Muslim Council of Great Britain who came to the school and talked to members of the sixth form.
64. The school has very good links with universities and colleges. They are particularly important in widening students' horizons and in providing them with good guidance on their options in further and higher education. There is an unusual link with the University of Cambridge. A former student has donated money to Bluecoat School so that it can establish good contacts with Christ's College. The funding covers the provision of bursaries for Bluecoat students who go on to study at the college. This initiative raises students' awareness of the opportunities that are open to them, and encourages them to have high aspirations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. Management of the school is good, as is its governance.

Main school

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal and senior team are ensuring that students achieve well.
- The financial management of the school is very good.
- The school's founding Christian principles signify much that is happening in the school.
- Governors provide good strategic leadership.
- Whilst management systems are good, there is inconsistent use of data in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

65. The principal provides very good leadership. He has a very high level of respect from staff, students and parents alike. The principal has clarity of vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations. For example, his farsightedness has enabled the development of

a new sister site at Wollaton under the same guiding principles that make the Bluecoat School so successful. He has motivated staff to share his vision and work together very effectively to make the best provision for the school's students. He has been successful in building a team of very good senior leaders who all fulfil their responsibilities most effectively. Central to the school's work is a commitment to the Christian principles on which the school was originally founded; to this end the school is successful. The school meets very well the needs of all the communities it serves; statutory requirements on race and disability legislation are in place and are being monitored.

66. All members of the leadership group are well informed and all have considerable expertise in each of their own specialist fields. There is a head of campus on both sites who report to the principal. Both heads of campus carry out their responsibilities very well. Together with other members of the senior team they form a strong team with a genuine shared commitment to succeed. The good line management system enables all aspects of the school's provision to be thoroughly reviewed with the major focus being the achievement of all students, an approach which is successful.
67. The school has used the grants it receives from being a specialist college and from the Excellence in Cities programme to provide excellent support for other schools. Before the sister site became fully part of the Bluecoat School, staff from Bluecoat supported students on the other site and helped to raise GCSE results.
68. The school improvement plan is a well-conceived document which is regularly evaluated. Staff, governors, students and parents are all involved with its production. The plan provides a very good record of the progress the school is making towards realising its goals. The school's targets are focused firmly on the development of teaching and learning and the improvement of achievement for all its students.
69. Monitoring of the school's performance and provision is good. All aspects of the school's work, including the pastoral system, are monitored and suggestions are made to improve the already good systems. All faculties have a comprehensive review carried out by the senior team. There is a very thorough evaluation of teaching and learning through classroom observation. The school's own monitoring of teaching produced very similar figures for the quality of teaching to that of the inspection.
70. The management of the school is good. The school is self-critical and is always keen to act on any weaknesses. The actions it takes are effective in bringing about improvement. For example, in recent months a review of the modern languages faculty has been carried out and extensive support provided for the manager of this faculty. Whilst the school operates very smoothly on a day-to-day basis there are aspects of the school's work that are good but can still be improved. For example, the central assessment system is good but the use of data within faculties in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent.
71. Middle managers share the principal's drive for improvement. There are examples of very good leadership and management. For example, the leadership and management of art and design are currently shared and are very good. The faculty is successfully focused on raising student achievement. Effective self-evaluation in this faculty is a powerful blend of critical reflective practice and unlimited enthusiasm. This has resulted in significant improvement, in particular the steep rise in student achievement in all years. In ICT, leadership is characterised by a strong sense of

direction and a tireless drive for improvement. This has resulted in the faculty going from the worst subject at the time of the previous inspection, to currently one of the best in the school; progress has been remarkable. The pastoral teams are led very well and are crucial to the positive ethos that pervades the school. The school sites are very well managed and are improving all the time. High quality non-teaching staff provide valuable support throughout the school.

72. The leadership and management of the special educational needs areas are very good. The school places great importance on helping students with learning and behavioural difficulties to get the most out of their lessons. The faculty is well staffed so that these students achieve at least as well as others. Management of these areas is very good. Individual education plans are in place, the staff work as a united team and teaching assistants are well deployed to help students learn. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement, and the faculty is going from strength to strength.
73. Both performance management and professional development are very good. They complement and support one another very well. The school runs very successful school-based training making use of a wealth of staff expertise. A strength of the school is its approach to staffing. Right from the very beginning, soon after their appointment, new staff are made welcome through an extensive induction programme; this applies to both teaching and support staff. The work force reforms are helping to release teachers from burdensome tasks and enabling them to focus on improving the quality of teaching.
74. The financial management of the school is very good. Good commercial practices are the norm. The school received well above average funding in 2003/2004 but a significant proportion of this was for supporting the Margaret Glen Bott School during closure. The school provides good value for money. Surplus funding is earmarked to underwrite the development of the new sister site.
75. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have a very good strategic overview of the school; they work with the school in producing the school improvement plan. They keep a watchful eye on the budget and challenge the school leaders appropriately. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well.

Sixth form

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good, as is its governance.

Main strengths and leadership

- The good leadership of the head of sixth form has ensured that standards are now higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school's founding Christian principles are as apparent in the sixth form as they are in the main school.
- Governors provide good strategic leadership.

Commentary

76. Standards have improved in the sixth form from below average to above average as a result of its good leadership and management. The head of sixth form combines the monitoring and promotion of both the academic and pastoral welfare of students well. Tutors in the sixth form are a good team. Systems are thorough and allow students a

good deal of autonomy and independence. There is a good relationship between the sixth form and the main school. The head of sixth form has identified that the curriculum caters well for the needs of higher attainers but the lowest attainers do not yet have the same range of courses available to them. She is actively investigating alternative courses for this group of students.

77. Governors carry out their duties with the same attention to detail as they do in the main school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	5487754
Total expenditure	5316926
Expenditure per student	4365

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	51118
Balance carried forward to the next	221946

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning (WRL)

Provision for work-related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- WRL is well led and is making a good contribution to students' learning.
- Work experience is good and supports and complements school-based work well.
- WRL includes a good programme of vocational focus days for students throughout the school.
- Faculties do not consistently take advantage of students' work-related experiences to enrich learning in their subjects.

Commentary

78. Students are achieving well in the vocational subjects offered by the school and are well motivated to learn about work. Students have a satisfactory understanding of the work environment and understand the importance of issues such as health and safety, employment and workplace practices.
79. The WRL programme has been carefully planned in line with the national recommendation. Units of WRL study are built into the personal and social education programme that is taught in each year and they include vocationally-based focus days. All students in Year 7 take part in a 'Technology Day' that involves a 'hands on' study visit in which they design and make an artefact. Students in Year 8 benefit from the school's strong partnership link with 'Open Industry' which arranges for representatives of locally-based manufacturing and commercial companies to visit. They provide interactive learning about their operations and policies of recruitment and career progression. Employers also lead a day for all students in Year 9 when students develop their key skills through enterprise-type activities and creative thinking exercises.
80. In Years 10 and 11, students are able to choose from a range of vocational courses; around eight out of every ten students in Year 10 are studying an applied GCSE course. The guidance and preparation of students for undertaking these courses are very good and this reinforces their good attitudes to learning and attendance at school. Such courses successfully build upon the Year 10 work experience programme to enrich students' learning, although other subjects do not consistently take advantage of this valuable opportunity to enrich their learning. All Year 10 students have two separate and different weekly placements with local businesses or organisations; once matched, they make their own written and telephone contacts with the employers and benefit greatly from this challenge to their inter-personal skills. Students' learning is also well developed because of the thorough preparation and debriefing they receive. The WRL programme in Year 11 involves a mock interview at school for each student with a representative from industry or commerce; students write an application form and experience a rigorous 20-minute interview. That students conduct themselves very successfully during, and learn a great deal from, these experiences is confirmed by very positive feedback from the employers involved.
81. The WRL programme is well led and managed and makes a major contribution to students' preparation for future study and employment. Partnerships with Deloitte and

Pork Farms, both of which companies chose the school under the 'Adopt a School' scheme, are examples of how leadership has promoted very good links with business and industry that are highly valued by both employers and school alike, to the clear benefit of students. There is good liaison with teachers and support of management is strong but mapping the overall contribution of the curriculum is yet to be fully developed.

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 **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some of the teaching and learning is very good.
- Gifted and talented students achieve very well in the special Year 11 AS-level course provided for them.
- The monitoring of teaching has not yet been successful in eliminating unsatisfactory or less effective practice and promoting best practice.

Commentary

Examination results

82. Whilst national benchmarks are not available for Year 9 tests in 2004, an analysis of the school's results would suggest that results would be above the 2003 national average. Improvement in results over the past five years has been at a faster rate than the national trend. In 2004, results in GCSE English were below the national average and in English literature they were average. The dip in GCSE results in English is explained largely through staffing difficulties. These have not yet been completely overcome but the situation is better than it was.

Standards and achievement

83. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining students are usually confident individuals and have good speaking and listening skills. Most middle attainers express themselves clearly and are attentive, but for lower attaining students this is an area of relative weakness. Many express themselves briefly, possess a limited vocabulary and have difficulty in explaining ideas more fully when asked to do so. These differences between students of different attainment are also to be seen in their written work. Higher attainers can adapt what they write for different purposes but a significant proportion of other students do not possess this flexibility. Students have satisfactory reading skills. Higher attainers have a good grasp of the effect of particular words in a given context and can recognise different genres. Most students have a sound understanding of what they read. The lowest attainers are not able to read independently.

84. In Years 10 and 11, students improve their skills and attain at levels that are in line with the national average. Higher attainers become articulate and persuasive speakers. They show a good understanding of demanding literature and can communicate their understanding of philosophical ideas and literary techniques effectively and fully. However, the work of lower attaining students contains errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and their vocabulary is limited. Middle and lower attaining students understand the content of what they read but explaining their responses clearly and fully in writing is a weakness.
85. Gifted and talented students take English literature a year early and study an AS-level module in Year 11. These students achieve very well.

Teaching and learning

86. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout Years 7 to 11. A significant number of good, and some very good, lessons were also seen. When teaching is most effective, teachers plan their lessons well, ensure students know what is expected of them, maintain a brisk pace, ensure the lesson includes a good variety of tasks, allow students to be active in their learning and have high expectations of them. In such lessons students become absorbed in their work and make rapid progress. When teachers select good, stimulating and relevant resources for lessons, students are intellectually excited and want to make positive contributions. In general, students' work is assessed efficiently and accurately. When the marking is of very good quality, teachers attend to accuracy at the word and sentence level, provide an analysis of students' strengths and weaknesses and give an accurate indication of the standard attained. The result of this is that students are well motivated, know what to do if they are to improve and take a pride in their work. In a minority of classes, marking is unsatisfactory and this results in students not knowing how to improve and generally becoming discouraged. A number of teachers use the three-part lesson to advantage. It helps to create variety in lessons, students know what is expected of them and there are usually opportunities for them to consolidate their learning. Most students have good attitudes to their studies. Behaviour is mostly good, though students become restless and can behave inappropriately when teaching is less effective.
87. When teaching is unsatisfactory or less effective, the pace of the lesson is too slow to engage students' interest, and the teacher does not require students to complete the tasks set but allows them to be distracted. In some instances, learning support assistants are not deployed effectively to support students' learning.

Leadership and management

88. The head of faculty is a good role model. She managed a difficult staffing situation successfully in the last academic year and continues to provide a high quality of support for the temporary, recently appointed and newly qualified teachers in the faculty. The teachers work well together as a team and share ideas. However, the monitoring of teaching has not yet been successful in eliminating unsatisfactory practice.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

89. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are average and most students possess a sufficient level of skills to give them access to the National Curriculum. When they are not able to gain this access independently, students receive a good quality of support that enables them to do so.

90. The school has a fairly recently appointed co-ordinator for literacy. She is reviewing strategy and has a good vision of how standards might be further raised. At present practice is inconsistent. There is some well-planned, thorough work, in history, for example, and some excellent development of a wide range of skills in some design and technology lessons. In general, however, there is no systematic programme of study that results in students being required to develop a full range of reading and writing skills.

English as an additional language

91. Students for whom English is an additional language are well supported in the school and so make good progress at the same rate as other students. A particular strength of the provision is the mentoring scheme that, for example, helps students to understand how to develop efficient routines. This is all the more effective because of the good links with parents. The provision to monitor and develop students' skills in language is satisfactory but is not as effective as the mentoring. The school has recognised this and recently appointed a co-ordinator to focus upon teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	French: average German: above average	French: average German: above average
Achievement	French: satisfactory German: good	French: satisfactory German: good
Teaching and learning	French: satisfactory German: good	French: satisfactory German: good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking is not as well developed as other skills in French.
- Students achieve well in German.
- The performance of boys is improving, especially in German.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching in French.

Commentary

Examination results

92. In French, examination results were average in 2004 and have remained at a similar level for the past three years, with the percentage of students entered being about the same as would be expected nationally. In German, there were about twice as many students taking the language as would be expected nationally and results were average. The difference between the performance of boys and girls is less than would be expected nationally, especially in German. Compared with the national figures, students perform similarly in languages compared to other subjects they take in the school but in German boys do better.

Standards and achievement

93. By the end of Year 9, students are working around the level that would be expected of them nationally in French and above average in German, which represents satisfactory achievement in French and good achievement in German. In German, students develop their ability to speak with good accuracy and pronunciation, but in French this skill is less well developed and pronunciation is often anglicised. In both languages, they can understand tapes well. They can read and understand short passages of written French or German, although they do not do much extended reading of authentic texts. In both languages, most can understand and use three tenses and give their opinions on a range of topics. Some of the higher attainers are making good progress, especially in German, as they are able to use accurate grammar and word order and are beginning to put some complex sentences together when writing. In French, lower attainers have weaker spoken skills and their writing is very short but they are better at listening and reading as they are given more support for this by teachers. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to other students.
94. By the end of Year 11, students' skills are average in French and above average in German; they continue to make satisfactory progress in French and good progress in German. In German students have good spoken skills but in French, students are not always given enough opportunity to practise the language and lower attaining students especially avoid doing oral work if they can. Higher attainers enjoy the opportunity to do coursework, producing some good quality work but students of average attainment find it more difficult to get good marks in their coursework. Reading is less well developed in class, especially for the higher attaining students who lack access to a wider range of extended and authentic texts, especially in German. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress; teachers are aware of their needs and support them within the class.

Teaching and learning

95. Teaching is satisfactory overall in French but there is some inconsistency in the quality. In a very good lesson, higher attaining students enjoyed, for example, being challenged to work out grammatical patterns in the perfect tense but in other lessons work was too difficult for lower attaining students. In German, teaching is good overall. In one excellent lesson, students were able to describe a drink-driving accident in German using a wide variety of tenses and idioms, expressing themselves fluently and with good pronunciation. Teachers use a range of activities, including games which motivate students, and lessons are well paced. In both languages teachers use carefully selected resources and prepare students carefully for the examinations.
96. In French, teachers do not always allow students sufficient time to practise language in pairs, relying on whole-class repetition. Speaking tasks are often done in front of the whole class. Although teachers made clear to students what they would be expected to have understood by the end of the lesson, it was not always clear what students would have actually written or said and there were several missed opportunities for middle ability students to work from memory. ICT is not used as often as it might be as access to computer rooms is often difficult so students do not always get the opportunity to work on authentic texts, for example from the Internet.
97. Relationships between staff and students are mostly good, teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that behaviour is controlled and it was only in a few lessons, where the pace was not fast enough or work was not pitched at the right level, that students misbehaved.

98. Students mostly know at what level they are working but marking is variable in quality. Sometimes it is exemplary; sometimes it does not tell students exactly what they have to do to improve. Some students, especially those of middle and lower ability, find revising difficult as they do not keep their notes systematically, although they use the vocabulary sheets which they are given in the lesson.

Leadership and management

99. The faculty now provides a similar quality of education to that which was reported at the time of the previous inspection. The faculty has been given much supportive advice from the senior management team in the school and teachers are committed to improving but there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and too little systematic sharing of good ideas. There has been an improvement in the standards achieved by boys, especially in German, recently. Examination results are carefully monitored and compared to national standards so that teachers know what improvements are needed but there is still a need to ensure that the different skills are equally well covered. The decision to make languages optional has reduced the numbers studying a language so that about a third of students now opt to do a language in Year 10 and about half of those in Year 11. There are many more girls than boys who opt to take a language.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics, which supports students' achievement well.
- There is good leadership and management of the faculty resulting in a clear vision for improvement.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to consolidate or extend students' learning.
- The highest attaining students in Year 11 study AS-level mathematics and achieve very well. However, in other classes higher attaining students could be challenged further.

Commentary

Examination results

100. Results in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above average and continued the overall upward trend in these results. The GCSE results in 2004 were in line with the national average though were slightly lower than those in 2003. This was due partially to those students having a lower attainment on entry to the school. Overall, boys attain higher results than girls do at the end of Years 9 and 11.

Standards and achievement

101. By the end of Year 9, students' algebraic skills are above average and the students achieve well having entered the course with average standards. Higher attaining students can use algebraic and graphical methods effectively to solve simultaneous equations; however, lower attainers have weaker shape, space and measure skills. Whilst they can name regular shapes and note the number of lines of symmetry, they struggle with identifying the orders of rotational symmetry. In Year 11, the highest attaining students study an AS-level course and develop well above average numerical and algebraic skills. They can solve linear and quadratic inequalities as well as differentiate to find the equation of a tangent. The lower attainers have much weaker numerical skills. Consequently, whilst they can add and subtract fractions with the same denominator they struggle with those of different denominators. Overall, by the end of Year 11 standards are above average and there is good achievement for a cohort of students who entered the school with broadly average standards.

Teaching and learning

102. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics which, combined with their good rapport with students, results in the students learning well. Teachers plan their lessons well; however, apart from the learning objective, teachers rarely relay to the students the content and progress to be made in the lesson. Consequently in the weaker lessons students are often unaware of the teachers' expectations and as a result the pace of learning drops as the lesson progresses. In the top sets in Years 10 and 11 the most able are well challenged, taking their GCSE early and then studying for an AS-level. However, the higher attaining students in other classes do not always benefit from an appropriate level of challenge. Helpful, constructive marking by teachers does take place, though the guidance on how students could improve is variable. Homework is provided regularly and assists well in the raising of achievement.

Leadership and management

103. The head of faculty is a good role model to both staff and students and provides good management and leadership with a clear vision for improvement. Teachers work well in a team where roles are effectively delegated. Monitoring of teaching and of students' homework does take place and assists well in the raising of standards.

However, ICT use is not maximised as a teaching aid or used sufficiently by students to develop their understanding of mathematics. Good enrichment activities are provided for students and include cryptography, a mathematics club and 'drop in' sessions to further support students in their work. Since the previous inspection the quality of teaching has improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

104. Standards of mathematics across the curriculum are average and the teaching of mathematics as a basic skill in all subjects is satisfactory. The mathematics faculty has carried out a training day on common mathematical approaches, and has raised the awareness of numeracy across faculties. Numeracy is a feature in some subjects. In geography for instance, students successfully improve their numerical skills through their data work on population growth in Brazil. However, this is not the case in a good proportion of the other subjects, where numeracy is not sufficiently embedded to further develop students' numerical skills across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students do well in the national tests at the end of Year 9.
- As a result of very good leadership and a strong team effort, standards in the current Year 11 are above average and better than those indicated by the 2004 GCSE results.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully and provide plenty of variety to hold students' attention and enable them to learn effectively.
- The teaching of physics topics, although satisfactory, is not as good as that in other aspects of science.

Commentary

Examination results

105. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were above the national average. Results in GCSE examinations for science were in line with the national average in 2004. One group in Year 11 took three separate GCSE science subjects; results in these examinations were average in biology and chemistry but below average in physics.

Standards and achievement

106. Students' standards in science vary widely across the various teaching groups. Higher attainers often achieve standards that are well above average. For example, some students in Year 9 successfully calculate pressure and understand the problems associated with deep sea divers returning to the surface. In a Year 11 triple science chemistry group, most students succeed in balancing ionic equations. However, lower attaining students often find it difficult to

concentrate when the teacher is speaking and hence struggle to recall the detail of topics they have studied earlier. In middle and lower attaining groups, students do not always express themselves clearly when answering questions in writing. Students' practical and investigative skills generally match their skills in other aspects of science.

107. As a result of the good teaching they receive, students do better in the national tests at the end of Year 9 than might be expected, given their standards when they entered the school. Hence their achievement is good. Results in GCSE examinations in 2004 were not as good as expected in relation to students' test results at the end of Year 9; some students underachieved, notably in the new applied science course. Staffing difficulties during the school year 2003 –2004 disrupted teaching and learning for these students, as well as for those currently in Year 11. Although students' achievement in Year 11 is improving and is now satisfactory, their achievement does not show the full impact of the good teaching that students currently experience.

Teaching and learning

108. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to meet the needs of the various groups of students. In particular they plan frequent changes of activity to help maintain students' concentration. Teachers usually have secure understanding of the topics they are teaching. However, there are minor weaknesses in the teaching of physics topics in all year groups. The faculty currently has no physics specialist on the staff and other teachers, particularly those who are less experienced, lack guidance on the finer points of the physics topics they need to teach.
109. Teachers tell students the aims of the lesson so that they know what they are expected to learn. Often these aims are particularly skilfully used at the end of the lesson to check what has been learnt and to give students the satisfaction of knowing what they have achieved. In the occasional very good lessons, there are excellent relationships between teacher and students, with clear evidence of teachers enjoying themselves. The activities in these lessons are imaginative and ensure that students learn very efficiently. For example, Year 7 students designed their own, particularly effective, predator and Year 10 competed fiercely in a memory game to learn the structure of a leaf.
110. In some middle and lower attaining groups, a few students arrive at the lesson disinclined to make any real effort and prefer to chat. Teachers generally handle this well and ensure that satisfactory behaviour is maintained and students do learn. However, the teacher has to spend considerable time and energy dealing with these reluctant learners and the pace of the lesson is slowed so that the learning for the whole class, although satisfactory, is not as good as it might be.

Leadership and management

111. The head of faculty was only appointed in September and several of the faculty's other teachers also joined the school at that time. The head of faculty's leadership is both energetic and skilful and she has quickly established a team, including teachers, technicians and learning support assistants, that shares her enthusiasm for the subject and her determination to raise standards. The faculty has already identified weaknesses and tackled them, for example in tightening the arrangements for investigative coursework in Year 11. Further improvements are very carefully planned in phases.
112. The monitoring of the faculty's work is good, with rigorous lesson observations. The analysis of test and examination results was not as detailed as it might have been this year; such analysis has sensibly been postponed until results achieved by the new team become available.
113. Test results in Year 9 are now better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching has also improved. Although there was a dip in GCSE results in 2004, overall the above average standards, identified in the previous report, have been maintained. The faculty

has successfully overcome the weaknesses listed in the previous report. Hence there has been good progress in science since the school was last inspected.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since previous inspection	Outstanding

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well In Years 10 and 11 because teachers match work very well to the needs of the students.
- The subject has improved significantly as a result of high quality leadership and considerable investment in equipment.
- Teachers are using assessment information really well to set targets and to monitor achievement in Years 10 and 11 but less so in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of ICT across the school is limited because the computer rooms are not always available.
- Not enough use is made of the interactive whiteboards available in the faculty.

Commentary

Examination results

114. In 2004 results in the applied GCSE examination were above average but average in the GCSE course.

Standards and achievement

115. By the end of Year 9, students' ability to use the Internet, spreadsheets and word processing is in line with that normally found. Students are provided with a well-structured imaginative course that enables them to achieve satisfactorily from their wide range of experience upon entering the school. They are confident with the use of text-based aspects such as Internet and word processing but their understanding of the theory associated with the subject is not as well developed as their practical skills. They have a good experience of using computers to produce attractive presentations and business related topics. Higher attaining students access software confidently; they are skilled at matching work for particular audiences and manipulating images and text. However, there are fewer students attaining the highest possible levels than normally seen. Lower attainers are familiar with the use of the Internet and simple word processing but are more dependent on teachers for guidance and struggle to cope with formulae and using databases. Students' achievement in Year 9 is restricted by the lack of time they receive for the subject.

116. All students study an accredited course in Years 10 and 11. High attainers produce good quality presentations and have well-developed skills that they use to work out spreadsheet and database problems. Lower attainers and students with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because teachers match the work well to the needs of these students.

Teaching and learning

117. Students benefit from skilled teachers who are very secure with modern technology and are keen to try out new strategies to improve learning. Lessons are well structured and in Years 10 and 11 contain work that is particularly well matched to the needs of all students. All lessons start with a sharing of what the students will learn and end with a summary to evaluate the work achieved. Teachers are good at demonstrating ideas and in explaining what needs to be done. However, not enough use is made of the interactive whiteboards to involve students in their own learning and to demonstrate what needs to be done. In the best lessons, teachers circulate the class well, passing on their expert knowledge successfully; they manage behaviour problems effectively and ensure the pace of learning is brisk by moving rapidly from one interesting task to the next. In the weaker lessons, whilst teaching is satisfactory, teachers spend too much time dealing with minor interruptions and learning suffers. They occasionally allow too much time for one task and students can become bored and restless. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is better because teachers know the syllabus requirements really well and push the pace of learning on at a much faster rate. Students are given clear targets and their progress is assessed very well. It is this rapid pace of learning combined with the wide range of learning resources that ensures students achieve well.

Leadership and management

118. Leadership is characterised by a strong sense of direction and a tireless drive for improvement. This has resulted in the faculty going from the worst subject at the time of the previous inspection to currently one of the best in the school. Progress has been remarkable. Because the school has made a significant commitment to ICT nearly all lessons are now taught in specialist ICT suites by specialist teachers. Management has created a staff team that are committed to improving the subject at all levels and who work together to produce exciting schemes of work and superb resources. A real strength is the 'filesurfer' function that allows students and staff access to their personal work and shared information from any computer connected to the Internet.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

119. The use of computers in other areas of the curriculum is generally satisfactory. Subject teachers are fairly confident users of ICT and as a result, students use computers far more than at the time of the last inspection. In some subjects computers are used well, such as in design and technology where they are used very effectively in design and manufacturing work and in Year 9 art and design. In physical education, good use is made of digital photography to evaluate performance. Although the school benefits from a larger than average number of up-to-date machines, many subjects do not get enough access to the eight computer suites because they are used extensively for the large number of ICT examination groups. Subjects such as geography, religious education, art and design and music do not make enough use of computers to enhance learning. Interactive whiteboards are available but they are not used well. Teachers predominantly use them as a screen for projected images rather than exploring the capabilities of the technology to enhance learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good

Progress since inspection	previous	Satisfactory
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Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well because of good teaching.
- Very good assessment systems ensure that students know how well they are doing.
- The curriculum is improved by fieldwork opportunities in Years 7 to 11.
- Not enough attention is given to improving students' grammatical accuracy.

Commentary

Examination results

120. Results in the 2004 GCSE examination were above average and have been maintained at this level in recent years. Achievement at grade A was double the national average. Students did better in geography than in most other subjects.

Standards and achievement

121. By the end of Year 9, students have improved map skills and knowledge of places. Grammatical accuracy is a weakness for lower attaining students. Students improve knowledge of local places like Nottingham because they take part in visits to see how the city has developed. Students broaden their knowledge of world areas such as the way places are affected by earthquakes and volcanic activity. Higher attaining students have above average understanding about the earth's structure and use technical terms well in written work. Other students, however, find difficulty in understanding about the causes of earthquakes and written answers are too generalised. By the end of Year 11, students have made rapid gains in their knowledge of topics and work is illustrated well with examples of the places they have studied. Students have above average knowledge of how the sea erodes coasts, but lower attaining students do not understand the processes that form features like cliffs and caves. Most are competent in drawing and analysing population graphs. Map skills are good and students improve their interpretation of information so that standards are rising.

Teaching and learning

122. In Years 7 to 9, lessons have clear aims and are planned well with work matched to the needs of students, particularly lower attainers. Students with special educational needs achieve well because they are helped by the teacher and by additional adult support. Lessons are structured with a variety of activities, so that most students are interested and well behaved and make sound progress. Occasionally learning is not well managed; students are bored and make poor progress. Students are well informed about the progress they are making through very good arrangements to test their knowledge and understanding of topics and this leads to the setting of rigorous targets for improvement. In day-to-day marking, however, teachers do not pay enough attention to improving students' grammatical accuracy. In Years 10 and 11, students benefit from being taught by subject specialists. This improves students' self-confidence and generates a will to learn, so that learning is brisk and much is achieved. Teachers are experienced and provide regular guidance about raising standards, so that students improve their understanding about what is expected in coursework. Students are well informed about the progress they are making through regular tests and setting improvement targets and this leads to good progress. Occasionally students are not challenged enough in discussion and spend too long on undemanding tasks.

Leadership and management

123. The head of faculty provides clear direction and supports students and teachers well, for example by providing detailed guidance for non-specialist teachers in Years 7 to 9. Planning for subject development is farsighted with detailed arrangements to monitor effectiveness. The subject is very well managed. Students' records and results are analysed and this leads to curriculum improvement and higher coursework standards.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of good teaching by enthusiastic teachers.
- Lessons are interesting and challenging and students behave well and work hard in them.
- Teachers give good feedback so that students understand how to improve their written work.
- Students are well motivated to succeed.
- Recently introduced strategies for improving literacy do not yet focus sufficiently on oral and presentational skills.

Commentary

Examination results

124. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were average. This was below the consistently above average standard of recent years but represented good achievement by those students.

Standards and achievement

125. In Year 9, students reach average standards and, as their attainment is below average when they enter the school, their achievement is good. In their oral work especially, students show that their skills have developed well in using historical evidence to interpret events; their writing is of average standard. Lower attaining students achieve as well as others because teachers provide materials that are well matched to the needs of these students.

126. In Years 10 and 11, students develop good analytical skills. The written answers produced by the great majority of students show an above average standard of understanding and reasoning, as they did in the work that considered the competing strengths of Stalin and Trotsky that led to the domination of the USSR by Stalin following the death of Lenin. Students of all levels of attainment achieve well and the standard of work seen is higher than the 2004 GCSE results would suggest.

Teaching and learning

127. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good. All students benefit from being taught by enthusiastic teachers who expect high standards of work and behaviour. Teachers explain clearly the aims of lessons, and the development of higher thinking skills, among students of all attainment levels, consistently features in those aims. In a lesson on the social impact of the Industrial Revolution, for instance, students were constantly challenged to make deductions from a visual source of evidence and their answers reflected perceptively focused observations and well-reasoned conclusions. Opportunities are more limited, however, for students to show fuller control of their learning by way of class presentations following group research. The assessment of students' written work is good. Teachers provide good detail in written feedback so that students know clearly how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Students' learning is enriched by the good use of study visits.

128. In Years 10 and 11, students produce good coursework assignments and produce them by the deadlines because teachers emphasise the importance of this to the gaining of good GCSE grades. Lessons continue to be challenging and move at a brisk pace. In one lesson, for example, students responded very well to the demanding task of using their prior knowledge to strengthen their convincing interpretation of a 1930s' political cartoon about the weakness of the League of Nations in the face of aggressive dictators. Teachers' assessments of written answers are accurate and detailed feedback from teachers ensures that students know what improvements will gain higher grades.

Leadership and management

129. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of faculty is an enthusiastic leader whose clear and intelligent vision for the further development of the subject, good organisation, and unremitting hard work inspire the team of teachers. Schemes of work, for instance, are of high quality and help ensure consistency of teaching standards. There is a mutually supportive ethos in the faculty that benefits all, and underpins the very good relationships that teachers have with students. There is good emphasis on the development of students' thinking skills, although the promotion of innovative and interactive learning strategies is less evident. Progress since the last inspection has been good, standards are higher and teaching has improved.

Religious education

Religious education was not part of the Section 10 inspection.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students get lots of opportunities to use computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CAD/CAM), so their skills in this area are above average.
- Managers are not getting a clear enough view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- Students can choose from a very wide range of courses at GCSE level.
- Excellent use is made of the technician as a mentor for CAD/CAM.

Commentary

Examination results

130. Results in GCSE examinations were average in 2004. All students study design and technology and do as well as expected in their examinations.

Standards and achievement

131. Students arrive at the school with broadly average standards in the subject, although their knowledge of textiles is above average. By the end of Year 9, standards are average in terms of both designing and making so students' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, standards are average, reflecting students' satisfactory achievement. Throughout the school there are some clear strengths and weaknesses in standards. The students' ability to use computers to aid designing and

manufacturing is a strength in their standards, because they get so many opportunities to use modern equipment in their lessons. It is also helped considerably by the excellent support provided by the technician who is expert in CAD/CAM and who provides outstanding support for students in lessons. Skills of evaluation and analysis, on the other hand, are relatively weak; students do not go into enough detail in their written work, saying something worked well, for example, without saying *why* it worked well, or what criteria were used to judge how well it worked.

Teaching and learning

132. Throughout design and technology, teachers put a great deal of effort into planning lessons. However, the full benefit of this planning is not being felt because strengths are often offset by weaknesses, many of which could be easily corrected. Virtually all lessons will have at least one strong feature, but these are not built upon sufficiently. In one lesson, for example, the teacher asked students to share their knowledge of textiles – an excellent activity to find out what students already knew. However, the full benefit was lost when students were asked to do another one, so wasting time. Similarly, in another lesson, the impact of an excellent and innovative way of developing a design brief, by turning it into a story, was negated to some extent when higher attainers, who had finished early, simply drew a picture of the story.
133. The same variation in strengths and weaknesses observed in lessons is also apparent across the faculty. Some teachers pay close attention to improving students' reading and writing, while others do not do enough. Some teachers go to great lengths to ensure that the work is well matched to the differing abilities of students in the class, while others aim the same content at all students. The variety of activities used in lessons plays an important role in the way that behaviour is controlled. Where lessons have several changes of task, with short times to complete them, potentially difficult students behave well. However, if tasks take too long then control is lost and students lose concentration and start to disrupt the lesson.

Leadership and management

134. The faculty has gone through a difficult period since the previous inspection, with several changes of staffing. The head of faculty now leads a new, young team of staff, three of whom are in their first year of teaching. The head of faculty does not get enough opportunities to watch lessons taught by members of the faculty and this is why the weaknesses that occur in lessons are not being identified and corrected. It also means that the faculty cannot build on the obvious strengths in the teaching. One great strength of the faculty is the excellent range of courses in Years 10 and 11 from which students can choose. The extra support provided by the staff outside of normal lesson times is much better than usually seen. Standards and achievement are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Overall provision in art and design is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress from the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers inspire high standards of art work and very positive attitudes from all students.
- The personal tutorial style of assessment strongly supports students' progress.
- Talented students and those students with special learning needs make equally good progress.
- Lack of access to ICT prevents GCSE students from using and applying digital media.
- Constraints in accommodation affect the development of three-dimensional work.

Commentary

Examination results

135. Performance in GCSE examinations in 2004, for both boys and girls, were well above average and continue a rising trend. The level of attainment at the highest grades is significantly above average.

Standards and achievement

136. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average with many students showing confidence and flair in drawing, painting and printmaking. Talented students and those students with special learning needs make equally good progress. The skills of drawing from observation are strong and students have a highly developed sense of design, pattern and colour. Inspired by the study of artists from different cultures, students create their own vibrant and colourful works in collage and batik. There are too few opportunities for collaborative work and cramped conditions make sculptural projects very limited. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average and students are creating exciting work of very good quality. Sketchbooks are full of carefully observed forms and design ideas. Independent research and investigation are very good. While the repeat prints are exquisite in detail and finish, these techniques need extending to produce more scope for students' imagination. ICT does not sufficiently inform and stimulate the work of GCSE students.

Teaching and learning

137. Whole-class teaching engages all students, and the systematic approach to the development of skills and techniques provides a firm foundation for successful learning. All students are appropriately challenged and supported in a highly inclusive approach. Relationships are warm and productive and students' positive attitudes help them make the most of the short lessons. Lesson planning is very good but some units will need to be modified to improve opportunities for collaborative and larger-scale three-dimensional work. Visits to galleries will need to be timed to contribute more effectively to coursework units. At GCSE level, assessment is an effective tool for maintaining students' progress. Students know what level they are working at and how they can improve. In Year 7 to 9, assessment systems are conscientiously applied but they need to be brought in line with National Curriculum levels.

Leadership and management

138. Leadership and management are currently shared and are very good. The faculty is successfully focused on raising students' achievement. There is good analysis of examination performance. Effective self-evaluation in this faculty is a powerful blend of critical reflective practice and unlimited enthusiasm. There has been significant improvement, in particular the steep rise in students' achievement in all years. Very good teaching has overcome the impact of the short lesson periods. There is now exciting ICT work in Year 9 but access to digital media at GCSE level still remains limited.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In examination work, teaching is good; teachers have complementary strengths and work well as a team.
- The range of opportunities in instrumental tuition is good and teaching is good.
- Teaching in extra-curricular work is usually very good so that standards are often well above average.
- Standards are below those expected in Year 9 and in examination work.
- The poor accommodation impacts negatively on learning, adversely affects the quality of the curriculum and affects students' attitudes.

Commentary

139. Most students enter the school with wide-ranging musical experiences related to the quality of their prior musical education, instrumental tuition experience, interests and level of home support. A number of instrumentalists enter with above average attainment but the majority of students enter with below average attainment.

Standards and achievement

140. Staff changes and the poor accommodation have affected standards in recent years but achievement is broadly satisfactory. Students sing irregularly and insufficiently in lessons. Students make use of keyboards and tuned percussion but do not use their own instruments enough in class work to support instrumental tuition and strengthen classroom work; their playing skills are underdeveloped. Students enjoy composing but their understanding of devices and music-reading skills are below average; most use letters written under the notes. Students listen respectfully to recordings and performances. The more experienced students use technical vocabulary in appraising but general musical knowledge, for example of instruments, composers, artists, forms and well-known pieces of music, is below average.

141. In recent years, GCSE results have been broadly average, but were below average in 2004 with a small group. Current standards are below average by the end of Year 11. Students do not sing in class to gain first-hand experience of vocal repertoire and very few sing in the choirs. In both year groups, they show very wide-ranging instrumental skills from beginners to grade 7 but the average is lower than expected, as many are self-taught and make little progress. Most students use music technologies (including keyboards or computers at home) to develop compositions and notate work, but their understanding of harmony, devices and structures is underdeveloped. They listen satisfactorily but show well below average general musical knowledge.

Teaching and learning

142. The best lessons are well prepared; teachers demonstrate, accompany or direct skilfully. Most lessons have brisk starts and are well paced and students remain focused when a practical approach is used. Most lessons have varied activities and very good student management maintains the interest of challenging students. Instructions are clear; students know what to do. Expectations are usually high in examination work so that students are challenged but work is not always pitched high enough in some of the youngest classes. When the approach is too academic students' attitudes are noticeably less positive and achievement lessened at all levels. Students with special needs are well integrated and also make satisfactory progress when they are supported. In GCSE lessons, attitudes are variable. Some students try hard but many students make insufficient effort; only a small minority take advantage of opportunities in instrumental or voice tuition and extra-curricular work to strengthen their achievement.

Leadership and management

143. Leadership and management in music are good. The temporary joint subject leaders are hard-working, innovative and committed to raising standards; staff work well as a team but the lack of progress in the development of practical skills (in singing and playing) across the curriculum is a major weakness affecting standards. The poor accommodation has affected provision because it lacks sufficient main teaching rooms and areas for group work so teaching occurs in rooms that are set out with desks, which further inhibits practical work. The building of new accommodation is imminent. Classes in Year 9 for music are placed in sets in humanities; this makes planning complicated. Since the previous inspection there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching, assessment and the use of music technologies, but insufficient improvement in the development of students' instrumental skills.

Extra-curricular work

144. The range of extra-curricular activities in music is good and includes two Year 7 choirs and a senior choir, wind band, brass group, string club and a soul band. Standards and the quality of teaching are good and often very good. Instrumental and school staff give good support to these groups. The school promotes many musical events, including Founders Day, the March Concert, the GCSE Musical Evening and the Carol Service. Groups perform at local civic, church and charity events. Students have attended a singing workshop at the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham recently. The choirs and instrumentalists have visited various European cities in recent years. Music makes a good contribution to students' personal development, especially their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the ethos of the school. These activities reflect the dedication of staff, commitment of parents and the enthusiasm of the talented musicians whose performances and successes bring credit to the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed head of faculty is giving very good leadership and direction to the subject.
- Teaching is good, so students learn well.
- Not enough time is allocated for the Year 10 and 11 core programme, which constrains achievement.
- Assessment is very good; it successfully monitors and supports students' progress.
- The very good extra-curricular programme provides opportunities for all students, especially the talented students, to extend their learning.

Commentary

Examination results

145. Examination results in 2004 were broadly average. Students do well when their previous results and targets are taken into account. However, the 2004 results are not as favourable as those gained in the last three years. For the first time in 2004, one-quarter of the Year 10 students were accredited with the Junior Sports Leader Award of the British Sports Trust.

Standards and achievement

146. Standards in Year 9 are above average, which represents good achievement. Boys achieve well in basketball, and girls in gymnastics; they are mastering many of the skills needed in these activities to take part successfully. Students with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are well integrated and supported well. Talented students are extended very well, as exemplified by a Year 9 badminton player. Students with special educational needs and talented students receive very good provision, ensuring they show better achievement than their classmates. By the end of Year 11, standards remain above average. Insufficient time allocated to core physical education in Years 10 and 11 constrains achievement; achievement is only satisfactory. Students who opt to follow a GCSE course attain standards that are average. Scrutiny of work files shows that literacy levels in the theory work depresses standards; students achieve satisfactorily. However, standards in extra-curricular sport are often high; in six sports the school is city champion.

Teaching and learning

147. Enthusiastic and very knowledgeable teachers motivate students well. Students show good attitudes towards the subject and this is reflected in the physical effort they put into their work, the high levels of participation, standards of dress and good attitudes. Very good planning, good routines and organisation ensure that students are actively engaged in a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities. Consequently, they learn well, improving their skills and successfully applying them in different activities. In the majority of lessons seen good challenge, expectations and brisk pace combine to consolidate and extend learning. This was well exemplified in a Year 11 football lesson and a Year 7 gymnastic lesson, where expertise, knowledge and challenge enabled students to learn well. Teaching and learning are underpinned by good attitudes and behaviour.

Leadership and management

148. Very good leadership has led to a very clear direction for physical education, vision for the future and a strong commitment to improvement and inclusion. Standards are improving in all aspects of the subject especially for students with special educational needs, talented students and those for whom English is a second language. In these areas big advances have been made. Development of good documentation, very good assessment procedures, dance and the Junior Sports Leader Award all support and enhance teaching and learning. However, there is a need for the greater sharing of good practice in order to secure further improvement. Teachers encourage students to participate in extra-curricular sport with between a third and a half of students involved. This is a young and vibrant faculty with teachers working very well together as a team. Physical education has made good progress since the previous inspection.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching brings about effective learning for students of all levels of attainment.
- Students do better in GCSE examinations than might be expected, given their test results when they enter the school.
- Teachers are well informed and enthusiastic and generally establish good relationships with students.

Commentary

Examination results

149. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were broadly average.

Standards and achievement

150. Students have a good understanding of the factors that need to be considered when promoting goods; they link price, place and promotion to the marketing of a product. Presentations are of a good quality. Students benefit from a significant input from outside speakers from commerce and industry. Students respond well to the variety of challenges offered to them. Students in Year 10 have a good grasp of various communication techniques used within companies. They demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of those elements appropriate to current and local business practices. Lower attainers are very dependent on teachers for guidance and struggle to cope with basic business concepts. Students' practical skills are average but their research skills are above average; higher attaining students make very good use of the Internet to research topics.

Teaching and learning

151. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and students benefit from teachers' good level of knowledge about the demands of the applied GCSE course. They quickly establish a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Lessons are planned thoroughly. Teachers' enthusiasm and commitment inspire students, who respond well to the challenges set for them. Over a period of time, students' work demonstrates that the range of teaching methods used is varied and students are therefore able to develop different ways of working. Teachers organise 'mini-enterprise' activities which link into students' understanding of production processes. Students are encouraged to develop independent learning skills. Assessment is well organised.

Leadership and management

152. There is a strong drive for continual improvement. Teamwork is good and is leading to improvements in the subject. Since the time of the previous inspection, the faculty has undergone several changes, notably the recent changes in staffing. Teaching is now good but this has yet to have a full impact on examination results.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Citizenship is taught through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme in Years 7 to 11.

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- No analysis of citizenship across the curriculum has been made; consequently subjects do not make explicit contributions to citizenship.
- Good assessment procedures successfully inform students of their progress.
- There are good opportunities to take part in a planned active citizenship programme.
- A large number of teachers teach citizenship with limited experience and training.

Commentary

153. Students did not follow an examination course in citizenship in 2004. In 2005, all Year 11 will take a GCSE short course in citizenship.

Standards and achievement

154. Students join school with a wide range of experiences in citizenship. By the end of Year 9 and 11 they have average skills of enquiry and knowledge about becoming informed citizens. All students experience the democratic process of election for the school council. The election process is developed in Year 7 through simple mock elections and in Year 11 students vote to elect members to the national youth parliament. By the end of Year 11, students' work shows understanding of local community, national and European government; they show basic confidence in personal finance matters. Enrichment activities like visits to the Crown Court, planned visits to school by the police, local magistrates and the local members of parliament and residential experiences in Year 8 and 9 all contribute to students becoming better-informed citizens.

Teaching and learning

155. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. The good PSHE scheme has successfully integrated citizenship aspects. Good planning enables a large team of teachers to plan lessons effectively; this gives consistency to the citizenship programme. Where teaching is good, lessons have good challenge and brisk pace. In a minority of lessons where work is not well matched to students' needs, they only consolidate their learning. This was exemplified in a Year 10 lesson about the issues resulting from unhealthy life styles. In a Year 11 lesson there were missed opportunities to link the law and financial services. In the majority of lessons seen, discussion is limited to partner work, and small group work is insufficiently used. The teaching methods often constrain students' contributions and do not sufficiently involve students in learning.

Leadership and management

156. The co-ordinator gives good direction and leadership to the subject. Citizenship has been successfully integrated into the PSHE programme. Citizenship is being developed across the curriculum this year to improve breadth, depth and awareness supported by training; consequently management is satisfactory. The recently developed citizenship assessment procedures are good and successfully inform students and parents of their progress. Good use is made of planned off-timetable days, like the Year 9 Industry Day. These features enhance the citizenship programme. Citizenship was not a curriculum subject at the previous inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	5	100	98.3	40	50.2	84.0	87.1
Biology	9	88.9	96.6	22.2	40.0	73.3	79.3
Business studies	19	100	98.9	31.6	39.4	77.9	81.8
Chemistry	4	100	97.7	25	50	70	85.7
Communication studies	6	100	99.2	16.7	40.4	63.3	83.5
English	11	100	99.2	27.3	36.4	74.5	81.1
English literature	15	100	99.4	46.7	44.9	89.3	85.5
Design and technology	9	88.9	97.8	11.1	35.0	57.8	77.9
Drama	7	82.9	85.1	28.6	42.8	82.9	85.1
German	2	100	98.6	0	49.6	80.0	86.3
General studies	41	90.2	94.9	26.8	30.5	65.4	72.9
Geography	7	100	98.8	42.9	46.4	80.0	85.2
History	15	100	99.0	60	45.6	100	85.1
Information technology	15	100	96.3	20	25.7	74.7	71.1
Mathematics	8	62.5	96.8	37.5	56.6	60.0	89.5
Music	2	100	98.2	0	37.1	60	79.5
Other languages	3	100	97.3	100	66.7	113.3	95.6
Other social studies	40	100	97.4	45	42.5	86.0	81.6
Physics	5	100	96.7	40	45.3	84	82.6
Religious studies	3	100	99.1	33.3	49.5	80	87.4
Sociology	12	100	98.5	25	45.3	78.3	84.6
Sports studies	3	100	97.8	33.3	30.9	86.7	75.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus subjects for the inspection were English literature and French.

English literature

The quality of the provision in English literature is **good**.

Overall judgements	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Above Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	N/A	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Stable staffing has led to a good match of teachers to the curriculum.
- Teachers do not always match the work closely enough to the needs of lower attaining students.

Commentary

Examination results

157. Results at A-level were above average in 2004 and similar in 2003.

Standards and achievement

158. Students enter the course with average levels of attainment. Students are able to formulate personal responses to texts. The higher attainers are skilled at using inference and deduction when analysing texts. They are confident at exploring underlying meanings, and in their written work they are able to use critical vocabulary and present well-structured arguments. The lower attainers tend to produce descriptive and narrative responses, and are unable to be sufficiently analytical.

159. Students are offered a variety of extra-curricular activities through which they can develop their appreciation of literature. The theatre visits which the faculty runs, give students the opportunity to experience a range of dramatic works other than those on the syllabus. Students benefit from this, as in class discussions they are able to make links between a range of texts. One weakness is the below average use of ICT in their work which restrains research opportunities.

Teaching and learning

160. The English faculty has benefited from having staff stability for a number of years, which has resulted in a good match of teachers to the curriculum. Literature is a strength of the faculty, and having a strong team leads to good achievement of the students. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subject, and are very passionate about literature. Their enthusiasm for the subject is very obvious, and motivates the students to learn. Teachers volunteer for numerous enrichment activities for students. These include theatre visits in Nottingham, out-of-school time revision, and coursework classes. This level of commitment is reflected in the examination results which are above the national average. Teachers provide a variety of activities

that enable the students to learn independently. They provide relevant research materials for the students. Students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively through paired work and group work. This allows them to share their ideas, and develop their own views. More differentiated work and assignment titles would encourage the lower attainers to become more analytical in their thinking.

161. The assessment objectives are often placed at the forefront of the teaching, which gives the students clear guidance as to what is expected of them in the examination. However, when tasks are set for either class work or homework, they do not always reflect the assessment objectives and grade descriptors. Assignment titles are often quite general, and tend to concentrate on content rather than skills. This is reflected in the marking of students' work where comments rarely refer to the grade descriptors of the examination syllabus, except where work has been moderated and annotated for coursework. Teachers make it very clear to students what is expected of them. As a result most students achieve well, and there is a high level of interest from them. There is limited use of ICT to support learning.

Leadership and management

162. Good leadership has ensured that standards are above average and students are achieving well. The enthusiasm and passion of the head of faculty motivates the staff, and leads to a collaborative approach to the sharing of resources. Management of the faculty is good. The head of faculty is a good delegator, and has appointed an A-level co-coordinator to oversee the day-to-day running of A-level English literature. Examination results are analysed, and are used to identify and anticipate the faculty's needs. The head of faculty has a clear view about what the faculty's strengths and its areas for development are. The faculty has made good progress since the last inspection when the results in literature were below average.

Literacy across the curriculum

163. The standards of literacy are above average. The school's intake comprises of a wide spread of abilities and a number of students with English as an additional language. The school is making appropriate efforts to meet their needs.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are well prepared for the examination.
- Lower attaining students in Year 12 do not always do as well in speaking as they do in other aspects of the course.
- In Year 13 students make good progress and perform well in coursework.

Commentary

Examination results

164. In 2004, no students were entered for the A-level examination and too few students were entered for the AS-level to make valid comparisons with national figures.

Standards and achievement

165. Standards on the current AS-level course are below average but students are achieving satisfactorily given their grades at GCSE. During the year they improve their ability to understand tapes and written texts as they get a lot of practice at this. They also develop their spoken French but are still heavily dependent on prompts to enable them to present their arguments clearly. Their pronunciation is generally good but fluency is sometimes less well developed. In writing most students express their ideas clearly but their accuracy is variable and only the higher attainers are able to justify their points of view convincingly and use a range of idiomatic expressions. In Year 13, standards are average and achievement is good. Students become increasingly independent, reading a range of texts and using the Internet to help improve their coursework. They continue to get plenty of practice at listening to French spoken on tapes and watch films which they have to review. Students increase the range of areas they feel confident to discuss, which includes literature as well as topics such as key events in the history of France and the environment. Higher attaining students show that they have a detailed knowledge of the relevant facts for the topic being studied and can use a variety of complex structures. Their writing is good and their arguments develop during the course so that they can present their case convincingly and their accuracy improves. Lower attaining students are less accurate and do not develop their ideas as well.

Teaching and learning

166. Students are very well prepared for the examination; teachers know the requirements well and make sure that students know how to get good marks. Teachers conduct lessons almost entirely in French so students develop improved listening skills. Teachers know their students well and plan their lessons accordingly so that the atmosphere is supportive and encouraging, especially when tackling long and complex texts. In one Year 12 lesson seen there were, however, some missed opportunities to ensure that all students were given sufficient help to express their views in a logical sequence when speaking and writing. The pace of lessons is good, especially in Year 13, and resources are well chosen to be relevant to the examination. ICT is used when possible to give students access to authentic articles so that students learn about current events and the culture of France. Students generally organise their work carefully and use their files well when revising. Students complete homework diligently and work hard at home to research topics in more depth, especially in Year 13 so that they can write well on a variety of topics for their coursework. They also benefit from the visit to France which is organised in Year 12 and from contact with the foreign language assistant so that they can improve their oral work. Students are aware of what they need to do to improve; they get helpful advice on written work which enables them to write more accurately and at greater length.

Leadership and management

167. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory and benefits from the effective support of the senior management team. The course content is checked to ensure it meets the requirements of the examination board. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the quality of teaching has remained the same. Examination results are carefully analysed so that any weaknesses are identified.

MATHEMATICS

The focus for the inspection was mathematics.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

The school offers mathematics at AS-level and A-level and it is very rare for a student not to complete the course. The school offers AS-level and A-level in the areas of the core mathematics, pure mathematics and statistics. It also provides the students with opportunities to retake their GCSE and to take GCSE statistics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and consequently students work hard; they learn well as a result.
- The very good subject knowledge that teachers have leads to clear explanations of concepts.
- There are generally good methods of assessing attainment and monitoring and tracking achievement so that students and teachers can see how students are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers have few opportunities to see each other teach so that their skills can be enhanced further.

Commentary

Examination results

168. In 2004, results at A-level were broadly in line with the national average. Students did as well in mathematics as they did in their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

169. Overall achievement is good given students' above average attainment on entry to the sixth form. Examination results were lower in 2004 than in the previous year; however, the standard of work seen during the inspection based on students' work is well above average. The number of students following the course is low and results are highly dependent on attainment on entry to the course. Students demonstrate a very good understanding of functions and composite functions and use this understanding well when learning how to differentiate using the chain rule. In both A-level and AS-level, the quality of students' written and oral work is generally above that expected at this stage in the course. In the GCSE statistics course, although standards are below the level generally seen nationally, achievement is satisfactory given students' attainment on entry to the course. Students have a secure understanding of averages; they carry out calculations accurately and progress to calculating the measure of spread.

Teaching and learning

170. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The very good level of knowledge of the teachers leads to clear explanations of concepts. Teachers inspire students to tackle new learning with confidence. Teachers regularly encourage students to explain what they are doing, monitoring understanding through well-chosen questions. This motivates students to tackle progressively challenging questions. Teachers plan their lessons very well. They build on previous learning where applicable, and provide a good framework for the lesson. There are good links between the starter session and the main activity. For example, when introducing the chain rule for differentiation, the teacher ensured that students were confident in the use of composite functions by using an examination question. One of the strengths of the better teaching is the quality of challenging questions and planning lessons where teachers match both questions and examples very well to the ability of the students. In these lessons, students discuss problems with real interest and a vibrant discussion takes place which captures the interest of the students. There are very good relationships between students and teachers that promote confidence in students. One of the strengths of the better teaching is the pace of lessons. These lessons proceed at a brisk pace challenging students to stay alert and think quickly and deeply. However, occasionally when students are working individually, the pace and expectations are less and a minority stop to chatter and are not fully engaged on their work. The students have a mature approach to mathematics generally and are well motivated. Consequently they put in a good level of intellectual effort and acquire new knowledge expeditiously. In the better lessons, students are engaged throughout and concentration is maintained. They participate well in discussions, responding well to questions and volunteering questions and answers. They work well co-operatively in pairs and small groups. However, in some lessons there are often too few opportunities for them to take a more active role in the lesson than just answering questions and then they are not fully engaged on the teacher's input. The day-to-day marking and assessment of students' work is good. Homework is set regularly. It is used effectively to consolidate and extend new work that is introduced in the lesson.

Leadership and management

171. The good leadership and management are the result of the subject having a clear understanding of what is needed for students to succeed in mathematics at this level. This is leading to good achievement. Teachers work well together and are keen to raise achievement in mathematics. There is a good match of teaching staff to the curriculum with a good diversity of qualities. Good strategies have been developed to support new teachers. However, there is little monitoring of teaching and learning within the faculty. Teachers have few opportunities to see each other teach so that their skills can be enhanced further. There is insufficient information in the previous report to make a judgement on progress since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

172. Competence in mathematics is broadly in line with the level expected. Students use units and estimates well in science and their techniques in algebra are good. In business studies, competence is good. Mathematics is used well in business planning and students create accurate break-even graphs. However, it is well below the level expected in design and technology.

SCIENCE

The focus for the inspection was chemistry.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
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Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good.
- Teachers' expectations are high and students achieve well as a consequence.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.
- The faculty does not provide sufficient diagnostic comments in marking, telling students what they should do in order to improve.

Commentary

Examination results

173. All Year 13 students gained grades between A to E in the 2004 examinations. This is above expectation; however, with small numbers of students it is not appropriate to analyse or compare their results in detail statistically. Results obtained in 2003 were similar.

Standards and achievement

174. Standards in both Year 12 and Year 13 are above average. Students in both years have better knowledge and understanding of current topics than expected. In Year 13, for example, most students understand molecular orbital theory and its applications to the chemistry of organic molecules. In both year groups, students have well-ordered files containing detailed notes of high quality. Students have good practical and investigative skills.

175. Students enter the AS-level chemistry course with overall GCSE grades in science that are average for students starting such a course. Standards seen in Year 12 and Year 13 are better overall than might be expected in relation to their GCSE grades and they achieve well.

Teaching and learning

176. Teachers plan lessons well with clear lesson objectives that are explained to the class. They have a good knowledge of the subject and course requirements. Students enjoy lessons which demonstrate high expectations in terms of pace and challenge, and benefit from the calm learning atmosphere that derives from positive teacher-student relationships.

177. Teachers set a variety of homework exercises to reinforce and extend students' learning. They mark tests and past papers regularly but feedback frequently fails to give students precise diagnostic information about strengths and weaknesses and how their work could be improved.

Leadership and management

178. The head of chemistry provides good leadership for the A-level chemistry course, encouraging high expectations and providing clear guidance on raising standards. The faculty is able to identify weaknesses and take action to overcome them, making good use of student performance data. The previous inspection report referred to A-level

science only in general terms, with chemistry included in generic comments. Since then the school has undergone changes affecting the intake to post-16 courses. The quality of teaching and levels of achievement in chemistry are good, and a result, progress since the last inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus for the inspection was information and communication technology.

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since previous inspection	Outstanding

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good gains in knowledge and understanding because of consistently high quality teaching.
- Highly effective leadership and management have changed the image of the subject in the school and have resulted in great improvement since the previous inspection.
- The subject is growing in popularity and numbers opting for examination courses are rising.
- Students value the opportunity to use lots of up-to-date computers and software to enhance their learning in a wide range of courses.
- Occasionally teachers give too much information to students rather than letting them contribute their own ideas.

Commentary

Examination results

179. Results in the 2004 A-level examinations were above average. Students can choose between A-level ICT, A-level computing or vocational A-level ICT courses.

Standards and achievement

180. By the end of Year 12, students on the examination courses can use database, spreadsheet and presentation packages well. They have a good grasp of how a variety of software can be used to support their studies. They cope well with formal data analysis and use data flow diagrams effectively. They understand how information moves from a customer or client through the organisation to result in the delivery of a product or service and how to customise user interfaces for particular situations. By the end of Year 13, students have a secure knowledge of databases and are helped considerably by the high quality home-produced resources available to them. Higher attainers understand the difference between auto-number, single-field and multiple-field primary keys and can incorporate them effectively into a relational database system. Students on the computing course achieve very well because of the high quality, and on occasions inspirational, teaching they receive. They build upon prior knowledge well in work that is preparing them to meet specific examination requirements. Students' very good achievement is exemplified by their work on real-

life problems, such as the design of a website or using update and calculated field queries to calculate fines on overdue library books.

Teaching and learning

181. Teaching is characterised by thorough planning and excellent use of resources. Lessons are stimulating and always interesting with a good variety of topics. Very good relationships ensure a positive atmosphere for learning. On occasions, students sit passively and rely too much on teacher input. They do not contribute their own ideas enough. In the best lessons teachers really challenge students and ask searching questions that make them think very carefully about the use of ICT in a business context. This constant reference to the real use of ICT helps students to grasp the full meaning of the work they do. Very good use is made of the high quality resources available and the extensive additional materials produced within the faculty.

Leadership and management

182. The impressive progress since the previous inspection can be attributed to the drive and determination of the head of faculty and the commitment of all the teaching staff. There is a good match of expertise within the staff team and this is used very well to ensure a good range of advice is available to students. The subject has become very popular and a wide range of courses is now on offer to the students. Standards are much higher and the quality of teaching is significantly improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

183. This is satisfactory. Many subjects use computers well to enhance students' learning and achievement. Because the school has a larger than average number of computers, students get many opportunities to use computers in a wide range of situations. However, due to the large range of courses offered, the computer suites are usually in use for ICT lessons. This prevents other subjects from having access to the computers.

HUMANITIES

The focus for the inspection was sociology.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have excellent relationships with students and this gives students the confidence to freely express their opinions.
- Teaching methods are well selected and time in lessons is used productively.

- Students enjoy their learning but activities do not always challenge the higher attaining students.
- Independent learning, and students' ownership of their own learning, are not sufficiently emphasised.

Commentary

Examination results

184. Results at GCSE were below average. There were too few students studying for A-level to make any national comparison although all students passed the course. In previous years, results were well above average. Girls outperform boys, particularly at the higher grades.

Standards and achievement

185. On all courses the standard of work seen during the inspection is above expectations and students are currently achieving well. Students in Year 12 demonstrate a secure understanding of key sociological terms and concepts. They show an understanding of how social structures and processes relate to one another. This was evident when they were looking at labeling, speculation and elaboration and deciding how these are relevant to the school situation and to educational achievement. Students in Year 13 clearly demonstrate an understanding of the methodology of the subject, including the strengths and limitations of different research techniques. They are able to clearly define and explain altruistic, egoistic, fatalistic and anomic suicide and relate their knowledge of the theories to different sociologists. Students refer to up-to-date research and they are beginning to apply concepts and theories to real situations.

Teaching and learning

186. Students in Years 12 and 13 benefit from good teaching by teachers who have very good subject knowledge. Lesson objectives are always clear. The range of teaching activities employed allows teachers to meet differing individual needs and enables students to learn effectively. Teachers on all courses are highly sensitive to students' individual needs. In a Year 12 lesson about covert participation observation, students analysed a 'MacIntyre Undercover' video and looked at the advantages and disadvantages of different research techniques. The teacher then skillfully led the discussion, which carefully evaluated whether this is the best way to research the most sensitive groups and areas of society. All teachers use approaches which encourage students to express their opinions without fear of ridicule. When class discussions take place, teachers ensure that all contributions are encouraged and valued. Students' attitudes towards the subject are positive and GCSE and A-level students enjoy their work. There is satisfactory assessment of students' work but formalised assessment procedures are not yet embedded within the faculty and there is a need to introduce a range of assessment tasks in order to reflect students' different styles of learning.

Leadership and management

187. There is a head of faculty who is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards. She is committed to inclusion and the promotion of equality and has concern for the needs of individuals. Day-to-day management of the faculty is satisfactory. There is an up-to-date management plan, which outlines the school's priorities for development and takes sufficient account of every stage. There is no faculty base and staff and students alike have insufficient access to resources and ICT facilities. There was no sociology report at the time of the previous inspection but since then the subject has grown rapidly in popularity.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The focus for the inspection was the design course.

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students get good written feedback on their work, so they know how well they are doing and what needs to be done to improve.
- Not enough is demanded in oral work and homework, so students are not developing independent learning skills.

Commentary

Examination results

188. Examination results were well below average in 2003 and 2004. Students performed as expected given their standards on starting the course.

Standards and achievement

189. Students join the course with well below average standards when compared to the national picture; none in Year 12 has a grade A or A* at GCSE for example, and very few have a B in a design and technology subject. In lessons and in the longer term, students do as well as expected. The main weaknesses in students' work tend to lie in their skills of evaluation and analysis. In particular, students do not go into enough depth in their written work, so they gain some marks in their coursework but rarely gain maximum marks for any objective. Graphical skills are a little better, but students' ideas for designs tend to lack flair and the attention to detail and quality of finish required for high grades at A-level. In lessons, students tend to lack confidence and, in Year 12 in particular, are reticent about answering questions or responding in any more than the most passive way, although they can recall work that they have previously covered.

190. Poor attendance by individual students is a problem. The faculty's analysis shows that there is a clear link between poor attendance and poor results in the examination.

Teaching and learning

191. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, so that all aspects of a particular topic are covered. However, some of the questioning does not demand enough of the students; they are allowed to respond with short sentences and are not made to explain themselves. The quality of assessment, on the other hand, is good; students receive good feedback on their work, both orally and in writing. As a result, students have a clear idea of how well they are doing and what needs to be added to their work. The technician acts as an extra teacher in some classes and this is very valuable support, allowing the teacher to spend more time with the lowest attainers or those with special needs. More could be demanded in terms of the amount of effort exerted by the students, especially in the way of work completed outside of lessons, as their independent learning skills are relatively weak, although they work well in pairs or small groups.

Leadership and management

192. A relatively large team of teachers teaches the A-level courses. Whilst this provides valuable experience for new members of staff, there is not enough observation of lessons to enable strengths to be identified and weaknesses to be ironed out. There is insufficient information provided in the previous report against which to judge improvement, although the curriculum is significantly better.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

193. In **music**, lessons in Year 12 and Year 13 were sampled. Five students in Year 12 and five in Year 13 currently take music or music technology in the sixth form. Standards of work are just below average although performing skills, which range from grade 6 to grade 8 are broadly average. Most students are working for graded examinations. Instrumental and vocal work are supported by the good tuition students receive and by opportunities offered by extra-curricular groups such as the senior choir, wind group and activities beyond the school. Students show below average composition skills but use their practical experience and understanding to develop and notate pieces using the available music technologies. They show appropriate general knowledge of a wide range of styles and periods.

194. Teaching in the lessons observed was good. Sessions were well prepared, well paced and use a good range of resources. Expectations are high and students enjoy the challenges offered. Learning is supported by the positive attitudes of the students who are supportive of each other and is further supported by activities such as concerts, visits and workshops. The involvement and support of the sixth form students strengthen the quality of music in the school.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The focus subject for the inspection was health and social care.

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good teaching students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Teaching methods are very well selected to engage students and meet their diverse needs.
- Lack of work experience and access to vocational settings impacts upon achievement.

Commentary

Examination results

195. In recent years all students have passed the AVCE course although achievement at the higher grades is limited. GCSE students do not get results in the A*-C range but the majority of students do well and achieve their highest grade in this subject. Both GCSE and AVCE students generally exceed their target grade.

Standards and achievement

196. Students in Year 12 who are following the AVCE course already demonstrate a competent understanding of health and social care services. They are clear about the roles of the statutory, private and informal care services. Students studying for GCSE understand how to plan for health and well-being. They can identify positive aspects of their own behaviour and recognise how this can impact on a care setting. Both AVCE and GCSE students understand the values which influence the way that support is provided. Students in Year 13 show a distinct understanding of how the principles of human behaviour are acquired and all use appropriate technical terminology correctly. They are all developing the skills of self-reflection and evaluation and this was particularly evident in a Year 13 lesson when students were evaluating their own portfolio work and then looking at how they can improve their work in order to obtain the highest possible marks.

Teaching and learning

197. Students make considerably better progress than might be expected of them because of vivacious teaching. On all courses, teaching is stimulating and highly sensitive to students' individual needs. Staff have excellent relationships with their students and they develop students' confidence. They lead discussions skilfully and ensure that all the students' contributions are encouraged and valued. This was apparent in a lesson when Year 12 students were looking at the variety of barriers which clients face when accessing health and social care services. Assessment methods are currently satisfactory but the faculty is aware of the need to formalise target setting after each assessment and to further develop the use of tracking sheets in order to reflect students' different learning styles.

Leadership and management

198. The faculty benefits from a head of faculty who has a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the subject. She is committed to inclusion and has an appropriate concern for the needs of individual students. Day-to-day management is less satisfactory. Staff are not always sure of their responsibilities and good intentions are not always followed through. Likewise, there is no one to oversee such initiatives as the development of work experience and thereby improve the students' access to vocational community links. The lack of a faculty base also means that teachers and students alike do not have appropriate access to ICT and other resources. Health and social care was not a focus subject at the time of the previous inspection and it is therefore not possible to assess progress since that time.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

One Year 12 theory lesson in **physical education** was observed where students combined the theory and practice of how skills are learned. In the lesson seen teaching, learning and achievement were good and standards were average.

BUSINESS

The focus for the inspection was business studies.

Provision in business studies is **good**.

	Y12	Y13
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because of good teaching.
- The curriculum is enhanced through links with the business community.
- Students know how well they are doing because of the very good guidance they receive.
- Students do not make enough use of ICT to research topics.

Commentary

Examination results

199. Results in the 2004 A-level examination were average with male students achieving higher than females. Students achieved as well as they did in their other subjects. The results were not as high as those attained in 2003. Results in AVCE and in the applied business GCSE courses were below average.

Standards and achievement

200. Students enter the course with below average standards. By the end of Year 13, students have an average level of knowledge of topics and use data to show understanding about issues such as the exchange rate mechanism. At A-level for example, they know how change in the value of money affects the demand and supply of products, but lower attaining females find calculation difficulties. Students gain knowledge of a wide range of business terms and are able to relate theoretical study to companies like Toyota. Standards in GCSE are below average. Students know how business is organised and understand how ICT has changed communication systems in major companies, but are limited in the depth of knowledge in written and oral aspects of work.

201. Students following the AVCE course understand the roles of business personnel and the effectiveness of different organisational systems in achieving a firm's objectives. Written work is well organised but students do not explain answers in sufficient detail or use ICT enough to research assignments.

Teaching and learning

202. Students achieve well because they are well taught. Lessons are carefully planned and incorporate a range of activities that interest and engage students actively in lessons. In the AVCE course for example, students worked effectively in teams in order to prepare class presentations about business organisation. Teachers are

knowledgeable about the examination requirements and bring a range of experience to support learning. This raises students' self-confidence and leads to them achieving well. Students are well informed about the progress they make and benefit from regular guidance on how to improve. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and do not expect enough of students. It leads to a loss in concentration, the pace of learning slows and students do not achieve enough.

Leadership and management

203. The faculty improvement plan provides detailed information about policies and developments that are linked to whole-school planning, but there is insufficient focus on planning the development of business studies.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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