

INSPECTION REPORT

THE STREETLY SCHOOL

Sutton Coldfield

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104258

Headteacher: Mr D Binnie

Lead inspector: Mr R Palmer

Dates of inspection: 17th – 21st January 2005

Inspection number: 268989

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Foundation
Age range of students: 11 – 18
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 1377

School address: Queslett Road East
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands
Postcode: B74 2EX

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr R Perks

Date of previous inspection: 22nd – 26th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is larger than most other schools and is over-subscribed. It gained status as a specialist Sports College in 2003 and received the Sportsmark Gold award in 2004. Students' attainment on entry in Year 7 is average. Approximately 10 per cent of students in the school's area attend selective grammar schools. Students come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds that are average overall, but include a sizeable minority of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The proportion of students entitled to receive free school meals is below average. About 10 per cent of students come from a wide range of ethnic minority groups. The proportion of students whose mother tongue is other than English, about one in 33, is a little higher than in most schools. No students are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with special educational needs, one in eight, is below average. Most of these students have moderate or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need, about one in 50, is average.

The sixth form has declined in numbers recently. It is currently below the average size of schools that have sixth forms. About one in three students stays on from Year 11 and very few students join the sixth form each year from other schools. The backgrounds of students in Years 12 and 13 broadly match those of students in Years 7 to 11. On entry to Year 12, students' attainment is average overall in terms of GCSE attainment but is below average for the courses studied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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13786	S Walsh	Lay inspector	
8216	G Binks	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs
2628	J Edwards	Team inspector	Physical education
23188	V Maunder	Team inspector	Science Biology
17868	E Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design
31850	D Nevens	Team inspector	Music Citizenship
19214	G Price	Team inspector	English
31879	D Rhodes	Team inspector	Mathematics
19404	L Schubeler	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
21806	P Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology
2626	M Thompson	Team inspector	Work-related learning
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14573	H Wareing	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
20497	V Williams	Team inspector	History (sixth form) Business studies

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is **unsatisfactory**. It provides **unsatisfactory** value for money. Although it provides an adequate education for students, the school has serious weaknesses. These are: unsatisfactory achievement in GCSE examinations, and unsatisfactory teaching and underachievement in Years 10 and 11 in English and science. Standards in Years 7 to 9 show satisfactory achievement. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Leadership is satisfactory. Management is unsatisfactory. In the sixth form, students achieve well as a result of good teaching.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- GCSE results, particularly for boys, are well below students' capabilities.
- Inadequate teaching leads to underachievement in English and science in Years 10 and 11.
- Results in the national tests in Year 9 are improving and now show satisfactory achievement.
- Much good teaching helps students to achieve well in several subjects.
- The management of students' behaviour, attendance and punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- Achievement is good in the sixth form.
- Sports College status enhances the curriculum and promotes very good community links.
- The school is well over-subscribed.

Improvement since the previous inspection is **unsatisfactory**. Standards at the end of Year 11 have declined, but are now rising in Years 7 to 9. The school tackled the key issues satisfactorily, raised students' achievement in music and increased the amount of good teaching across subjects. Provision for students with learning difficulties is now satisfactory, but is inadequate for those with behavioural difficulties.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Standards are below average by Year 11 and show **unsatisfactory** achievement, compared with students' prior attainment. In 2004, results in national tests in English, science and mathematics in Year 9 rose and were average overall. They show that achievement was satisfactory overall, and very good in English. Although GCSE results in 2004 were above those of 2003, they were below average and well below those of similar schools. Girls achieved satisfactorily, but the GCSE achievement of boys was poor. Students make faster progress in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11 because teaching is better and expectations are higher. Students of all capabilities and different ethnic backgrounds, including those who are gifted or talented and those who have special educational needs, make similar rates of progress. Currently, standards in Year 9 are broadly average and indicate satisfactory achievement overall. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science and indicate achievement that is good in mathematics and satisfactory in English and science. Standards by Year 11 are rising in most subjects but are a little below average overall. Standards are average in

English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. They indicate achievement that is unsatisfactory in English and science but good in mathematics. Achievement by Year 11 is good in art and design, history, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology and modern foreign languages and satisfactory in most other subjects.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **satisfactory** overall. Students' behaviour and their attitudes are satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory overall but punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is good throughout Years 7 to 11 in mathematics, art and design, geography, history, ICT, music and physical education. In English and science, it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other subjects. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory across subjects. Students with learning difficulties receive satisfactory teaching and support that enable them to make the same rates of progress as other students. The lack of additional support for students who have behavioural difficulties has an adverse effect on learning in many subjects. Most teachers manage their classes well. They provide work of suitable difficulty and interest to encourage students to work hard. In lessons that were unsatisfactory, discipline was lacking, expectations of students and the teacher were too low and the work did not match students' different capabilities. The use of assessment to help students to raise standards is improving and is satisfactory.

The **satisfactory** curriculum meets statutory requirements in Years 7 to 11, apart from the provision of a daily act of collective worship. Students enrich their learning through good out-of-class activities. They receive a satisfactory quality of care, support and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **satisfactory**. Management varies and is **unsatisfactory** overall. Governance is **satisfactory**, but the school does not meet two statutory requirements. Satisfactory leadership by the headteacher provides suitable direction for improvement. Financial management is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Over-subscription indicates parents are quite happy for their children to attend this school. Many students and parents have concerns about behaviour and homework. Their concerns are understandable because, although behaviour is satisfactory overall, a few teachers do not control their classes well enough and disruption to learning occurs. The quality of homework is satisfactory overall but the setting of it is inconsistent.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise results in GCSE examinations so that they represent at least satisfactory achievement;
- raise standards and improve teaching and learning in English and science in Years 10 and 11;
- improve the management of behaviour, attendance and punctuality;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- make provision for a daily act of collective worship for all students;
- provide religious education for students in Years 12 and 13.

THE SIXTH FORM AT THE STREETLY SCHOOL

The sixth form of 121 students is below average size. It provides a good range of advanced level (A2), AS-level and vocational courses.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is **satisfactory** and is cost effective. Numbers have declined recently. Results in AS/A2 examinations in 2004 were below average but indicate good achievement compared with students' GCSE results. Standards are currently average overall. They indicate good achievement for students of all ethnic backgrounds. Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Retention of students on courses is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- A2 results show that students' achievement is good, compared with their earlier GCSE results.
- Good teaching helps students to achieve well.
- Good curricular provision meets students' needs and aspirations.
- The sixth form does not recruit enough higher attaining students.
- Statutory requirements for religious education and for a daily act of collective worship are not met.

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 satisfactory . A2 results in 2004 were average and showed satisfactory achievement, compared with predictions based on students' GCSE results. Standards are currently average in Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and students' achievement is satisfactory.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is good . A2 results in 2004 were below average and showed satisfactory achievement. Standards in current classes are above average. Good teaching helps the small number of students to achieve well.
Science	Provision in biology is satisfactory . In 2004, A2 results were below average and indicated satisfactory achievement. Standards are currently below average. Teaching is satisfactory and so is students' achievement.
Humanities	Provision in history is very good . A2 results, as usual, were well above average in 2004 and represented very good achievement. Currently standards remain well above average. Very good teaching and high expectations encourage students to work hard and achieve very well.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision in design and technology is satisfactory . In 2004, A2 results for the small number of students were a little below average and indicated satisfactory achievement. Good teaching in Years 12 and 13 helps students to achieve better than expected from their previous GCSE attainment.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and design is good . A2 results were well below average in 2004 but showed good achievement for the very few students involved. Standards are average in Years 12 and 13 classes. Good teaching leads to good achievement. Provision in music is good . No students sat A2 examinations in 2004. Standards on the AS/A2 courses are currently average. Students are reaching higher than expected standards as a result of good teaching and their positive attitudes to work.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in sports studies is good . A2 results were average in 2004 and indicated good achievement. Standards are average on the AS/A2 courses in Years 12 and 13. Students benefit from good teaching, support and guidance that help them to achieve well.
Business	Provision in business studies is very good . A2 results were above average in 2003 and showed that students gained much higher grades than predicted from their earlier GCSE performances. Standards are currently above average. Very good teaching helps students to achieve very well.

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

The quality of advice, guidance and support is **satisfactory** in Years 12 and 13. Students obtain appropriate and timely advice regarding university applications. Advice for students seeking employment is satisfactory. Subject teachers and the sixth form co-ordinator provide good support and encouragement for students and help to raise their educational and career aspirations. Teachers check students' progress closely and frequently through the satisfactory 'traffic light' system used for assessing their work. However, students do not always have sufficiently detailed advice about how to improve. A satisfactory programme of induction helps students to settle in easily. The good range of courses matches most students' aspirations and capabilities. As a result, the large majority of students complete the AS, A2 and vocational courses that they start.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. Pastoral management is satisfactory. The recent change to a house system from a year system has resulted in a new arrangement for co-ordinating the sixth form. This system is settling down adequately, but many sixth formers, used to the previous procedures, have taken a while to accept and adjust to the new ways of working. Leadership and management of subjects are good overall and help to raise standards and achievement. Good planning, which anticipated the recent decline in numbers, has ensured the viability of current courses and a suitably broad curriculum to meet the needs of students of a wide range of capabilities. The sixth form does not meet statutory requirements for the provision of religious education and a daily act of collective worship.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are generally satisfied with the sixth form. They value the support from subject teachers. Their main concerns are about behaviour in the rest of the school and the quality of careers guidance. They are right to say that some poor behaviour occurs at times in Years 7 to 11, but behaviour is good in the sixth form. Careers guidance for sixth formers is satisfactory overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Following a decline in standards in recent years, standards are rising and are just below average by Year 11. However, they indicate unsatisfactory achievement overall, particularly for boys.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The low GCSE examination results in 2004 indicate poor achievement by many boys.
- Standards are not high enough in Years 10 and 11, particularly in English and science.
- Results in Year 9 national tests improved well in 2004 and show satisfactory achievement.
- Students achieve well in a few subjects including mathematics, history and physical education.

Commentary

1. On entry to the school in Year 7, students' attainment is average. Standards are average at the end of Year 9 and show that students are achieving satisfactorily. Standards are below average by Year 11 and show unsatisfactory achievement. The school was short of its targets for performance in GCSE examinations in 2004. Recent performance in the GCSE examinations has been unsatisfactory and is a serious weakness, particularly in respect of boys' results. Standards of literacy and numeracy are average throughout Years 7 to 11.
2. The results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science are usually close to the national average. Results improved in 2004 and were above the national average in English and average in mathematics and science. Overall, girls do better than boys in these tests but the gap between the performances of boys and girls matches the national difference for this age group. The results in 2004 indicate satisfactory achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities, compared with their standards when they joined the school in Year 7. The school met its suitably challenging targets for performance in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9. Results are now improving at the same rate as they are nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.1 (32.7)	33.3 (33.4)
Mathematics	35.8 (34.8)	36.5 (35.4)
Science	33.0 (33.7)	33.1 (33.6)

There were 256 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The GCSE examination results declined considerably in 2003, were below average and represented poor achievement. Although results improved in 2004, they were slightly below average and well below those of similar schools. They indicate unsatisfactory achievement overall, compared with students' prior attainment at the end of Year 9. However, the achievement of girls was satisfactory and their results matched those of girls nationally. The achievement of boys was poor and their results were well below the national average for boys. This very wide gap between the GCSE results of boys and girls is a new feature for the school,

because, in past years, the gap in their performances has been narrower than the national difference.

4. The school is aware that it was previously too complacent about its performance in public examinations. This was because it occupied a high position in the locally published 'league tables' of results. The focus in recent years on measuring the value added to students' performance as they move through the school has made the school realise that students were not achieving as well as they should. The school is now developing ways to improve teaching and assessment to help students to achieve higher standards. Good improvements, for example through the use of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies for Learning, are occurring in Years 7 to 9. The watchful eye and good leadership of the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator have helped staff and students to raise aspirations and have resulted in the recent higher results and better achievement in National Curriculum tests in Year 9.

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	45 (39)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86 (85)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per student	36.9 (34.6)	41.4 (40.6)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	32.8 (30.7)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 251 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Standards in Year 9 are currently average in English, mathematics and science and are above average in art and design, history and physical education. Standards are average in most other subjects. Students' achievement by Year 9, compared with their attainment in the subject when they joined the school, is satisfactory in English and science and is good in mathematics. Achievement is good by Year 9 in art and design, geography, history and physical education and is satisfactory in other subjects.
6. Students are underachieving by Year 11 in English and science, as a direct result of unsatisfactory teaching. The inadequate achievement of students in these two core subjects is a serious weakness. Students also underachieve in design and technology and modern foreign languages, but this is mainly a consequence of gaps in their previous knowledge caused by earlier staffing difficulties. Improved teaching is raising standards in both subjects now. Standards by Year 11 are above average in mathematics, art and design, history, ICT, physical education and religious education. They are broadly average in English and music but are below average in science, design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. Students' achievement, compared with their attainment in the subject by Year 9, is good in mathematics, art and design, history, ICT, physical education and religious education and is satisfactory in other subjects, apart from those listed above as unsatisfactory.
7. The achievement of students with special educational needs and of those identified as gifted or talented is broadly similar to that of other students throughout Years 7 to 11. Students with learning difficulties often achieve well in practical activities in subjects such as mathematics, art and design, ICT, physical education and geography, particularly when they receive good help from learning support assistants. There is very little difference in the quality of achievement of students of different ethnic groups. Students whose mother tongue is reported as not being

English are fluent in English and have suitable language skills to cope with the curricular demands of all subjects.

8. Several factors are responsible for achievement being lower in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. The unsatisfactory attendance of Year 11 students, especially boys, had an adverse effect on GCSE results last year. Staffing difficulties, such as long-term absences and some ineffective teaching, as noticed in English, have resulted in poor attitudes and demoralisation among a sizeable minority of current Year 11 students. In a few subjects, such as geography and modern foreign languages, standards are rising as a result of new and good leadership and teaching, but achievement is hampered because many students in Year 11 still have large gaps to fill in their knowledge and skills in these subjects. The lack of sufficient support for students who have behavioural difficulties hinders the learning and continuity of work, even when teaching is good. Unsatisfactory teaching and low expectations in English and science contribute significantly to the overall underachievement in Years 10 and 11.
9. In subjects in which achievement is good, teaching is good or better. Students make good progress in the many classes in which discipline is good and the expectations of both the teacher and the class are high.

Sixth form

Standards are currently average in Years 12 and 13. They indicate good achievement overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards overall are below average but indicate good achievement.
- Students achieve very well in history and business studies.

Commentary

10. Students' attainment on entry to Year 12 is below that found in many other sixth forms, as a result of its open entry policy. Results in AS, A2 and vocational certificate of education (VCE) examinations, based on average points scored, were above average for male and female students in 2002, average in 2003 and below average in 2004. They reflect the recent decline in students' attainment on entry to the sixth form resulting from the school's drop in GCSE performance in the past few years. Compared with students' prior attainment in GCSE examinations, the A2 results in 2004 indicate good achievement for male and female students of all ethnic backgrounds. A2 results in the past two years have been well above average in history and communication studies. In several subjects, the number of students sitting A2 examinations in Year 13 and AS examinations in Year 12 is too small to make meaningful comparisons with the subject's national averages. In AS examinations taken by Year 12 students in 2004, results overall were close to national averages and indicated satisfactory achievement. The proportion of grades A and B was below average, both in A2 and AS examinations.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	97.4 (97.9)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	27.4 (32.5)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	224.1 (241.9)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 61 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

11. In Years 12 and 13, standards of work are currently average. They show that male and female students of all capabilities are achieving well, as a result of good teaching that helps them to consolidate and improve their work and to develop good skills of independent learning. Students have competent skills of literacy and numeracy, but their skills in ICT are below average. In the nine subjects that were the focus of the inspection, standards are currently well above average in history, above average in mathematics and business studies, average in English literature, art and design, design and technology, music and sports studies and below average in biology. Achievement by Year 13, taking into account students' prior GCSE attainment, is currently very good in history and business studies, satisfactory in English literature and biology and good in the other five subjects. Students are achieving well because teaching is good, they want to learn and their positive attitudes ensure that they complete the work set.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students behave well in formal situations such as assemblies and in most lessons.
- Procedures to promote attendance, punctuality and good behaviour are unsatisfactory.
- In most lessons, students' positive attitudes help them to make good progress.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour by a few students, usually boys, restricts progress in a few lessons.
- Relationships between teachers and students are generally good.
- Unsatisfactory attendance in Years 10 and 11 affects GCSE performance adversely.

Commentary

12. Rates of attendance have improved and are average overall. Attendance is good for students in Years 7 to 9 and contributes positively to their improving standards. Unsatisfactory attendance in Years 10 and 11 restricts achievement, particularly among boys. Unsatisfactory attendance by Year 11 students last year was a contributory factor to underachievement in GCSE examinations.
13. Many students have a casual attitude towards punctuality and drift in during the first lesson. They display little urgency during lesson change over. Latecomers often interrupt the beginning of lessons. Most parents make a good effort to ensure that their children attend school but the school's systems for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. The absence of a morning registration period contributes to delays in identifying absentees and increases the effect of unsatisfactory punctuality on learning. The delay between absence and contact with parents is too long. Computerised registration systems are not used effectively to analyse patterns of attendance and to identify students who are at risk of developing unsatisfactory attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	School data	1.4
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.

14. Most students enjoy coming to school and joining in activities. In the large majority of lessons, students co-operate willingly with teachers and other adults. Generally good relationships between students and staff give students the confidence to ask questions. Behaviour outside lessons is satisfactory, often with minimal supervision. Students' behaviour during formal events such as assemblies is good. A few students, mostly boys, sometimes behave immaturely and in rude and challenging ways. Most teachers have developed their own very successful personal strategies for creating good discipline and a good working atmosphere so that the majority of students have good attitudes and behaviour in these lessons. However, in a few lessons, the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of a small number of students hinder their own learning and the progress of others. The school's strategies for managing behaviour do not provide effective support for the few teachers who lack sufficient skills of classroom

management. Teachers' inconsistent application of the whole-school policy results in students who misbehave having little regard or respect for the sanctions. Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties receive inadequate support to improve their behaviour. The number of exclusions matches that in similar schools. The proportion of fixed-term exclusion of minority ethnic students was higher last year than that of British white students. It is not significant, however, because the exclusions were appropriate responses to the misdemeanours.

15. Parents and students expressed justifiable concerns about the behaviour of a few students. They also raised a few concerns about bullying and racism. Discussion with students and staff indicates that individual cases of bullying are tackled appropriately when they are reported. Additionally a 'Friends' group run by sixth formers provides a listening ear. Students report some low level racism but say this is restricted to minor name-calling. Arrangements to promote race equality meet statutory requirements and racial harmony is generally good.

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	1238	61	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	14	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	13	3	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	33	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	15	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	16	0	0

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

16. Students' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. It is good in English, history, religious education and physical education, largely because spiritual considerations arise naturally in these subjects and extend students' understanding of the human spirit. Generally students develop a good sense of their own worth. However, many subjects provide very few opportunities for considering spiritual aspects. The school does not consistently provide a daily act of worship in assemblies or the plenary period. The use of the 'thought for the week' in tutor periods is inconsistent. Sometimes it is used well to explore social and moral considerations, but often it is skimmed over or, occasionally, omitted.
17. Students' moral and social development is satisfactory. Most students behave in a sensible manner and have consideration for others. Teachers and other staff provide good role models for students. Students are provided with moral guidelines but not all students choose to follow

them and pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour result. Whilst having a clear understanding of right and wrong a few students do not always understand that they have responsibilities towards themselves and other members of the school community. Students have responded sympathetically to the recent Tsunami disaster and have launched enthusiastically into supportive fundraising. Students have satisfactory opportunities to develop leadership skills and responsibility, for example through membership of the school council.

18. Cultural development is satisfactory. Students gain an awareness of the diverse nature of modern society, particularly through work in religious education, art and design, dance and music and in specific topics in history and geography. Students learn that non-western cultures have made a significant contribution to our knowledge and progress, for example in mathematics.

Sixth form

Students' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' hard work and good productivity help them to achieve well.
- Good attendance ensures good continuity and progression of learning.
- Very good relationships between teachers and students make learning enjoyable.
- Students have good opportunities to develop and practise responsibility.

Commentary

19. Students in the sixth form have good attitudes towards their studies. Their hard work supports good achievement. Very good relationships between students and teachers encourage lively discussions and facilitate good learning. Students express themselves well, gain confidence and enjoy learning. Students collaborate well and are willing to support one other. They listen carefully to other students' ideas and recognise that they can learn from one another. Students are developing the capacity to work independently. Good rates of attendance assist good continuity of learning.
20. Students have extensive contact with students in Years 7 to 11. Attachment to house and form groups enhances opportunities for social development and helps them to acquire good skills in exercising responsibility and leadership. The vast majority of students are serious and mature and show good consideration for others. However, one or two boys continue to be immature. Students acquire good moral attitudes. Sixth formers often lead and organise fundraising. Enrichment activities provide good opportunities for male and female students to extend their social skills and to obtain extra qualifications, through such activities as the Sports Leader award, but a few students choose not to avail themselves of these activities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides an adequate overall quality of education. However, it has serious weaknesses in English and science in Years 10 and 11 and in performance in GCSE examinations. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory. The quality of care, support and guidance is satisfactory. Links with parents are satisfactory and links with the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 10 and 11 in English and science results in students' underachievement.
- The amount of good or better teaching has increased well since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching helps students to achieve well in many subjects.
- A few long-term staff absences and difficulties in recruiting teachers affect learning adversely.
- In a few lessons, lack of support for, and inadequate management of, the few students who behave poorly restricts the progress of all students in the class.

Commentary

21. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in the sixth form. However, it is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11, mainly because of much ineffective teaching in the key subjects of English and science. Compared with the previous inspection, the amount of good or better teaching has increased from about one in every two to two in three lessons observed. The proportion of less than satisfactory teaching has increased slightly. Teaching in music was identified as a key issue for improvement. Teaching in this subject is now good throughout the school. Good teaching was observed in all subjects. The unsatisfactory teaching was spread across several subjects but most was seen in English and science. The small amount of poor teaching was observed in science.
22. Parents and students are correct in their views expressed before the inspection that long-term absence of key teachers and inadequate teaching in English have had an adverse effect on students' progress and learning in GCSE English classes. Students are underachieving in English in Year 11, partly because of the lack of continuity and progression in work and the poor marking resulting from the use of a large number of different supply teachers.
23. Teaching is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. This is because the effective use of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies for Learning helps teachers in Years 7 to 9 to plan lessons well to ensure that students work hard, with interest and at pace. Good leadership of Years 7 to 9 has helped to raise the expectations of students and staff and, through careful monitoring of the performance of students and subjects, standards are rising. In Years 10 and 11, the expectations of teachers are not always high enough and a sizeable minority of students, particularly boys, have limited educational aspirations. Several students in Year 11 feel demotivated because of the inconsistent quality of teaching they have received across subjects and lack the ambition to do well in GCSE examinations. Students in Year 10 have benefited from the recent improvements in teaching and learning in the lower school and generally have a more positive approach to work than students in Year 11.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 171 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	23 (13%)	90 (53%)	43 (25%)	13 (8%)	1 (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.

24. The quality of teaching is good throughout Years 7 to 11 in mathematics, art and design, geography, history, ICT, music and physical education. In English and science, it is satisfactory

in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other subjects. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory across the curriculum.

25. The quality of learning is broadly the same as that of teaching. However, particularly in Years 10 and 11, learning is sometimes of a lower quality than teaching. Despite the best efforts of the teachers, the poor behaviour and attitudes of a few students, usually boys, occasionally disrupt the work of the whole class. The lack of additional support for students who have behavioural difficulties hinders learning in a few classes in many subjects. Learning in a few classes is not as rapid as it should be because, as in science, continuity and progression are unsatisfactory when the class has more than one teacher for the subject.
26. The best teachers use their expertise in the subject well to plan interesting and challenging lessons. They explain the work clearly so that students know exactly what they have to do and the relevance of the work. Good use of stimulating visual aids reinforces students' learning. These teachers motivate students to work hard and aim for high standards, as seen in many lessons in subjects such as mathematics, history and physical education. In these classes, discipline is good; teachers manage behaviour well and provide a wide range of activities of appropriate difficulty for students of all capabilities. As a result, students work enthusiastically, make good progress and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the topics studied.
27. The most prominent features of the unsatisfactory and occasionally poor lessons are dull teaching, inadequate planning that does not provide work suited to the different capabilities of students and a failure to deal effectively with poor behaviour. In a few lessons in English and science, for example, and confirmed through scrutiny of students' books, the work lacks challenge, the activities fail to attract students' interest, and students make little progress.
28. The teaching of students with special educational needs has improved since the previous inspection. With the exception of English and science in Years 10 and 11, in which teaching is unsatisfactory, teaching and learning for these students are at least satisfactory. The most successful teaching includes careful preparation of materials to match differing capabilities of students and good quality of support by the learning support assistants, who have some specialist subject knowledge or skills and who plan the work closely with the class teacher.
29. Procedures for assessment have improved and are satisfactory overall. Marking has improved since the previous inspection and is satisfactory. It is very thorough in physical education and history. Students receive helpful comments on how to improve their work in most subjects. In citizenship, assessment is not yet in place. Assessment is unsatisfactory in science because students receive little feedback on class work and inadequate marking means that class workbooks are unreliable as revision aids for examinations. Senior staff and departments track the academic progress of all groups of students against targets set. With the introduction of the 'traffic lights' system, targets set for subject departments and for students are above the predictions based on students' prior attainment and encourage higher achievement. This system operates throughout the school and is effective in identifying and tackling underachievement. However, it is not yet successful in showing the high attaining students how to reach the highest possible levels.

Sixth form

Teaching and learning are good. The use of assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps students to achieve well.
- Students' positive attitudes and behaviour ensure that they make good progress in class.
- In a few subjects, teachers do not make enough use of ICT to extend students' learning.

Commentary

30. Teaching and learning were good or better in about nine out of every 10 lessons observed in Years 12 and 13. In the nine subjects inspected in detail, teaching was very good in business studies and history, good in mathematics, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education and satisfactory in English literature and biology. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Good and much very good teaching in Years 12 and 13 has helped several students with below average GCSE grades to gain GCE A2 grades, for example in business studies.
31. Students of all ethnic backgrounds and capabilities make good overall progress on AS, A2 and vocational courses because they have positive attitudes, work hard, enthusiastically and productively, and respond well to good encouragement from teachers. They consolidate their learning by completing homework, coursework and other assignments conscientiously. They develop good skills in carrying out their own investigations and research. Teachers help students to develop their writing and speaking skills in work in class and for homework. In history, for example, very good teaching provides students with plenty of opportunities to discuss and debate their work and to write analytically. Students have satisfactory opportunities to use and develop their numeracy skills. However, they have too few opportunities to use ICT to support their learning because of limited access to computing facilities during lessons.
32. Teachers know the students well and provide work of suitable challenge and difficulty. They use their subject knowledge well to motivate the class, to give clear explanations and to encourage students to use their initiative in solving problems. They help students to understand new concepts quickly and to extend their basic subject skills. Very good relationships between students and teachers promote good learning.
33. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. Students often receive good feedback about their work during lessons that helps them to make good progress. As with the main school, the 'traffic lights' system is used, challenging targets are set and good achievement is encouraged. This system is effective in identifying and tackling underachievement, but does not show high attaining students clearly enough how to access the highest grades.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets statutory requirements in Years 7 to 11, apart from the provision of a daily act of collective worship. Extra-curricular provision is good. The accommodation and resources are adequate to meet curricular needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets most students' needs well.
- Good extra-curricular provision enhances students' enjoyment of learning.
- There is insufficient provision for ICT in Year 11, currently.
- Curricular planning is improving across the school through good use of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies and good practice from the school's development as a Sports College.

Commentary

34. The broad and balanced curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for students in Years 7 to 11, as at the time of the previous inspection. It reflects the school's status as a specialist Sports College. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is enhanced by the provision of two modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, the wide choice of courses, a few of which are taught at a local college, ensures that all students, including those with special educational needs, have access to subjects that interest and engage them. However, not all students in Year 11 have access to an ICT course. Provision for developing students' ICT skills across the curriculum is satisfactory, but there is less ICT equipment than normally found in a school of this size. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.
35. Schemes of work have improved and are now satisfactory, overall. Many, as in geography and modern foreign languages, have improved rapidly under new departmental leadership and provide a clear focus on learning outcomes and teaching and learning styles. The good implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategies has a positive effect on lesson planning and the quality of teaching throughout the school. The sharing of a few classes by two teachers in science and design and technology hinders continuity and assessment and slows learning.
36. The improved and updated programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The coverage of topics such as sex and drugs education is adequate. Good use of external speakers enhances the programme. The school's work in affiliation to the Global Institute for Raising Aspiration helps to raise students' aspirations, for example in developing their capacity for leadership and responsibility. Careers education is satisfactory and prepares students well for the next stage of their career or education.
37. Good opportunities for enrichment are a strength of the school and enhance the school's development as a Sports College. Students participate in large numbers in the many extra-curricular activities offered, particularly in a wide range of sports, among which trampolining and aerobics, as well as team sports, are particularly popular. Many students develop a sense of responsibility through training as referees or junior sports leaders and through organising sports festivals for primary schools. Many students develop their social skills and cultural awareness through taking part in a wide range of musical ensembles and productions and in residential experiences in France and Spain. Gifted and talented students raise their aspirations through a programme of well-planned activities, such as visits to universities or 'linguists days'. Booster classes and revision sessions in the evenings, at lunch times and at weekends help students to improve their work. A variety of well-targeted interventions such as mentoring and paired reading support students with particular learning needs well.
38. Access to the curriculum is satisfactory. All students, including those with special educational needs, have access to the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 11. In Years 10 and 11, particular care is taken to match courses to students' individual needs. Special programmes are in place for the few students who do not benefit fully from the traditional curriculum to cater for their particular interests and needs, for example through placements on college courses in cosmetics, gardening and agriculture. The buildings have been adapted well to teach students with mobility difficulties.
39. Curricular provision for students with special educational needs has improved since the previous inspection and is satisfactory. However, those students who display challenging behaviour in lessons are not identified as having special needs and have insufficient support to

improve their behaviour. Provision for gifted and talented students is satisfactory overall. Following the good example of the physical education department, subjects now identify these students' needs and talents clearly and classify them for different levels of support. These students receive good support outside lessons, through such initiatives as support from mentors, targeted activities and educational visits. However, in English and science, the gifted students in Years 10 and 11 rarely receive work that stretches them fully.

40. The number of teaching staff is satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. Almost all teachers are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the courses timetabled for them. In recent years, the unfortunate long-term absence of a few teachers has had an adverse effect on standards and achievement, particularly in English. Resources for teaching and learning are generally sufficient to meet curricular needs. They are good in physical education. However, in many subjects the provision of, and access to, ICT facilities are inadequate. Accommodation in most areas of the school is satisfactory. New or refurbished areas provide a good environment for learning, for example in English and geography. Although the outdoor facilities for physical education are good, the indoor facilities and changing rooms are unsatisfactory.

Sixth form

The curriculum is good overall. Extra-curricular provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Courses meet the needs of most students well, resulting in good rates of retention.
- Provision for religious education is unsatisfactory and does not meet statutory requirements.
- Good extra-curricular provision enhances students' leadership skills.
- Students have too little access to ICT in a few subjects.

Commentary

41. The range of learning opportunities for students is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the number of academic and vocational courses at advanced and intermediate levels has increased. Good rates of retention of students on courses indicates that the curriculum meets most students' needs well, even though many enter the sixth form with lower than average GCSE results. Courses provide good progression from Years 10 and 11 to the sixth form and from the sixth form to further study. The school does not meet statutory requirements for the provision of religious education or for a daily act of collective worship. As befits a Sports College, a very good range of activities is available for sport. However, involvement is not compulsory and a few students do not take advantage of this valuable opportunity.
42. A small number of students are not able to follow the combination of subjects they choose. The school makes good efforts to accommodate their preferences, even to the extent of running a few very small groups, offering classes in the early evening and providing some subjects with a reduced time allocation. A programme of tutorials with sixth form mentors, who provide individual support for students, for example with applications to university, provides good support for students' learning. The satisfactory PSHE programme is responsive to students' individual welfare and learning needs.
43. Provision for private study has improved considerably since the previous inspection, when it was identified as an area for improvement. Nevertheless, students still experience problems with access to ICT facilities. Provision for key skills is satisfactory. Students have a timetabled

programme of ICT even if they have a GCSE qualification. The teaching of other key skills is effective through subjects and through a Young Managers' Conference, held annually in June, when students have four days off timetable to work with a local firm in a collaborative problem-solving exercise.

44. As in the main school, good extra-curricular activities enhance learning. Opportunities for taking responsibility are particularly strong, both in the school and in the community. Students receive satisfactory guidance for the next stage of their career or education.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of support, advice and guidance is satisfactory. Procedures for health and safety are satisfactory. Arrangements for seeking, valuing and acting on students' views are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships between form tutors and students promote students' personal development.
- Pastoral management of behaviour, attendance and punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- The tutor period/plenary session at the end of the day is often not used productively.
- In Years 7 to 9, students at risk of underachieving are identified and supported quickly.
- The good careers library encourages students to develop their reading and research skills.

Commentary

45. Child protection procedures are satisfactory, follow locally agreed procedures and ensure the adequate monitoring of vulnerable students. However, there is a need to have a second named person in this large school. Good procedures for health and safety meet statutory requirements. Good management of the effective arrangements for risk assessments results in a school that is safe, in sound repair, clean and pleasant. Good arrangements are in place for the care of students who are unwell. The potential for inaccurate records of students' attendance is an unnecessary risk.
46. The recent reversion to a house system has had a few teething problems and many older students do not yet value the system highly. However, good relationships between form tutors and students help students to develop a sense of belonging. Most students feel they have an adult they know and trust.
47. Pastoral management is unsatisfactory. Systems for monitoring behaviour, attendance and punctuality are inadequate. They operate inconsistently and do not provide house staff and subject teachers with accurate information or effective strategies for bringing about improvements in these important areas. The absence of a registration period at the beginning of the day is a missed opportunity to establish expectations for the day and a clear picture of who is present in school. Tutors lack guidance regarding good use of the tutor period/plenary period held at the end of the afternoon and, in many groups, the time is used inappropriately and often just for social chats.
48. The 'traffic lights' system of assessment monitors the attainment and progress of students, including those with special educational needs, effectively to spot those who are at risk of underachieving and to provide early remedial support. In Years 10 and 11, subject departments and external mentors provide extra support in the form of revision and booster classes. Support

and strategies to improve the social skills of students whose inappropriate behaviour inhibits their academic progress are unsatisfactory.

49. Induction procedures are satisfactory. Development as a Sports College has enhanced links with local primary schools. Well-planned visits to all the main feeder schools ensure the collection of appropriate information about students. The induction day provides early opportunities for prospective students to get to know their new teachers. The residential visit, early in Year 7, helps students to develop good relationships with teachers and their peers.
50. The school provides satisfactory support for students with identified special educational needs. As a result, these students integrate well in mainstream classes and receive help, when required, from learning support assistants in lessons. Care and support provided for students in wheelchairs are good. Annual reviews of students with a statement of special educational need take place at suitably planned times and are thorough. Students' files show that teachers make helpful contributions to the review process. However, students and their parents are not always involved fully enough in the setting of new targets and drawing up new individual education plans.
51. Careers advice and guidance provided by the school and the Connexions service are satisfactory. The satisfactory careers education programme meets statutory requirements. The good careers library contains a wide range of easily accessible resources that provides valuable information for students. Students benefit from a well-organised placement on work experience. However, several Year 11 students have unambitious ideas about career opportunities. The school recognises the need to raise the career and educational aspirations of many students. It makes satisfactory attempts to seek and act upon students' views, through such initiatives as the school council and student questionnaires. Most teachers listen to students and welcome their ideas.

Sixth form

Personal support and guidance are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students receive good advice and assistance from subject teachers.
- Appropriate and timely advice helps students to determine their university applications.
- Advice for students seeking employment, though satisfactory, is limited.

Commentary

52. The monitoring and review of students' attainment and progress through the 'traffic lights' system and regular assessments by subject teachers are satisfactory. However, students say, with justification, that often the assessments lack specificity and rigour. They would appreciate more detailed advice about how they could improve their work.
53. Students receive satisfactory information before starting courses in Year 12. They get impartial advice through an information evening and an induction day. Written documentation concentrates on AS courses and there is insufficient information about A2 courses and examination boards and requirements. A few students change subjects at the start of AS courses but long-term rates of retention are satisfactory and most students complete their studies successfully.

54. Students have access to appropriate and timely advice and support relating to applications for higher education. Support for those whose results fall below expectations is satisfactory. The school recognises the need to improve the tracking of students' destinations and to continue to raise students' aspirations. The high proportion of students who proceed from the sixth form to employment receive less detailed, though satisfactory, careers support and guidance. Students are correct to report that they generally receive good help from their subject teachers and they appreciate the support and guidance provided by the sixth form co-ordinator.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Links with the local community are very good and those with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Development as a Sports College enhances links with the community and with primary schools and encourages many local people to make good use of the school's facilities.
- Reports to Year 7 parents have not been informative enough.

Commentary

55. Reports to parents about students' progress and attainment are satisfactory overall. However, parents of the current Year 8 students have justifiable concern about the quality of the reports issued at the end of Year 7. This is because, unlike in other years, the subject reports did not inform them clearly enough what their children knew, understood and could do and contained insufficient information about progress in individual subjects. The school has amended its practice to resolve this deficiency.
56. The governors' annual report to parents and other documentation such as the prospectus and newsletters provide sufficient information about the day-to-day running of the school and the school's activities and events.
57. Parents expressed concerns about homework and behaviour. Although the quality and quantity of homework are satisfactory overall, the setting of homework lacks consistency across and within subjects. Most students behave well, but a few, mainly boys, behave badly at times and disrupt the work of other students.
58. The school seeks to involve parents fully in the education of students with special educational needs. Most parents or carers, but not all, attend the annual review meetings. The school has developed good links with nearby special schools. Particularly positive links have been made with a neighbouring school for students with mobility difficulties.
59. Good development as a Sports College has strengthened and enhanced the long-standing good links with the local community. Extensive use of the facilities by local sports clubs has resulted in increased learning opportunities, particularly in team sports and coaching, for many students. A very full programme of adult education managed by the school is well attended by the local community. The school is involved actively in local organisations that have been trying to improve the attitudes and behaviour of young people.
60. Active involvement in activities in local primary schools has improved students' standards in physical education and provided good opportunities for students to exercise responsibility and

act as role models for younger children. The school's swimming programme has close and good links with local special schools. Joint initiatives with other local schools have focused on leadership issues. Post-16 links, though satisfactory, are not as well developed.

61. Students and parents are generally satisfied with provision in the sixth form. Most students enjoy their studies and value the good support from subject teachers. They welcome the care and guidance available from the sixth form co-ordinator but have mixed views over their attachment to house groups that contain younger students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is satisfactory. Management is unsatisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory. The school does not meet all of its statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of attendance, behaviour and punctuality are unsatisfactory and contribute to underachievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Good leadership of the Sports College plan has enriched the curriculum.
- Good implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategies is improving teaching and learning.
- The school does not meet two of its statutory requirements.

Commentary

62. The leadership of the headteacher, who has been in post for six years, is currently satisfactory. The school's improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, and change has been slow. However, over recent years, the headteacher has set a clear educational direction for the school that is based on raising the aspirations and achievement of students and improving the quality of teaching and learning. He receives satisfactory support from senior and other staff, parents and governors, who are all committed to improving the quality of education and raising standards. Leadership of the Sports College developments and the co-ordination of the National Key Stage 3 Strategies, both of which have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning and on raising standards, are good.
63. The effectiveness of management is improving, but varies considerably and is unsatisfactory overall. Whilst most aspects are satisfactory, the management of punctuality, attendance and behaviour, all of which have a considerable effect on standards and achievement, is inadequate, especially in Years 10 and 11, where achievement is unsatisfactory. The leadership of middle managers, including house heads, is satisfactory overall. It is good in many subjects. It is very good in physical education and art and design, which provide very good role models for other departments. Many of the heads of department have been appointed fairly recently and are already having a positive effect on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning, for example in geography, music and modern foreign languages. Unsatisfactory leadership and management in English result in unsatisfactory teaching and learning in the subject in Years 10 and 11. The very effective work of the Key Stage 3 co-ordinator challenges staff and students to work hard and to aim high. This is already successful in raising attainment and achievement in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9.
64. Leadership and management of students identified as having special educational needs are satisfactory. The school has improved provision for students with special educational needs since the previous inspection. The improvement has focused on the teaching and learning of students with learning difficulties and on welcoming into the school more students with mobility difficulties. However, the lack of identification of and provision for students who have behavioural difficulties are shortcomings of senior management that have an adverse effect on students' achievement.
65. The supportive and informed governing body carries out most of its responsibilities satisfactorily and responsibly. However, the school does not meet statutory requirements for

providing religious education in the sixth form or for a daily act of collective worship. Governors have a reasonable understanding of what the school does well and what should be improved. They play an increasingly active role in the school's development and are prepared to challenge the headteacher and senior staff to account for the school's performance.

66. The school development plan provides a satisfactory and sensible framework for improving the quality of teaching and learning, based on an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It provides adequate support for most of the areas earmarked for improvement. Satisfactory monitoring and self-evaluation result in appropriate priorities for development.
67. Satisfactory arrangements for the induction of new staff enable the large number of recently appointed teachers to work effectively and collaboratively. Procedures for the professional development of staff are satisfactory and are beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Close and supportive links between senior staff and middle managers are helping to raise aspirations of students and expectations of teachers.
68. Financial management and planning are satisfactory. Day-to-day management of finance is good. Spending decisions link carefully and closely to the school's educational priorities. Procedures to seek best value are satisfactory, although the cost effectiveness of major purchases is not evaluated consistently. Governors are well informed about budgetary issues and are involved fully in setting the budget. The system for the allocation of funding to departments is fair and open. The balance carried over to the current financial year is larger than usual, but most of this is already committed to an appropriate major building project. The latest audit of the schools' finances found that systems were effective and satisfactory.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5 318 417	Balance from previous year	227 032
Total expenditure	5 184 968	Balance carried forward to the next	360 481
Expenditure per student	3708		

69. The main aids to students' achievement are some good and very good teaching, curricular provision that meets the needs of students of all capabilities and the improving use of assessment. The main barriers to raising achievement are too much unsatisfactory teaching, inadequate management of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, and the low aspirations of many students in Year 11.
70. Taking into account the funding received by the school, the social and economic backgrounds of students and the current quality of education and achievement, the school currently provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Sixth form

The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management of subjects result in good teaching and learning.
- Statutory requirements for religious education and a daily act of collective worship are not met.

Commentary

71. The recent reversion to a house system from a year system has meant a change in the way the sixth form is led and managed and the appointment of a sixth form co-ordinator. The new system is gradually settling down and students value the support provided by the co-ordinator.
72. Leadership and management of the sixth form have resulted in satisfactory improvement, even though numbers have declined recently, mainly as a result of low results in GCSE examinations. Results in AS, A2 and VCE examinations have remained close to the national average, even though standards on entry to the sixth form have declined. They indicate that students' achievement and progress are now better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has a very open entry policy and accepts students with below average results. Through its provision of good support and encouragement, students achieve well, compared with their earlier GCSE attainment. Teaching and learning in the sixth form were satisfactory previously and are now good. A wider range of courses is on offer and rates of retention of students on courses remain satisfactory. The school anticipated the recent fall in sixth form numbers and planned its finances well to sustain the same quality of curricular provision currently as before. Plans are in place to ensure that the subsidy is short term. As a result, the sixth form remains cost effective, in relation to the school's expenditure as a whole.
73. Leadership and management of subject departments are good and help to raise standards and promote achievement. They are very good in art and design, history, and business studies, in which recently appointed heads of department are working hard and successfully to raise standards and improve achievement further. They are injecting vitality and enthusiasm into the sixth form curriculum. Pastoral management is satisfactory and ensures that students receive appropriate support and guidance for their current and future plans. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory and detect any underachievement quickly.
74. Governors are kept informed about the sixth form curriculum and its management. Statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of collective worship and for religious education are not met.

What is the effectiveness of work-related learning?

Provision for work-related learning is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students develop leadership and team working skills, particularly through sporting activities and the pastoral curriculum.
- Co-ordination of work-related learning is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

75. The school prepares students adequately for their working lives and supports them in developing the skills they need. Students engage with the world of work through work experience placements of one week during Year 11. Students organise most of these placements themselves, with support from school when this proves difficult. They receive adequate preparation for these placements through the guidance and support of an external speaker who

spends half a day with the students. Good debriefing of students, soon after the placements, enables them to discuss and reflect on their experiences.

76. Careers advice in the main school and the sixth form provides realistic guidance to support students' future career choices and to help them to develop an understanding of the world of work. Specific events promote students' awareness of the world of work. For example, they learn about skills for enterprise during the Year 9 Industry Day, when students spend a day working with business or commercial organisations that include a local bank, a fast food restaurant and the local council, to examine business processes such as marketing. Group exercises help students to develop such skills for work as teamwork and working under pressure. In addition, a small number of students from Year 10 onwards take part in the Young Enterprise initiative, setting up their own businesses. A number, such as a clothes-printing business, have been successful and profitable.
77. Sixth formers develop the skills for work and learn about enterprise through taking part in the Young Managers' Conference, when groups of students join local firms for four days to propose and present solutions to real problems. One example, of particular relevance to this specialist Sports College, was the project that considered how to increase the use of sports facilities at a sports centre during the day. Presenting their findings to an audience enhanced students' communication skills.
78. Skills required for work are promoted across the curriculum and, particularly, through sport and the pastoral curriculum, within which opportunities to develop leadership and team working skills are good. In Years 10 and 11, many students take the opportunity to become junior sports leaders. They organise sports events in primary schools, taking proper account of health and safety procedures. Students develop problem-solving skills well through mathematics and events like the Green Car Challenge. They improve their communication skills in activities in most subjects and, especially well, in history and business studies. Sixth formers take a lead with younger students, for example through supporting tutor groups or mentoring.
79. The co-ordination of work-related learning is unsatisfactory: Whilst provision meets statutory requirements, the school has not identified where it is provided in school, nor planned a coherent programme. Students' work is not assessed and provision is not monitored to establish strengths and weaknesses.

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 **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students, especially boys, underachieve by Year 11 because much teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Good preparation for the national tests in Year 9 led to above average results in 2004.
- Inadequate management of poor behaviour holds back learning in many lessons.
- Oral work in most lessons is insufficiently developed to ensure good learning.

Commentary

80. Students enter the school with standards in English that are a little above average. Standards of work by Year 9 remain close to average overall and currently indicate satisfactory achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities. However, results in the 2004 Year 9 national tests were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. They indicate much improved and very good achievement in the tests, compared with students' standards at the end of Year 6.
81. In Years 10 and 11, students underachieve. GCSE examination results for English in 2004 were slightly below average overall and well below those of similar schools. Girls' GCSE results were a little above the national average for girls and show that they achieved satisfactorily. Boys' GCSE results were well below the national average for boys and indicate poor achievement. English literature results were average for the smaller proportion of students entered. The achievement of students from different ethnic backgrounds and of all capabilities, including the students with special educational needs, is the same, both in external examinations and in work seen in class.
82. Currently, the work of students by Year 9 is average. Oral skills are generally underdeveloped because students have few opportunities in lessons for structured talk. Reading for meaning is satisfactory by Year 9. Students scan dictionaries well. They understand demanding texts such as Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Written work is generally of average accuracy. Students tackle a wide range of writing and make competent use of redrafting to improve their work. By Year 11, students have greater confidence when speaking. Further development of oral skills is again limited because they have few chances to discuss their work. Thus, in a lesson on persuasive writing, Year 11 students made unsatisfactory progress because they had no opportunity to explore techniques together. Written work by Year 11 is usually accurate and clearly expressed. That of lower attaining students is often above expected levels. Original writing by most students is lively and engaging but the handling of dialogue lacks control. Middle attaining students do not always develop their ideas fully and much of boys' work is casually and inadequately presented. Students in all years make less use of ICT than is the case in many schools, even though the school's intranet is used well for setting much homework.

83. Learning and teaching are unsatisfactory overall in the main school, but are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Students often lack enthusiasm in lessons. Several teachers struggle to manage the poor behaviour of a minority of boys, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This holds back the learning of others and leads to unsatisfactory progress by the whole class. Recently revised programmes of lessons for students in Years 7 to 9 do not provide sufficient flexibility and appeal to match the needs of all students. Where learning is most effective, usually in Years 7 to 9, relationships between teacher and students are good, as seen in a lesson in which everyone greatly enjoyed two Year 9 students performing the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Students with learning difficulties receive good support from learning support assistants.
84. A few teachers do not mark work in sufficient detail to help students to improve their writing. Girls usually make at least satisfactory progress in most lessons because they complete the work conscientiously, even when the teaching is unsatisfactory. Many boys in Year 11 underachieve because they do not find the work interesting enough. They respond negatively and immaturely to dull teaching. Many have not worked hard enough to fill large gaps in their skills and knowledge that result from the discontinuity of English teaching they have received in recent times. The poorly presented, and often incomplete, work of many boys provides scant support for revision. The work of girls shows more conscientious endeavour and helps to explain their greater success in the GCSE examinations.
85. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Teachers work well together as a team but programmes of lessons do not provide the stimulus for consistently good teaching. Tasks lack variety and appropriate challenge for all students. Oral work is often neglected. Responsibilities are not effectively delegated. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory because the quality of teaching has declined and standards of work by Year 11 are lower.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

86. Students in Years 7 to 11 make satisfactory use of their average skills of language and literacy to develop their work in subjects across the curriculum. Recent efforts to raise standards of literacy have led to good practice in about half of all subjects. Most students write competently and accurately for a range of purposes. In history and religious education, teachers provide students with a variety of written tasks that encourage the development of their writing skills. Marking for spelling and punctuation is inconsistent from subject to subject. Students readily meet the demands for reading in all subjects. The learning resource centre has a positive influence on reading across the curriculum. It has a good stock of books, which students from all years use well, although levels of borrowing are modest. Very good practice is evident in history where students respond positively to teachers' encouragement for them to read widely.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average and achievement, particularly of boys, is unsatisfactory by Year 11.
- Good leadership results in improved teaching and rising standards, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

87. In 2004, the GCSE examination results in French and Spanish were below the national average but an improvement on the previous year. A higher proportion of students than is found nationally enter for the examination. Nevertheless, the results in 2004 indicated unsatisfactory achievement overall, based on students' previous standards at the end of Year 9. Girls perform better than boys. The gap between their respective GCSE results is much greater than the national figures show.
88. Standards in current classes are rising in response to improvements in teaching. By the end of Year 9, boys and girls of all ethnic backgrounds and capabilities achieve satisfactorily and reach standards that match the national average. They recognise and use past, present and future tenses. Students develop competent speaking skills through the controlled tasks set in class, but most struggle to cope with spontaneous dialogue. In Years 10 and 11, standards are improving but remain below average. Students following the GCSE course have a good understanding of spoken and written language and achieve satisfactorily, but, as is the case with the younger students, their ability to talk spontaneously is limited. The achievement of students on the general course is unsatisfactory, because gaps in their knowledge from previous years remain to be filled and the attitudes of a few students, especially boys, are negative.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school and contributes to the improved standards. Teachers plan the work well and lessons have a clear focus so that students know what they are expected to do. They use assessment well to help students to improve their work by enabling them to understand what is required to reach a specific level or examination grade. However, teachers generally pay insufficient attention to developing students' speaking skills and, in a few lessons, students do not have enough opportunities to take an active role in their learning. Most students show interest and a satisfactory level of application. In Year 11, the immature attitudes and behaviour of a few students, mainly boys, in groups of middle and lower attainers, hold back achievement, in spite of the best efforts of their teachers to control such poor behaviour.
90. The new and good leadership of the department has earned the respect of staff and students and leads by example. As a result, teachers now use a wider range of teaching styles that motivates students to work harder and with more interest than previously. Teachers now make increasingly effective use of assessment to raise standards. The management of the department is satisfactory, but it is still too early for the full effect of recent changes to be felt. Nevertheless, teaching and standards show an improvement on the performance of recent years and the capacity for further improvement is good. Improvement since the previous inspection is now satisfactory because of these recent developments, although standards remain about the same as they were previously.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching helps students to achieve well in current classes by Year 11.
- Students receive good oral feedback on their work.
- Marking does not provide enough written comments to assist students' revision.
- Good management has led to good improvement since the previous inspection.

Commentary

91. Results in the Year 9 national tests, in 2004, and work observed in current classes show that standards match the national average by the end of Year 9. They indicate that students of all ethnic backgrounds and capabilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving satisfactorily across all aspects of the mathematics curriculum by Year 9, compared with their standards in the subject when they joined the school in Year 7. The GCSE examination results, in 2004, were average overall but indicated slight underachievement. This was mainly due to the poor attendance of some of the students in that year group. Girls' results were above the national average for girls and boys' results matched the national average for boys. Analysis and observation of work of the students currently in Years 10 and 11 indicate that standards are now above average. Taking into account these students' prior attainment at the end of Year 9, standards now represent good achievement across all parts of the mathematics syllabus for boys and girls of all capabilities in Years 10 and 11.
92. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 7 to 11. The good implementation and use of the Key Stage 3 Numeracy Strategy, particularly the three-part structure of the lessons, ensure that students receive work of appropriate difficulty that interests and challenges most of them to work hard. Most 'starter' activities give students good opportunity for recapitulation of previous work and to enhance their basic numeracy skills. The plenary sessions, usually held towards the end of lessons, occasionally do not reinforce fully the learning that has taken place earlier, because the lesson runs out of time. The good teaching generally leads to well-motivated students who engage quickly with the work and, consequently, make good progress in lessons. However, a few boys occasionally display poor attitudes and behave badly in lessons. The mathematics teachers keep good discipline and deal effectively with any poor behaviour. Very occasionally, despite the teacher's best efforts, the disruption prevents adequate learning. The good deployment of learning support assistants ensures that students with learning difficulties perform as well as the other students in mathematics lessons.
93. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers assess and track students' work and progress thoroughly. Feedback in lessons is good and students receive clear indications about how to improve. Marking is accurate, but written comments in students' books are often inadequate to assist students' revision. Although teachers provide some opportunities for students to use the ICT facilities to enrich a few elements of the syllabus, the planned access for students to use ICT resources to assist their mathematical work is insufficient. Teachers do not make enough use of ICT to present the work, but when they do, they use it very well to stimulate students' interest and work. Software resources are very good, due in no small measure to the expertise of one of the mathematics teachers, and promote good learning.
94. Good leadership and management of the department provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning, which has a very positive effect on raising standards and achievement throughout Years 7 to 11. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are effective in promoting higher achievement. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The thorough analysis and effective tackling of the issues raised in the previous inspection report have resulted in improved achievement in Years 10 and 11.

Mathematics across the curriculum

95. Students use their average computational, statistical, graphical, interpretational and measuring skills competently to assist their work across the curriculum. Students have good opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills in many lessons, as seen, for example, in science,

design and technology, ICT, art and design and geography. The recently introduced numeracy policy has very good potential, but has not yet permeated the work of all subjects. A particularly good feature is the weekly numeracy challenge for the whole school, which has already increased students' awareness of mathematics in everyday life and developed their skills in solving problems.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average and represent unsatisfactory achievement, particularly for boys, by Year 11.
- New leadership helps to improve teaching and results in rising standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory and leads to underachievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Monitoring is inadequate to ensure consistency of teaching, marking and assessment.

Commentary

96. In 2004, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were average, but below those of similar schools. They indicated unsatisfactory achievement overall, particularly at the higher levels. GCSE results in 2004 were average and indicated unsatisfactory achievement overall, compared with students' previous attainment at the end of Year 9. The results were above average for girls and showed that their achievement was at least satisfactory. However, for boys they were well below average and indicated poor achievement. Results in both national tests and GCSE examinations were lower than those in English and mathematics.
97. Standards by Year 9 are currently average across all areas of the science curriculum. They show that the achievement of boys and girls of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. Standards are below average by Year 11 and indicate unsatisfactory achievement among boys and girls of all capabilities. Several factors contribute to this underachievement in Years 10 and 11. A lack of rigour in teaching and a number of undisciplined classes result in many students losing interest in science. This was evident in a Year 11 class that was attempting to find out the differences between elements, mixtures and compounds, when students showed very little interest in the work. Poor attendance and punctuality of a sizeable minority of students, mainly boys, have an adverse effect on students' achievement. Throughout Years 7 to 11, higher attaining students make satisfactory progress. The achievement of students with special educational needs and of minority ethnic students is similar to that of other students.
98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The best lessons are well planned, consolidate students' previous learning and have a good balance between theory and practical work, and, at the end, students and the teacher check the extent of students' new learning. Students enjoy science when teaching is good and they play a full and active part, as seen in a Year 7 class that was investigating how acids react with carbonates. Students made good progress in this lesson because they responded purposefully to the good variety of activities and the teacher's good encouragement that ensured a brisk pace to the learning. When lessons are unsatisfactory, teachers do not discipline the class well enough and do not explain the work well or check students' understanding of the work rigorously. As a result, students often set out on tasks that seem pointless to them and which they cannot carry out with much success. In these classes, students are questioned, but are not encouraged to

generate their own ideas. In a few practicals students follow the teacher's recipe to prove what they already know, rather than having opportunities to discover science for themselves.

99. Marking is just satisfactory but lacks consistency. Students receive few useful written comments to let them know how well they are doing and to set targets to improve. Students have insufficient opportunities to use ICT, for example to store and retrieve data, including that from sensors, or to use computing software packages to promote their understanding of science.
100. The new and satisfactory leadership and management have the capacity and commitment to raise standards, but have had insufficient time yet to have their desired effect on performance in Years 10 and 11. Substantial restructuring resulted in the appointment of six new teachers, including the head of department. Staff are beginning to work effectively as a team. Improvements to schemes of work and in procedures to develop teaching, learning, and assessment are helping standards to rise in Years 7 to 9. Previously, new courses were introduced into Years 10 and 11 without adequate planning and organisation. Steps are now being taken to remedy this situation. Overall, the main hindrance to better achievement is the lack of adequate monitoring to ensure greater consistency of teaching and learning, through the application of new departmental policies. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, because standards have not risen sufficiently.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and show good achievement in the GCSE short course.
- Students develop good independent learning skills in Years 10 and 11.
- There is insufficient equipment for all students in Years 7 to 9 to develop their skills fully.
- All students in Years 7 to 10 now follow a discrete course in ICT.
- Year 11 students, currently, do not all have access to a discrete ICT course.

Commentary

101. In 2004, teachers' assessments showed that by the end of Year 9 students' attainment was average and higher than in previous years. Currently, standards are average by Year 9. They represent satisfactory achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities, compared with their broadly average standards in ICT on entry to the school in Year 7. Students make good progress when using presentational tools. They make slower progress when using spreadsheets and mathematical modelling. In 2004, results in the short course GCSE examination were above average and represented good achievement for the students involved, compared with their levels of attainment at the end of Year 9. However, not all students followed an ICT course. Those who did not do so had some access to ICT through other subjects, but their entitlement to National Curriculum programmes of study could not be guaranteed. A compulsory course for all students has now been introduced so that, from next September, all students throughout Years 10 and 11 will receive their full entitlement. Currently, standards on the GCSE ICT course are above average. Taking into account that students now in Years 10 and 11 did not have the benefit of discrete ICT lessons when they were in Years 7 to 9, the achievement of students of all capabilities and ethnic backgrounds on the GCSE course is good.
102. Teaching is good throughout Years 7 to 11. Learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have high expectations of the students and prepare lessons accordingly. Good relationships in lessons and a good working environment encourage students to apply themselves well and to pursue their work with interest. Teachers set work of suitable difficulty and challenge that matches the individual capabilities of students. Good support from the technical and non-teaching staff helps to ensure that equipment works efficiently and that resources of good quality encourage good learning. Students know how well they are doing and what is needed to improve their work.
103. The courses are designed to develop students' independent learning skills, but the shortage of computers available in ICT rooms means that many students in Years 7 to 9 have to share. Accordingly, they do not always develop and use their computing skills to full effect. In Years 10 and 11, groups are smaller and students are able to access ICT facilities readily and so they work and learn more quickly and independently. Their ICT skills and capabilities were lower at the start of this course. They have achieved well.
104. Good leadership and management now provide a discrete course for all students in Years 7 to 10, and for all years soon. The good development of new courses leads to accreditation by Year 11 that is suitable for students of all different capabilities. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Planning and implementation of the ICT curriculum have improved. The time allowed for the course is now adequate in Years 7 to 9, but remains low in Years 10 and 11. Students in Year 10 can now follow a vocational course that is appropriate for their different capabilities. The department has sustained its above average results in GCSE examinations. Suitable plans are in place for all students in Years 10 and 11 to have access to discrete ICT courses from the next academic year.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

105. Students make satisfactory use of their improving ICT skills to support their work in subjects across the curriculum. Students' skills and competency in ICT are now sufficient to meet the curricular needs of all subjects. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to extend these skills in many lessons. In a few subjects, the opportunities to do so are restricted because access to computer suites is limited. The number of computers is lower than in many similarly

sized schools. Most classrooms have one computer, which, in many subjects, teachers use well to present and explain the work.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2004 indicated unsatisfactory achievement, particularly for boys.
- Good leadership and management result in improved schemes of work and good assessment.
- Well-planned lessons help students to achieve well in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

106. Standards are average by the end of Year 9. Many students produce well-researched enquiries on topics such as Antarctica and tourism, which are of well above average standard. Achievement is good overall by Year 9 for students of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs. Most students arrive in Year 7 with little experience of map reading, observation and recording. Lively teaching and regular assessment against National Curriculum levels help most students to make good progress. An exception to this is a small number of uninterested low-attaining boys in Year 9.
107. Standards have been well below average and indicated unsatisfactory achievement at the end of Year 11 but they are now improving. GCSE results in 2003 and 2004 were well below the national average. In 2004, girls performed better than boys and nearer to average standards. This poor GCSE performance, compared with that of other subjects, was due to lengthy teacher absence over many months early in the GCSE course, a reluctance of some students to complete coursework to the standards required, and poor attendance by a sizeable minority of students. The achievement of students now in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall.
108. Revised schemes of work, a wider range of teaching resources and better assessment methods are helping to improve students' performance. Many are making good progress and have a competent basic understanding of plate tectonics and the capacity to interpret the human issues of natural disasters. For a few students, irregular attendance and poor motivation continue to restrict their progress.
109. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully to challenge all students to observe, to think and to ask questions about the work. Teachers use time very productively, ensuring that students with special educational needs receive appropriate help and participate fully, and that the work extends the students identified as talented geographers. Frequent and regular opportunities for group activity, role-play, and observation outside the classroom help students to enjoy learning in a practical way. Year 7 students, for example, learn about zones of urban land use by interpreting photographs that show familiar buildings along a transect from central Birmingham to the suburbs near the school. An interesting topic on 'the geography of football' is included in the Year 8 curriculum to link with the school's Sports College development.
110. The new and good leadership and management of the department have enabled teachers to carry out effectively a full revision of the schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 and introduced a change of GCSE syllabus that engages the interests of all students. The increased use of fieldwork and local study helps students to enjoy practical aspects of geography. The department has embraced

well the school's new system of assessment of students. The regular and continuous assessment of geographical skills to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades follows on from a baseline audit of skills in Year 7.

111. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory overall and is good since September 2003. Good progress has been made to improve achievement of all students by the end of Year 9 and those currently preparing for GCSE. Teachers now provide work of suitable challenge for all students in lessons, by encouraging them to carry out their own research using ICT and library sources.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain consistently above average standards by Year 9 and in GCSE examinations.
- Good teaching focuses on how students can improve their work.
- Students' written work is of a high quality.
- Opportunities for fieldwork and first-hand experience are insufficient.

Commentary

112. Standards are above average by Year 9 and indicate good achievement for students of all capabilities and different ethnic backgrounds. Students' work shows a good understanding of the Tudor and Stuart periods in English history, and a firm grasp of the origins of the English Civil War. Standards at GCSE and in current classes in Years 10 and 11 are higher than national averages overall, although girls attain considerably higher grades than boys. In their work on conflict in the twentieth century, students show that they can evaluate the reliability of different sources of evidence critically. In learning about episodes in the Cold War, such as the Cuban missile crisis, students show that they understand differing interpretations of the same event. Achievement for students of all capabilities and ethnic backgrounds is good by Year 11.
113. In Years 7 to 9, all students achieve very well in their understanding of how to use sources of historical evidence. The quality of students' writing, especially that of girls, develops well, particularly in their use of additional material to illustrate their answers. The attention given to historical skills in the earlier years is especially valuable for the topics studied in Years 10 and 11, when students demonstrate an increasingly analytical approach to their work.
114. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Well-planned lessons offer purposeful and focused learning activities, as in a lesson on the role of the Church in mediaeval life, in which the narrative was interspersed with valuable discussion in pairs and groups. In many lessons, teachers maintain a very good momentum to learning that helps students to concentrate. Teachers routinely set high expectations for all students by reminding them of the criteria needed to achieve higher levels in their written work. This guidance is especially valuable to students studying for the GCSE examination. Students in Year 9 receive a first-hand account of the Nazis' persecution of Jews from a survivor of the Holocaust, which makes a very valuable impact on their moral and social development. Discussion with students indicates that they would benefit from a broader range of first-hand experiences in history. Too little use is made of ICT, either as a medium of enquiry or for presenting material in lessons.

115. Students generally approach their work with enthusiasm and commitment, and work well collaboratively. A minority of disaffected students of lower attainment, however, require more confident and assertive management in a few lessons to ensure their concentration.
116. Leadership and management are new, enthusiastic, committed and good. The department has identified important priorities such as enhanced opportunities for fieldwork and first-hand enquiry. Plans to review the syllabus in Years 10 and 11 show a thoughtful analysis of how best to motivate students further. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The department has very good teachers who have maintained above average GCSE results and good achievement consistently. The capacity to improve standards further, particularly by raising the achievement of boys, is good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students attain above average results and achieve well in the GCSE short course examination.
- Knowledgeable and committed specialist teachers have high expectations of students and help them to achieve well.
- Teachers make insufficient use of ICT to assist their presentations.

Commentary

117. Standards are above average and indicate good achievement for students of all capabilities and different ethnic backgrounds by Year 9. Teachers' assessments using the school's 'traffic lights' system indicate above average levels of attainment. Students' written work shows that they have a clear understanding of the main tenets of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They begin to put religious beliefs in the context of their own experience, which prepares them well for their GCSE course. This shows good achievement in relation to the knowledge of different faiths that they have on entering the school in Year 7.
118. All students in Year 11 enter for the GCSE short course examination. Results at A*-C grades are above average and indicate good achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs. Students produce balanced, well-argued answers to questions on moral and ethical issues such as abortion and euthanasia. A small number of students take the full course GCSE and attain results that match the national average. Taking account of the lower amount of curricular time than that recommended for the course, this represents good achievement. Across the school, boys achieve as well as girls.
119. Teaching in religious education is good. Good planning of lessons, with activities such as group discussion and role-play, helps to develop students' sensitivity to the perspectives of different faiths. Teachers encourage students to reflect on issues, such as the problem of evil, in a way that fosters their spiritual and moral development well. In Years 10 and 11, teachers are especially effective in preparing students for examinations by modelling good answers very clearly. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT as an aid to the presentation of lessons.
120. Students' learning is good. Students of different capabilities, including those with special educational needs, show keen interest in the subject and make sustained efforts in lessons. They produce good writing, as in mock newspaper accounts of the Nativity story in Year 7. Older students appreciate the opportunity that religious education offers to discuss topical issues. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson in which many students were visibly moved by the dilemma faced by the loving parents of a profoundly and terminally ill child.
121. Good leadership and management have a commitment and purposefulness that provide a good role model for colleagues. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are effective in bringing about improvements and have a positive effect on achievement. Good teamwork enables the three teachers, all of whom are specialists, to work well together.
122. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Boys and girls now attain above average standards in the GCSE examinations. Improvements in teaching for students in

Years 7 to 9 have led to better achievement by Year 9. Provision for sixth form students continues to be insufficient and does not meet statutory requirements.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many boys in Years 10 and 11 underachieve because they are poorly motivated.
- Girls achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of their good attitudes and good teaching.
- Students of all capabilities receive good feedback on their work so they know how to improve.
- Inadequate provision for ICT hinders higher achievement, particularly for boys.

Commentary

123. By Year 9, standards are average and show that boys and girls of all capabilities and ethnic backgrounds achieve as expected, given their varied but overall average attainment on entry. In Years 7 to 9 students learn to work with a range of tools and materials and develop a good understanding of the design process. They design and make a variety of products, the majority of which are of at least average standard for their age and develop competent practical skills. Students have well-organised work booklets, but their sketching skills to show initial design ideas are below average.

124. In 2004, the overall GCSE examination results were below average but higher than in 2003 when they were well below average. They show that overall students did marginally better than in their other subjects. Girls achieved much better results than girls nationally and significantly better than they did in their other subjects. Boys' results, however, were well below average compared with boys' results nationally and boys did less well in design and technology than in other subjects. Current standards, in Years 10 and 11, though showing a few signs of improvement in boys' work still show a wide difference in the attainment and achievement of girls and boys. Boys underachieve because they are poorly motivated. The subject lacks the necessary ICT resources, particularly for computer-aided manufacture, to inspire and enable, for example, the all-boy groups in resistant materials to achieve higher. In systems and control, many boys experience great difficulty coping with the academic demands of the course and, because the ICT provision is limited, lose interest. In food technology groups, which have many more girls than boys, standards are highest. Graphic products classes are more evenly balanced between boys and girls. Nevertheless, standards, whilst average overall, vary according to the level of ICT provision available for coursework.

125. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11 although a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Learning is unsatisfactory overall, because of the underachievement and inadequate attendance of a few boys, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of the time and resources available to them. They manage students well and insist on high standards of behaviour. In Years 7 to 9, teachers make insufficient use of regular homework to promote learning. Teachers assess students' work well and give good feedback so that students understand how they can improve. Students in Years 7 to 9 apply themselves well to the work and are productive. In Years 10 and 11, although girls work well, boys are much less enthusiastic, particularly with coursework folios, which they find tedious to complete. Students enjoy making products and teachers use eye-catching displays of good work to promote higher standards.

126. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good organisation of the department's work enables supply teachers to teach the courses effectively. Teachers work well as a team and support each other. Reviews and analyses of the department's performance result in a realistic development plan, linked to whole-school issues. It is too early to judge the effect of the recently planned strategies to improve the performance of boys.

127. Improvement is satisfactory since the previous inspection. New courses, both vocational and advanced, have been introduced successfully. Better tools and equipment have been purchased but shortcomings remain. Procedures for assessment have improved and students have a better understanding of their progress. Teachers now provide suitable work for students who have special educational needs by using individual educational programmes more effectively.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The focus was on art and design and music. Work was sampled in **drama**, which is taught to all students in Years 7 to 9. GCSE drama is chosen by large numbers of students in Years 10 and 11. Results in the 2004 GCSE examination were above average and amongst the best in the school. In the two lessons observed, good teaching helped students to make good progress and standards were above average. Activities outside the classroom, particularly in the form of regular school productions and workshops, ensure that students have very good opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills in drama.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and contributes directly to good achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good, bringing energy and vision to the subject.
- There is insufficient provision of ICT to extend students' learning fully.

Commentary

128. Standards in art and design are broadly average on entry to the school. In 2004, teachers' assessments show that students' standards were above average at the end of Year 9. Current standards in Year 9 are above average. They represent good achievement in the first three years. Students acquire good skills in drawing and painting. They draw well from observation and gain a good knowledge of the theory of colour, including the effects of tone.

129. In 2004, GCSE examination results were above the national average. Girls' results were much higher than those of boys, especially in the proportion of A*/A grades. The achievement of girls was very good and the achievement of boys was satisfactory in relation to their standards on entry to the course. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average and represent good achievement. Students show good skills in drawing, painting, pattern and design. They understand how the use of symbols and images can convey ideas, including personal feelings and emotions. They use ICT well to get inspiration from the work of artists. However, there is insufficient provision of ICT in lessons for them to experiment and manipulate images. In all years, students of all capabilities, including those identified as gifted and talented and those

with special educational needs, make good progress as a result of good one-to-one guidance and support from their teachers.

130. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their good range of expertise effectively to extend students' experiences in a variety of art forms. There are very good features in most lessons. Teachers give very good demonstrations and illustrations that inspire and inform students and help to raise standards. They have a good rapport with students and maintain a calm working environment. Students receive good guidance on where and how to research the work of artists and good encouragement to be independent learners. Good marking of written work supports learning in art and design but does not always pay enough attention to showing students how to raise standards in literacy.
131. New, dynamic and very good leadership and management have moved quickly to devise imaginative schemes of work. There is very good teamwork and good support for the newly qualified teacher. The department has a clear vision for extending and enhancing provision and raising standards further, particularly the standard of boys' work, with a greater emphasis on ceramics and printing. All new documentation, including examination analysis and records, is detailed and thorough. Art and design makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by considering these aspects as they arise within the themes studied. The subject makes a good contribution to work-related learning by studying the work of illustrators and how artists contribute to our awareness of world events such as wars. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. All the good features remain and development planning has improved well.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good action on the key issue from the previous inspection report has led to higher standards.
- Good leadership, management and teaching are helping to improve students' achievement.
- Standards on the new music technology course are too low because resources to support it are inadequate.

Commentary

132. The previous inspection report recorded many weaknesses in music and established a key issue for action for the school to improve students' progress in the subject. The school tackled these weaknesses effectively, with resultant recent good improvements in leadership and management, assessment, schemes of work, and provision of suitably challenging work for students of different capabilities. The effect of these changes and better teaching and learning are beginning to raise students' standards and achievement. However, the learning of many students in Years 9 and 10 continues to be partially affected by the poor provision they experienced in earlier years. Their attitudes, behaviour and productivity do not match the demands of the new teaching team. Overall, however, improvement since the previous inspection is good.
133. Students' standards on entry are below average. By Year 9, standards are average overall. Students' standards and achievement are currently higher in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9, in which a sizeable minority of students have gaps in their skills and knowledge and a few have

unsatisfactory attitudes. For these reasons, achievement overall for students by Year 9 is satisfactory rather than good. Standards by Year 11 are average with the more capable students in Year 11 moving towards above average standards. Achievement by Year 11 is satisfactory. The results of the small number of GCSE entries in recent years have varied, but are below average overall. One indicator of a renewed interest in music is that the number of students choosing to continue it in Years 10 and 11 has increased considerably.

134. The school has recently introduced AS music technology as a fast-track course for a few students in Years 10 and 11. Despite consistently good teaching and students' enthusiasm, standards are below expectations. The students have insufficient musical and technical background to meet the demands of this advanced course and virtually no proper recording or computer resources to support their work.
135. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 11. The new teaching team is consistently rigorous in demanding high levels of concentration and productivity from students of all capabilities. Teachers provide varied and adaptable activities and assessment that reinforce and consolidate students' listening, composing and performing skills. Learning is good in Years 7, 8 and 11. It is only satisfactory in Years 9 and 10, because of patchy prior learning, irregular attendance and the difficulty that too many students still have in working sensibly. In a few lessons in Years 9 and 10, learning is occasionally disrupted by a small group of students, mainly boys, whose behavioural difficulties are not sufficiently recognised or supported by the school. In all years, the lack of adequate resources, especially ICT software for music and portable battery-operated keyboards, restricts higher achievement, as does very cramped accommodation.
136. Good leadership and management have promoted rapid improvements in the music curriculum and introduced a lively and well-supported enrichment programme. The subject development plan and regular monitoring and review of changes indicate capacity for further improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical education enjoys a deservedly high status within the school and the local community.
- Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were well above average.
- Students achieve well because teaching is consistently good or better.
- Very good leadership and management promote the subject well and provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good relationships between staff and students assist learning.
- The marking of GCSE work does not show students clearly enough how to improve.

Commentary

137. Standards are above average by Year 9 and indicate good achievement compared with students' average standards on entry in Year 7. The GCSE examination results, in 2004, were well above average for boys and for girls. Taking account of students' prior attainment at the end of Year 9, these students achieved very well. Standards in current classes are above average for boys and girls on the general course taken by all students and broadly average on the GCSE courses taken by an above average proportion of students. Achievement is good on both courses by Year 11.

138. Standards are above average in most aspects of the syllabus in Years 7 to 9. Students are competent swimmers as seen in a swimming lesson in Year 7 and when they applied their techniques of a wide range of swimming strokes correctly in a water polo lesson in Year 9. In Year 10, students on the new course in dance reach above average standards and are achieving well. They understand the principles of choreography and their performance and presentation are of a high quality. In rugby, students learn the positions of both scrums and lineouts in the game but their skills of passing and their understanding of the use of space are underdeveloped. In the GCSE course, a few low attaining students in Year 11 have unsatisfactory attitudes and attendance and underachieve in theory and practical work. The written work of higher attaining GCSE students is well presented and serves as a good aid to revision.
139. Teaching and learning are good. Good planning of lessons ensures that students know what they have to do and the purpose and relevance of the activities. Teachers' enthusiasm and high expectations of their students encourage students to work hard and with interest. The learning support assistant provides valuable assistance to individuals and groups of students as appropriate. Teachers' good relationships with students contribute to the very positive attitudes of most students to their work. Students accept responsibility readily. They develop very good leadership skills in Years 10 and 11 through successful involvement in the Junior Sports Leaders Award. The marking of students' GCSE work is suitably frequent but does not always show students clearly how to improve their work or tell them the progress being made towards their predicted grades. Students with special educational needs integrate easily into all lessons and make good progress. Occasionally, the work lacks enough challenge to extend the highest attaining students fully. Teachers make good use of *PowerPoint* to enhance their teaching, but students do not have enough opportunities to use ICT to enhance their work in lessons.
140. Very good and enthusiastic leadership and management set a clear direction for further developments and ensure that staff share a commitment to raising standards. Monitoring of teaching is effective in sharing good practice in the department and across the school. The curriculum has been extended despite the inadequate indoor facilities, which limit the quality and range of the curriculum. A number of subjects have embraced the Sports College ethos and topics of work linked to physical education are taking place within subjects such as PSHE and business studies.
141. Very good links with primary schools ensure good continuity of the physical education curriculum and assessment procedures. Good partnership with special schools helps students from outside the school, including those with physical impairment, to access the school's physical education facilities. Students extend and enrich their work through participation in large numbers in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and participation is high. Talented students receive good extension activities through the successful Junior Athlete Education programme. A number of students have achieved success at a high level nationally, regionally, and locally. School teams are successful in a range of games. The school has gained the prestigious Sportsmark Gold Award for its commitment to physical education and sport and through the high contribution of time given by all teachers. Sporting clubs in the local community make good use of facilities and some clubs provide coaching for students in extra-curricular time to extend enrichment activities in the school.
142. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. The school's designation as a specialist Sport College reflects the high status of the subject within the school and the local community. Risk assessment procedures are now carried out properly. GCSE results continue to improve and dance has been successfully introduced at GCSE.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

This area was not a focus of the inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus of the inspection was on citizenship. **Personal, social and health education** was sampled through the scrutiny of the basic programme of work and in five lessons, in each of Years 7 to 11. The programme of work, which is taught by form teachers, visiting speakers and in occasional workshops, is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. In the lessons seen, attainment was below average and progress was unsatisfactory overall. This was because the quality of teaching varied and was unsatisfactory overall, resulting in a few students being uncooperative and displaying uninterested attitudes. However, in the Year 7 lesson, students made good progress because of good teaching that stimulated their learning.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students in Years 7 to 11 now receive lessons in citizenship.
- Students develop active citizenship through enrichment and community initiatives.
- Schemes of work are insufficiently detailed and lack meaningful assessment.
- Students are not made aware of the many good opportunities for citizenship development across the curriculum.

Commentary

143. All students in Years 7 to 11 have had dedicated citizenship lessons since the beginning of this school year. Because the majority of lessons take place in the first week of a fortnightly timetable, only two lessons, in Years 8 and 9, were seen during the inspection. Standards of attainment were below average and learning and achievement were unsatisfactory, despite satisfactory teaching. This is because students lack previously accumulated citizenship skills and many of them find it difficult to concentrate and participate sensibly in discussion and debate.
144. The school provides a good range of personal, enrichment, charity and community initiatives through which students can practise active citizenship. However, many good opportunities to explore citizenship issues in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, in geography, history, physical education and drama, are lost because their relevance to citizenship is not made explicit to students.
145. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The responsibility for both citizenship and PSHE has recently been reorganised within the wider changes in pastoral provision. There is satisfactory improvement in citizenship since the previous inspection. Despite no specialist citizenship training, the new co-ordinator has established basic provision and some planning for future development. However, at this stage, the scheme of work does not show how learning outcomes of the programmes of study will be successfully ensured, or how students should be assessed in a way that measures their achievement in the subject. Teaching and learning are not

currently monitored for quality and consistency or to promote curricular review and development.

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 AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	3	100	78	0	22	26.7	28.5
Biology	7	66	64	0	10	21.4	19.8
Business studies	3	100	75.3	33	16	40.0	25.7
Chemistry	9	78	70	11	13	24.4	23.0
Communication studies	1	100	87	100	25	50.0	32.8
Design and technology	1	100	73	0	14	20.0	24.3
Drama	1	100	87	0	20	20.0	30.9
Economics	1	100	72	0	19	30.0	25.8
English language	1	100	85	0	16	30.0	29.0
English literature	3	100	86	0	17	30.0	29.7
French	5	60	80	0	19	12.0	28.2
Geography	3	67	76	0	20	13.3	27.0
History	2	100	82	50	21	40.0	29.2
Mathematics	5	100	60	0	14	34.0	20.5
Music	2	100	80	0	17	25.0	27.5
Other social studies	5	80	68	0	15	20.0	23.2

Physics	1	100	66	0	15	20.0	22.4
Religious studies	5	80	82	20	26	28.0	31.2
Sports/PE studies	1	100	72	0	12	20.0	22.8

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	2	100	98	0	50	70.0	87.1
Biology	14	100	97	7	40	67.1	79.3
Business studies	23	100	99	44	39	85.2	81.8
Chemistry	4	100	98	75	50	90.0	85.7
Communication studies	5	100	99	80	40	96.0	83.5
Design and technology	4	100	98	25	35	75.0	77.9
Drama	9	100	99.6	44	43	88.9	85.1
Economics	7	100	99	29	54	80.0	89.8
English language	14	100	99	7	36	71.4	81.1
English literature	4	100	99	25	45	85.0	85.5
French	3	100	99	0	53	46.7	88.9
Geography	5	100	99	40	46	72.0	85.2
History	8	100	99	50	46	92.5	85.1
Mathematics	10	100	97	40	57	78.0	89.5
Other social studies	16	100	97	38	43	82.5	81.6
Physics	5	100	97	20	45	60.0	82.6
Religious studies	8	100	99	13	50	57.5	87.4
Sports/PE studies	7	100	98	29	31	74.3	75.4
Business VCE	2	50	92	0	24	20.0	67.9
Health and social care VCE	10	100	94	40	25	78.0	70.0
Travel and tourism VCE	6	100	90	0	20	63.3	64.9

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business studies	7	86	N/a	43	N/a	0	N/a
Health and social care	8	75	N/a	13	N/a	0	N/a
Leisure and tourism	4	100	N/a	75	N/a	25	N/a

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was the provision for AS/A2 courses in English language and literature. A lesson in **English literature** was also sampled. Teaching in this lesson was very good. The two Year 13 students gave presentations comparing Shakespeare's plays. They were challenged and fully involved

so that they learnt very well. Work seen is at average levels. GCE A2 examination results for 2004 matched the national average. Results declined from those in 2003, which were well above average. Work was sampled in **French** and two lessons were seen. Standards were below average and indicated satisfactory achievement in the Year 13 class in which teaching was satisfactory. Standards were above average in the Year 12 class in which good teaching helped students to make good progress.

English language and literature

Provision in English language and literature is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy lessons and make satisfactory progress.
- Teachers have good relationships with students and support them well
- Work in Year 13 is above average.
- A2 examination results have declined in recent years.

Commentary

146. Standards of work are average. Results in GCE A2 examinations for 2004 were well below the national average. Based on their GCSE results when they join the sixth form, students achieve the standards of work expected of them. However, on average they perform less well in English language and literature than in their other subjects. The work of Year 13 students is currently above average.
147. By Year 13, students have a good understanding of language, as seen in their thoughtful and perceptive commentaries on their own original writing. The best work, such as a very well crafted poetic response to Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*, is outstanding. Higher attaining students produce perceptive notes that they organise effectively. All students have good knowledge of texts. Work on *Othello* is detailed and shows good awareness of how dialogue can indicate character development. Knowledge in Year 12 is more modest and students lack confidence. Discussion in lessons is often restricted to a small number of students in the class. Essays tend to be brief, but are argued clearly and supported well with textual evidence.
148. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Recent staffing difficulties that led to frequent changes of teacher for some students now appear to have been resolved. In the best lessons, students are challenged to assume responsibility. In a very good lesson in Year 13, students gave presentations that drew parallels between different Shakespeare plays. The discussion was stimulating so that students learnt very well. Less successful lessons lack pace and make few demands of students so they make slower progress. Students have good relationships with their teachers, enjoy lessons and are very positive about the course. Marking is generally detailed and helpful. Students generally know what they must do to achieve well.
149. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The course is well organised and students are clear about examination requirements. A2 results have declined since the previous inspection, which reflects the changing and lower attainment profile of students. Even so, a sharp focus on strategies to improve all teaching to the level of the best is not evident. The course is well organised and students understand examination requirements clearly. Large numbers of students choose the subject and few students drop out during the year.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

150. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are average and sufficient for students to cope with the demands for language skills in all subjects. Students express themselves clearly when talking and communicate readily. Written work is generally well organised, appropriate and accurate. Students read a range of texts with competent understanding. History teachers provide very good support for literacy but, in general, higher attaining students are not sufficiently encouraged to read widely. Good support for developing the language of students is evident in mathematics, music and drama. Typical of this support is the help that teachers give students to develop their presentational skills, to write analytical essays and to extend the range of their vocabulary and expression. Students develop their skills in language by making good use of the learning resource centre for study and research.

MATHEMATICS

The focus of the inspection was on AS and A2 work in mathematics. Students are offered four modules in core mathematics, and two modules in either statistics or mechanics. Students having completed the Year 12 modules generally continue to study mathematics in Year 13.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are usually well above average and represent good achievement.
- Students' very good attitudes to their work assist their progress.
- Teaching is good because teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject and know how to put it across.
- A few groups are too small to allow effective interaction among students.

Commentary

151. Standards on entry to the AS/A2 courses are slightly below those found nationally. Good teaching ensures good learning with standards rising to above average by the end of Year 13.

152. A2 results in 2003 indicated well above average standards, but results in 2004 show standards below national averages. Students currently in Years 12 and 13 are attaining above average standards. Taking into account students' prior GCSE performances, achievement overall of the small number of students is good.

153. Teaching and learning are good throughout Years 12 and 13. Teachers use their thorough knowledge of the subject well to present the work imaginatively and to provide competent answers to their questions. The good teaching motivates students very well and as a result, they are enthusiastic and achieve well. Students develop very good learning skills, working independently or within small groups, as appropriate. Students' presentations are used to very good effect to reinforce their learning and to develop their problem-solving skills. A few of the mathematics groups are very small, and where this is the case, learning is inhibited a little by the lack of peer stimulation.

154. The assessment of students' work is thorough and accurate, giving students clear guidance as to how to improve. Students keep very good records of the work covered and at all times are aware of the assessment criteria and the requirements of the AS or A2 examinations.
155. Students use ICT as appropriate in creating mathematical models of real situations, and not merely as a tool for enhancing the appearance of work to be presented.
156. The good leadership and management of the department have ensured that there has been good improvement since the previous inspection and that standards obtained represent good achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

157. Most students have average standards in numeracy, which they use well to support their work across subjects. Students entering the sixth form without a grade C or above in GCSE mathematics have the suitable choice of either re-sitting GCSE to endeavour to raise their grade to C or above, or of studying the key skills course in application of number, either at level 1 or level 2, as appropriate. Teaching of both of these courses is good. Consequently, students readily acquire the skills they need to cope with the mathematical demands made to support their work in other studies.

SCIENCE

The focus of the inspection was the provision for AS/A2 courses in biology.

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A2 results are below average but represent satisfactory achievement.
- Students' attainment is tracked well using available data.
- Students' positive attitudes and behaviour assist their learning.
- A narrow range of teaching methods and insufficient resources restrict learning.

Commentary

158. A2 results in 2004 were below average. They represent satisfactory achievement compared with students' previous GCSE results. Over the past three years results have declined steadily with fewer students gaining the higher grades. AS results in 2004 were average. A good number of students take biology in the sixth form. The rate of retention is good.
159. Current standards in Year 12 are below average. Achievement at this stage indicates satisfactory achievement overall for students of all capabilities. In Year 12, most students can explain the structure of DNA and how it is used in protein synthesis. In Year 13, achievement is satisfactory on the A2 course. Students have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the process of photosynthesis and respiration. In one lesson seen, most could explain satisfactorily the effect of the human growth hormone on muscles.

160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching varies from very good to satisfactory. Teachers use their competent knowledge to plan carefully structured lessons. They make sure that students understand what they are to achieve in a given lesson. They also check throughout lessons that students have understood their work. Good relationships allow students and teachers to work well together both in and out of lessons. However, teachers do not use a wide enough range of teaching methods to involve students more actively in their learning. In most lessons, the teacher spends too long talking so that students have little time to explore their own understanding fully. The amount of practical work is satisfactory, but students do not have enough guidance about skills and understanding of techniques. Marking is inconsistent and does not always provide a clear indication of how students can improve their work. There is little use of ICT for research, for data analysis or for developing techniques in data logging. Students find the course interesting and relevant to their needs. Most produce a reasonably comprehensive set of course notes, which contributes well to their learning.
161. Satisfactory leadership and management provide a clear sense of direction and a commitment to raise standards. Assessment is good overall and students know how well they are doing. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough to raise the satisfactory teaching to that of the best. Accommodation and resources used to teach biology are unsatisfactory. Many lessons take place in ordinary classrooms and the lack of specialist equipment limits the amount of practical work that can be done.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

This area was not a focus of the inspection. Work was sampled in a Year 12 key skills lesson in **ICT** on databases. Although standards were below average, students have achieved well at this stage of the course, taking into account that many in the class did not study ICT at GCSE level. Good teaching, students' positive attitudes and effective use of self-assessment ensured good progress in the lesson.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

162. Students make generally satisfactory use of their below average skills in ICT to assist their work in subjects. Improvement in the provision of ICT in Years 7 to 11 has not yet led to improvement in ICT capability in the sixth form. Students' skills are limited, unless they have followed a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. Many use available software to assist with presentation and research. They do not generally have enough access to designated ICT hardware to support independent learning. Good use is made of ICT in a few subjects, such as business studies.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on the GCE A2/AS courses in history. Work was sampled in **geography**. Recent A2 results in geography have been just below average. The three students currently in Year 13 are working satisfactorily towards target grades above the expected national average. In the Year 13 lesson seen, teaching and learning were very good. Students were rehearsing elements of practical hydrology work completed on their recent residential field course on the River Windrush. They were guided effectively towards the writing of a scientific description of their methodology and an evaluation of its effectiveness.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work, including in AS and A2 examinations, are well above average.
- Very good teaching in Years 12 and 13 results in very good learning.
- Students are very well motivated and committed and this helps them to achieve very well.

Commentary

163. Recent A2 and AS examination results have varied from above average to very high against the national average. In 2004, they were well above average and students' achievement was good, compared with their GCSE attainment.

164. Standards of work seen on current AS and A2 courses are well above average and reflect the recent high standards in external examinations. Achievement over Years 12 and 13 is very good. This is due to very good teaching and students who are enthusiastic and capable and work hard. Students in Year 12 show good knowledge and understanding of topics covered and they use historical sources very well. The best essays are of high quality, but a few students need to apply a wider spectrum of evidence to questions posed. In Year 13, there is further development of critical analysis of historical sources. Higher attainers evaluate very effectively a range of evidence to produce well-balanced and convincing arguments. However, when writing set assignments, few students undertake independent research using a range of textbooks or magazine articles.

165. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well and thoughtfully planned and presented in a structured and focused way, so that students understand clearly what they are doing. This results in very effective learning. Lessons develop students' self-learning impressively, through discussion, group work and independent learning. Relationships are excellent, relaxed but professional and lead to high commitment to the work from students. Expectations are high and teachers challenge students to think hard, always explaining the need to subject ideas and evidence to scrutiny. Teachers show very good subject knowledge when presenting topics and when monitoring students' learning. Work is marked very well. Comments made on how assignments can be improved are very helpful to students.

166. The course is well led and very effectively managed. The provision is co-ordinated well and teachers work very well together so that their combined strengths promote very high standards. Academic support and guidance provided for students are excellent. Students do not have enough enrichment of the curriculum through visits to relevant museums and fieldwork sites. Resources are good overall. Improvement since the previous inspection is good with high standards sustained.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

The focus was on the two AS/A2 courses in design and technology. The product design course was introduced in 2003. The course in food technology has been running for several years.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results in food technology represent good achievement.
- Good teaching on both courses helps students to achieve well.
- Inadequate access to resources for ICT restricts students' opportunities.
- Very few students drop out from their chosen course because it matches their needs well.

Commentary

167. A2 results in food technology in 2004 were broadly average and showed good achievement for the four students involved. A2 results are not yet available for product design but provisional AS grades for the seven students on the course represent good achievement based on their prior attainment at GCSE.
168. In the work seen in Years 12 and 13, standards are average on both courses and indicate that students are achieving well. This is due to good teaching and the good attitude of the students themselves, who hold very positive views of both courses and the quality of teaching they receive. Students have well-developed independent learning skills and are supportive of one another. They strive hard to overcome the barrier of low attainment on entry to the sixth form, but a few students on the product design course find it difficult to make the jump from GCSE to advanced level work. This is particularly evident in coursework, which lacks the originality and unique identity seen in work of high quality. Students in Year 13 rarely look for sufficiently challenging design problems to solve, thus lowering their potential to achieve higher. The limited ICT provision for designing and making restricts standards in product design. Students in a Year 12 food technology lesson were creative when developing ideas for a new food product, following an effective analysis and evaluation of existing products on the market. Their well-organised and detailed folders of work indicate that they are making good progress throughout the course.
169. Teaching and learning on both courses are good as a result of good deployment of the experienced subject specialists. Good classroom relationships are a positive contributory factor to good achievement. Teaching groups are small. Students benefit from much individual attention and work that is matched well to their particular needs so that progress in lessons is good. The good planning of both courses and the provision of good resources and materials to support students' work help to foster students' skills of independent learning. Teachers assess work thoroughly. They provide students with good support and guidance, both oral and written, so that they understand how to improve. Students are motivated to succeed and work productively because they are made aware of the criteria for awarding marks before they begin a unit of work.
170. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new product design course adds breadth to the curriculum. A firm foundation has been laid for future development and expansion of student numbers. Food technology is a firmly established course, albeit with low numbers. There is a well co-ordinated input from several teachers. The work of the subject is reviewed and analysed but it is too early to judge the overall success of product design without any A2 results. Post-16 design and technology is a comparatively recent addition to the sixth form curriculum and was not reported previously.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus of the inspection was on art and design and music. Work was sampled in a Year 13 class studying the A2 **drama** course. Good teaching and students' very enthusiastic approach to their work on Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* helped them to make good progress. Attainment is average and indicates that achievement is good at this stage of the drama course. GCE A2 results for 2004 were above the national average.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are good independent learners and show initiative and imagination.
- Teaching is good and leads to good achievement.
- Students' written notes are not precise enough to do justice to their ideas.

Commentary

171. In 2004, the AS and A2 examination results were below average for the small number of candidates. However, achievement was good given students' standards on entry to the courses. Standards were similar in 2003 when more students took the subject.
172. There is a good increase in the numbers of students taking art and design in the present Years 12 and 13. Standards are average in both years, with over half the students in Year 13 on course to gain A/B grades and approximately a third in Year 12 at similar levels. All work is highly individual and shows good creativity and imagination. Students have good skills in drawing and painting and work seriously to achieve a detailed finish on their final pieces. They use a wide range of materials imaginatively and work confidently in two and three dimensions. They use ICT effectively for research and to manipulate images to create dramatic effects, especially in work on the theme of 'Self' in Year 12. This work extends their knowledge and understanding of the power of composition and the use of colour. Students' written notes are often too long and do not focus on the key features that inspire developments within their topics. Students are mature and serious, with good interest in the subject that contributes to their success.
173. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good expertise across a range of art forms that they use effectively to widen students' experiences. Students receive good individual guidance and inspiration that help them to explore their ideas in personal ways. Teachers encourage and enable all students to experiment boldly. They show them how to research well to expand their ideas and aspirations. Assessment is good and includes self-assessment using the examination criteria. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by considering the creative and emotional aspects of the themes studied, particularly in the theme of 'Self'. Students have a good understanding of how to use symbols and imagery effectively to convey ideas about themselves.
174. The very good, new leadership and management have produced new, detailed schemes of work that help students to focus closely on set topics. Year 12 students already value the closer guidance and specific focus provided in given themes. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The good features in teaching and achievement remain and development planning has improved considerably.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management are promoting good improvement in music.
- Students achieve well because they respond positively to good teaching.
- Resources are inadequate for the increasing number of students.

Commentary

175. In 2004, there were no A2 candidates, but the small number taking the AS examination gained average results that indicated satisfactory achievement. There are now three students in Year 12 and seven students in Year 13. Their entry standards were below average because they experienced poor music provision in Years 7 to 9 and in only two cases continued music to GCSE level in Years 10 and 11. All students in Year 13 have below average AS results, largely because of inadequate prior learning. Current attainment in Year 12 is varied and below average overall. Standards in Year 13 are average. The majority of students are good performers.
176. Teaching and learning are good in Years 12 and 13. Students' good achievement by Year 13 is promoted by their positive responses to the good teaching. All three teachers have high levels of subject expertise, performing ability, experience and complementary specialisms. Their rigorous and demanding teaching challenges students and promotes skills and processes that equip them for successful independent study and problem solving. Students work hard and productively to complete the work set because they are determined to do well. Resources, particularly ICT software for music, compact discs and acoustic instruments, are inadequate to support the growing number of students.
177. Good leadership and management are improving provision in music and students' opportunities. Good teaching, informative assessment systems and enrichment activities in which students gain from exercising responsibilities are leading to increased numbers choosing to study music and better retention rates. Regular monitoring, evaluation and review are ensuring that students continue to raise standards. Year 13 students expressed considerable satisfaction with the good improvement in the subject. The sixth form music students enhance the standards of performance activities and provide good role models for younger students.
178. The previous inspection report indicated that the unsatisfactory progress of a very small number of sixth form students was due to low standards in music theory and poor teaching and learning. Previous examination results were generally very low. Improvement since the previous inspection is good and standards and achievement are rising.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus of the inspection was the AS/A2 course in sports studies.

Sports studies

Provision in sports studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In 2004, students achieved well in the A2 examinations.

- Good teaching motivates students to work hard and to achieve well.
- Students' very good attitudes to their work enhance learning.
- Marking is often insufficiently informative for students.

Commentary

179. A2 results in 2004 were average. All students gained a pass grade and, considering their prior GCSE attainment, achieved well. In the lessons observed and the scrutiny of students' work in Years 12 and 13, standards are average. Students take pride in their written work and presentation is very good.
180. Students in Year 13 demonstrate a very good knowledge of energy systems in anatomy and physiology and they understand the role of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) in aerobic exercise. They know that carbohydrates produce glycogen, which can be stored as energy. In Year 12, students understand the effect that the media has on spectators of sport. They know that rules have changed in sports and that the introduction of limited-over and one-day cricket matches has proved popular, especially on satellite television.
181. Teaching and learning are good. The very good attitudes of students to their work and their very good relationships with the teachers help to ensure that lessons proceed at pace and progress is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to enthuse and inform the students. Lesson planning is good and teachers are confident and competent in the use of *PowerPoint* to enhance their presentations. Marking of work is regular but not rigorous enough. Work is not always graded and students report that they often do not know the progress they are making. There are few comments that show students how to improve.
182. Enrichment activities for sixth formers take place on one afternoon in the week but a few students do not take part in a recreation or sporting activity. The two-week timetable means that students are committed to lessons in other subjects on alternate weeks and are unable to participate on a regular basis in the enrichment physical education activities. Many students participate in the Community Sports' Leaders Award that helps them to extend their leadership skills and to exercise responsibility. This course makes a valuable contribution to the personal development of these students.
183. Very good leadership and management motivate teachers and students to raise standards. Best use is made of teachers' expertise on the AS/A2 courses and the number of students on present courses has increased.

BUSINESS

The focus of the inspection was the AS/A2 courses in business education.

Business studies

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A2 results in 2004 for the large number of candidates were above average and indicated very good achievement.
- Very good teaching and very good relationships between students and teachers result in very good learning.

- Students' very good attitudes and good support from teachers assist very good achievement.
- Not enough use is made of local business links and work-related learning opportunities.

Commentary

184. Business studies is a popular subject and 23 students sat the A2 examination in 2004. Recent examination results have been above average on the AS and A2 courses. Most students achieve above or well above expected levels based on prior attainment. Students do better in business studies than in most of their other subjects. The retention rate on the course is high.
185. Standards of work on the current AS course in Year 12 are above average. On the A2 course in Year 13, standards are well above average. Achievement is very good overall in relationship to prior GCSE attainment. This is due to teaching of high quality and students' very positive attitudes to their study. There is no significant difference between the standards of work seen of male and female students. Students in Year 12 have made a very good start to their course and are coping well with challenging work. A strength of the AS and A2 courses is the emphasis placed on independent study-based enquiry and the use of case studies to illustrate concepts. The best independent studies in Year 13 are of very high quality, with students applying knowledge and understanding of business theory very well in their evaluations. Critical analysis is progressively and well developed over Years 12 and 13, but few students make use of reading around the subject. Graphical work is well integrated within topics taught, but is not used enough in students' assignments.
186. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In lessons, teachers' very good subject knowledge underpins presentation and discussion and lends clarity to the explanations provided. Teaching is well planned so that students of different capabilities make very good progress in lessons. Very good rapport between students and teachers results in productive learning. Lessons have clear purpose, good pace and appropriately high expectations so that students are well motivated and work hard. A few Year 12 students find theoretical aspects of the course very challenging and technical terms difficult to understand. Students have good opportunities to contribute to discussion and to develop ideas and most do so very well. Lessons do not always make enough use of visual materials or group work to add variety and to consolidate learning. The assessment of students' work is good. The marking of work assignments is thorough and students find this particularly helpful in identifying areas for improvement.
187. Leadership of the course is good and management very effective. Curricular planning is good but there is need to enrich the curriculum further with more links with local industry and the inclusion of an element of work-related learning. Resources are satisfactory, but ICT facilities are inadequate to support independent study. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

This area was not a focus of the inspection. Two lessons in **health and social care** were sampled. In a Year 12 lesson very good teaching promoted lively interaction between the teacher and students, leading to very good learning. Students became very knowledgeable about the range of initiatives that governments can use to promote health education. In the Year 13 lesson, excellent one-to-one teaching led to a clear understanding of how to plan a biological research module and how to produce work leading to the highest grades. VCE examination results in health and social care were above average in the past two years and represent very good achievement, compared with students' prior GCSE results.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

This area was not a focus of the inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	5
How inclusive the school is		4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	5
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	5
Overall standards achieved		5
Students' achievement	3	5
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		4
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	4
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	3	5
How well students learn	3	5
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for students	4	4
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	3
The leadership and management of the school		5
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		4
The leadership of other key staff	4	4
The effectiveness of management	4	5

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