

INSPECTION REPORT

WALLINGTON COUNTY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Wallington, Surrey

LEA area: Sutton

Unique reference number: 103014

Headteacher: Dr J M Haworth

Lead inspector: Mr M Pavey

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 January 2005

Inspection number: 269000

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar (selective)
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Male. Girls in the sixth form.
Number on roll:	882
School address:	Croydon Road Wallington Surrey
Postcode:	SM6 7PH
Telephone number:	020 8647 2235
Fax number:	020 8254 7921
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Roger O'Neill
Date of previous inspection:	25.1.1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wallington County Grammar School is a selective grammar school for boys, with a mixed sixth form, in the London Borough of Sutton. There are 629 boys in Years 7-11 and the sixth form has 208 boys and 45 girls. The school draws its pupils from a wide area. Entry is by a competitive examination. Attainment on entry is overall well above the national average, though the attainment of some pupils is above average and a few are around the average level. The school aims to provide a traditional grammar school education, with an emphasis on academic excellence and all-round development.

Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Parents are very supportive of the school. Entitlement to free school meals, at 2 per cent, is well below average. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs (SEN) is well below average, and there are currently no pupils with statements of SEN. Around 55 per cent of pupils come from White heritage backgrounds, with a further 25 per cent from Asian backgrounds, the majority Indian. Pupils from Black, Mixed and other backgrounds are well represented in the school. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English, 25 per cent, is high. Almost all Year 11 pupils continue in full-time education, mostly in the school's sixth form. Some 20 pupils join the sixth form each year from other schools. Almost all sixth formers go into higher education on leaving the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has grown by over 100 pupils. Growth has been greatest in the sixth form, which has included girls since 1999. The school became a specialist science college in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17650	M Pavey	Lead inspector	Special educational needs
9724	Mrs B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector	
8864	P Clifton	Team inspector	Science
8139	Mrs B Johnstone	Team inspector	Music
12179	L Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education, citizenship
16950	Dr C Orr	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
33711	M Hird	Team inspector	Mathematics
10666	Mrs P Wheeler	Team inspector	Economics in the sixth form
20497	Dr V Williams	Team inspector	Geography
1782	A Lyons	Team inspector	Design technology
1085	J Laver	Team inspector	Physical education
12121	J Mallinson	Team inspector	History
3731	W Robson	Team inspector	English
17015	L Denholm	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
31688	B McGonagle	Team inspector	Art

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with some excellent features. These features include very high examination results, excellent relationships, first rate support for pupils, and the Headmaster's very clear vision and purpose for his school. Teaching and pupils' achievement are very good. Leadership and management by all key staff are very good. **The school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make very good progress in their work and results at all levels are very high.
- Support and guidance for pupils are excellent. Teachers assess pupils' work very well.
- The Headmaster and senior team lead the school very well.
- Relationships, including harmony between pupils of different heritage backgrounds and the inclusion of all pupils in the opportunities the school makes available, are excellent.
- Pupils have a strong desire to learn. Their behaviour and attitudes are very good.
- Provision in design and technology (DT) is poor, particularly in its accommodation, resources and curriculum.
- Teaching is very good overall, though further improvements could be made in Years 7-11 and in design and technology.
- Major deficiencies in accommodation affect achievement in DT, physical education (PE), and to some extent music. The school is generally short of space, particularly for the library and sixth form private study. It has sought the improvements it urgently needs, for many years.
- Links with parents are very good. Parents greatly support their children's education.
- Opportunities to join in extra-curricular activities, especially sport, music and drama, are very good.
- The curriculum in DT is not meeting statutory requirements in Years 7-9, and the school is not providing the required daily act of collective worship.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 has been good. Though no progress has been made in improving DT, the school has further raised its results and has improved other aspects of the curriculum.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is very good. Standards in tests and examinations are very high at all levels, compared with the national average. The category of A* means that results for this school are very high, and so in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Pupils make very good progress in their work and achieve higher results than predicted from their standards at the start of each stage of their education. Pupils make good progress over Years 7-9. They benefit from this good start and make very good progress over Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form.

In English, results are very high, both in tests and examinations. Pupils achieve very well, making rapid and confident progress in all years. Standards of literacy across the school are very high. In mathematics, results and standards of work are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Across the curriculum, competence in numeracy is very good. In science, standards in tests and examinations are very high and pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils' skill in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is often very good. Pupils use ICT extensively in their independent learning and work of exceptional quality was seen in several subjects.

The development of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attitudes and behaviour are very good in Years 7-11 and excellent in the sixth form. At all stages, pupils are very keen to learn and enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers and each other. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of learning provided is very good. Teaching is very good. Other leading strengths include very good extra-curricular activities, excellent provision for the welfare and guidance of pupils, and very good links with parents and the community. Accommodation is the only weakness, and this significantly affects learning in DT, PE, and to some extent music.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. Leadership is very good; management from all key staff is very good also; governance of the school is good.

Governors lead the school very well, in almost all respects. However, there are two areas in which they have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements. The Headmaster and senior team lead and manage very well. The Headmaster has an excellent vision and sense of purpose for his school. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. Leadership and management by all key staff are very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. Views at the parents' meeting before the inspection were very positive. In their questionnaire returns, parents were very positive about most aspects of the school. A very high proportion felt their child was making good progress, the school was approachable, teaching was good and expectations high. Parents felt that leadership and management were good and that their children received support and encouragement. A minority did not feel well informed and considered the range of activities to be limited. In fact, inspectors have found both these items to be very good.

Pupils strongly felt that this was a good school to be at and that teaching was good. A minority felt that their peers did not behave well and that bullying existed. During the inspection, pupils consulted were very positive about all aspects of the school, and felt that any bullying was well handled. Inspectors found behaviour to be very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve accommodation, resources and the curriculum in DT,
- continue to press for long overdue improvements in accommodation, so that the school can offer an adequately wide curriculum in DT and PE, and improved facilities in music, the library and sixth form private study,
- continue to develop initiatives in teaching and learning in Years 7-11, with an emphasis on better participation by pupils in lessons and how best to sum up learning and progress at the end of lessons,

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure the curriculum in DT meets requirements in Years 7-9, and
- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

SIXTH FORM SUMMARY REPORT

There are 253 students in the sixth form, 208 boys and 45 girls, who follow courses at advanced level. Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is very effective and gives students a very good quality of education. Results of courses at A2-level have improved markedly in recent years. They are very high compared to other schools. Students achieve very well. Teaching is very good, and enables both boys and girls to learn very well. The support, advice and guidance that students receive are excellent. Leadership of the sixth form is very good and it is very well managed. The quality of education has improved since the last inspection, with a wider range of courses as well as improved results. The sixth form is cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Results have improved markedly, with a greater percentage of A-B grades.
- Students achieve very well because of very good teaching.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are both excellent.
- The support and guidance given to students are excellent.
- Leadership and management are very good.

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	English literature. Excellent. Teaching is very good. Students' excellent attitudes lead to very high achievement. French. Very good. Teaching is vigorous and demanding. Students learn very well as a result.
Mathematics	Mathematics. Very good. Teaching and learning are good, and students achieve very well.
Science	Chemistry. Very good. Teaching and learning are both very good. Students achieve very well.
Information communication technology	and Computer studies. Good. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well.
Humanities	Geography. Very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Students achieve very well and reach very high standards. History. Very good. Teaching and learning are good. Achievement is very good. Standards reached in examinations are well above average. Religious studies. Very good. Overall, teaching is very good. Standards in examination groups are well above average. Students achieve very well.
Visual and performing arts and media	Art. Good. Teaching and learning are very good. Students achieve very well over the two years.

Hospitality, sports, **Physical education. Good.** Students achieve above average leisure and travel standards in response to good teaching.

Business **Economics. Very good.** Teaching and learning are both very good, and students achieve 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 advice and guidance given to students are excellent. They are detailed and relevant to their needs at this stage. Students receive excellent support and perceptive advice with their work on a very regular basis, which helps them to achieve very well. The advice and guidance that they receive on further study opportunities are excellent, both in choosing courses and in how to apply for them. Preparation for this next stage is detailed and effective. Students' progress and attendance are monitored very efficiently.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership of the sixth form is very good and it is managed very well. The size of the sixth form has increased as well as the range of courses available to students. Very good direction - well informed, positive and detailed - ensures very good attitudes to learning. As a result of this, students learn and achieve very well.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students enjoy life in the sixth form and find their studies there both challenging and demanding. They appreciate the encouragement to work hard and do well which pervades the school. Students value the advice, support and guidance that they are given to this end, but some of them would like more opportunities to express their views.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Note:

Attainment answers the question, 'how high are standards?' This means the actual standards pupils have reached, when compared with the national average in tests and examinations. It is also used to explain the average level expected nationally on entry to the school, or the level of work seen during an inspection.

Achievement answers the question, 'are standards for individual pupils high enough?' This means the level pupils have reached, based on the progress they have made in relation to how capable they are.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in tests and examinations are very high, compared with the national average. Pupils and students achieve very well overall, making very good progress in their work and achieving higher results than predicted from their standards at the start of each stage of their education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work seen are well above average at all levels of the school, reflecting the very high examination results attained in recent years.
- Overall, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in their work.
- Attainment in the key skills of literacy is very high; in numeracy and ICT, attainment is well above average.
- Pupils achieve much higher results than expected from their starting points; in other words, the value added by the school is well above average.

Commentary

1. When pupils join the school, their attainment is above or well above the national average, though for a small number attainment is around the national average. Overall, attainment is well above average, but the spread of ability is relatively wide. The school accepts pupils in the top 25 per cent of the ability range, but the existence of other grammar and independent schools in the area means that the local availability of a grammar school education is not unduly restrictive.

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

Note: School results for 2004 are provisional. National results for 2004 have not yet been confirmed.

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	43.3 (43.1)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	46.8 (47.2)	n/a (35.4)
science	43.8 (44.3)	n/a (33.6)

There were 120 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in 2003 were very high in relation to the national average. They were well above average when compared with the attainment of pupils with a similar starting point when they joined Year 7 in other schools. In recent years, the school has achieved much higher results for these pupils in their Year 9 tests than expected from their starting points; in other words, its value added has been well above average. In both 2002 and 2003 the school was ranked in the top 25 schools nationally for the value it added at this stage, and unvalidated results in 2004 suggest a similar outcome. A national league table in 2002 ranked the school 7th nationally, and the school was ranked 23rd nationally in 2003. Over recent years, results in these tests have been rising faster than the national trend. Provisional results in 2004 were also very high and were well above average when compared with other selective schools.
3. Standards of work seen in Years 7-9 during the inspection were well above average and pupils' achievement was good overall; they were making rapid, assured progress. Helped by very good attitudes and behaviour, and by excellent use of homework, pupils consolidated their learning well, learnt new material rapidly and made progress at a good pace.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	99 (99)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	54.3 (55.3)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 119 pupils in the year group. The national percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. GCSE results in 2003 were very high, compared with all schools nationally. They were well above average, compared with those achieved by pupils beginning Year 10 with a similar starting point in other schools. The school was given national Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2002, the last year these awards were made. The value added by the school over the GCSE years was above average. GCSE results in 2004 were also very high, compared with the national average. They were above average, compared with those of pupils with a similar starting point. GCSE results over recent years have been rising faster than the national trend. In 2004, five pupils gained 12 A* passes in GCSE, a considerable achievement. The value added to pupils' results over their five years in the school to 2004 was well above average. The school has received confirmation that it is in the top 25 per cent of schools nationally in 2004 for the value it adds over these five years.
5. Standards of work seen in Years 10-11 during the inspection were also well above average. Pupils' achievement over the GCSE years was very good overall; pupils had profited from the very secure foundations established in Year 7-9, and were now able to make very rapid progress in the majority of subjects. Their very good attitudes and behaviour continued, now further supported by the diligent and confident work habits they had acquired and the excellent relationships they enjoyed with their teachers.
6. In English, results are very high, both in tests and examinations. Pupils are fluent, articulate speakers and read with excellent understanding. They have a ready command of different styles of writing. They achieve very well, making rapid and confident progress in all years.

Standards of literacy across the school are very high. Pupils handle language easily and often with pleasure. In mathematics, results and standards of work are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Pupils grasp concepts readily and apply them readily in all areas of the subject. Across the curriculum, competence in numeracy is very good. In science, standards in tests and examinations are very high. By the end of Year 9, a high proportion of pupils is working at levels well beyond that expected. GCSE results are very high. In all years, pupils make excellent use of number skills and show very high levels of commitment. Overall, their achievement is very good. Pupils' skills in the use of ICT across the curriculum are often very good, though the chance to make use of them varies between subjects. Pupils use ICT extensively in their independent learning, often at home, and work of exceptional quality was seen in several subjects.

7. There are seven pupils on the school's register of those with SEN, and there are currently no pupils with statements. Very few pupils are primarily on this register for learning difficulties. The progress of these pupils is carefully monitored. They achieve equally well as all other pupils. The same is true for gifted and talented pupils. The school has identified a substantial number of these pupils, who make rapid, assured progress, often achieving very good results in their tests and examinations.
8. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is very good. They join with English skills below those of other pupils, but in 2004 EAL pupils obtained better average point scores in GCSE examinations than all other pupils. They generally catch up the others in English by about Year 10.
9. The school analyses its test and examination results very carefully for the performance of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. There is little difference in the performance of pupils from different groups in the Year 9 tests. There is some evidence that pupils from Black Caribbean backgrounds do less well in GCSE than other groups. The school is looking closely at ways to encourage higher performance from this group, and has noted that pupils from Indian and Chinese backgrounds generally perform rather better than any other group.
10. The school has set very demanding targets for Year 9 test and GCSE performance, aiming for 100 per cent success in the various measures required. It virtually achieved these levels in 2003 and was not far off in 2004. It has maintained these demanding targets for 2005, and has the clear ability to maintain its existing very high standards.

Standards achieved in the sixth form

11. Results in the A2-level examinations have improved markedly over recent years. The percentage of A-B grades has risen from 40 in 2001 to 66 in 2004, and the average points score has risen considerably as well. In 2003, results were very high in comparison with all schools, for both boys and girls. They were very high in 2004 also; the performance of boys was very high and that of girls well above average. No particular differences were seen in the performance of students from different heritage backgrounds.
12. During the inspection, students were achieving very well overall in their work in the 11 subjects focused on. Their achievement was excellent in English. As in their GCSE years, students were making very good use of their secure knowledge and skills, helped by excellent relationships with their teachers. They were keen to master new subjects and to get good results. The fact that virtually all go into higher education, many to prestigious universities, reflects their achievement in the sixth form. It also reflects the ethos of hard work and high expectations which almost all parents report in their questionnaires.
13. Students with EAL achieve very well also, and a minority achieve more highly than other students. In 2004, 36 EAL students in Year 12 obtained better average point scores than all other students in AS examinations; and 16 EAL students in Year 13 obtained better average point scores than all other students in A2 examinations.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	99.3 (98.9)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	58.8 (60.6)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per pupil	409.5 (412.8)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 116 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

14. Improvement at all levels in results and achievement has been good since the last inspection. Results have risen in all tests and examinations, particularly at A2-level. At all stages also, the school now adds considerable value to pupils' and students' results, and so to the benefits they gain by attending this school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The main qualities reported in this section are all very good - attendance, punctuality, attitudes, behaviour and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very strong desire to learn and are prepared to work hard.
- Standards of behaviour are consistently high.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers, as well as among pupils, are excellent.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mix together easily so that the school functions as a very harmonious community.

Commentary

15. Pupils are very willing to play an active part in the school. They readily involve themselves in lessons, exchange ideas and learn from each other. Pupils are highly motivated. They have a strong desire to learn and are prepared to work hard to get the results they want. This hard work extends beyond classroom lessons to work done at home. The school expects pupils to show a high level of commitment to their studies. It is pupils' very positive attitudes in response to this expectation which leads to very good achievement. Pupils' interests are not just confined to their studies. They enjoy taking part in the many other activities offered by the school. Pupils interviewed were enthusiastic about the school's sporting prowess. Relationships among pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are excellent. This is an important factor in helping pupils do well. The school functions as a harmonious and homogenous community. Pupils from many ethnic backgrounds are well integrated throughout the school and mix easily in lessons and for social activities.
16. Standards of behaviour are consistently very good, both in lessons and as boys move around the school. They can be lively, and energetic, but still behave with friendly courtesy. There were no permanent exclusions last year and the fixed term exclusion rate is low. Action to reduce bullying is given a high profile. Cases do occur, but pupils interviewed were confident that these would be reported and that they would be dealt with.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	460	12	0
White – any other White background	14	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	70	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	28	1	0
Black or Black British – African	48	1	0

Chinese	31	1	0
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The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

17. Personal development is very good overall. Within this area, spiritual and cultural provision are good; moral and social provision are very good. The formal assemblies provide corporate unity and make a strong contribution to all strands of this provision. However, they are held only twice weekly. Specific planning to include opportunities for spiritual development in lessons was rarely seen (except where included in the syllabus, as in RE), yet pupils are developing well spiritually. All departments are expected to reflect the aims and values of the school in lessons. Pupils explore moral issues willingly and express their views clearly. Members of staff provide consistently good role models. Pupils' high standards of behaviour and excellent relations with each other and with staff are testimony to successful social provision. The personal, social and health education programme extends pupils' moral and social development successfully. The house system, team games, drama and music productions also play a highly significant part in pupils' personal development; they provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop socially through taking responsibility and working together. In lessons and in extra-curricular events there is good provision for the development of Western culture and an increasing awareness of the many other cultures represented in the school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.1
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.

18. Pupils' attendance is very good. At 95 per cent in 2003/2004, it was well above the national median. Unauthorised absence is low. Nonetheless, the school monitors attendance very efficiently and sets high targets. Attendance for the autumn term 2004 improved further to 97.3 per cent. Punctuality is very good, especially at the start of lessons.

Attitudes and values in the sixth form

19. Sixth form students have very good attendance and are punctual. Their attitudes and behaviour are both excellent. Students are exceptionally well motivated, with a strong desire to succeed and to do as well as they can. They value the encouragement to work hard and respond with diligence. Personal development in the sixth form is very good, both in provision and outcome. Students are articulate and mature young adults who readily accept responsibility for their own work and for helping others in the school and the wider community. For example, their invaluable role as prefects gives them very good opportunities for such responsibility and service. These attributes all contribute to students' very good achievement.
20. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its very high standards of personal development, at all levels. Attendance, attitudes and behaviour were already considered very good in the last inspection and have remained so. Most aspects of personal development have improved.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is very good. Particular strengths include teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, the welfare and guidance of pupils, and the school's links with parents and

the community. Accommodation is the only weakness, and this significantly affects learning in DT, PE, and to some extent music.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers assess pupils' work very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very effective in all years.
- The quality of what teachers provide outside lessons, particularly homework and extra teaching, makes teachers' good performance in lessons into very good teaching overall.
- Pupils learn very well. They have a great desire to learn and make very good use of the opportunities they receive.
- Teachers assess pupils' work very well, giving them a very good understanding of how to improve.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunity to work independently in lessons.
- Teaching for pupils who have EAL is very effective.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 164 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
10 (6%)	51 (31%)	63 (39%)	36 (22%)	4 (2%)	0	0

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

21. Overall, teaching is very good, so that pupils learn very well and make very good progress in their work. This leads to the very good results the school obtains and the considerable extra value it adds to pupils' attainment at all levels.
22. Teaching and learning are very good in English, science, modern languages, geography and religious studies. They are good in all other subjects, but unsatisfactory in design and technology. The school provides courses in classical studies in Year 7 and in economics in Years 10-11. These subjects were not inspected in the main school, though an excellent lesson in classical studies was seen, with first-rate teaching and an excellent response from pupils. An analysis of pupils' work in economics in Year 11 reveals that standards are well above average and achievement is very good; this indicates that teaching and learning are very good.
23. Teaching and learning have many strengths. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects. They have an easy command of detail and a very good overview of the significance of what they teach. They have very good expectations of what their pupils will do and the level of work they will accept from them. They encourage pupils very well, often with good humour and with excellent relationships in the classroom. Pupils respond with very good behaviour and with excellent productivity. They acquire knowledge and understanding very well. Teachers give everyone very good opportunity to achieve well, and pupils from every background make equally rapid, confident progress.
24. There are no weaknesses in the overall quality of teaching, but there is one area for further development. Much teaching seen during the inspection was instructional. Teachers made good use of time to teach complex material and to test pupils' recall and understanding of what they had been taught. Opportunities for pupils to join in lessons as fully as they might were sometimes limited. For example, teachers sometimes invited pupils to discuss and come up with solutions, but did not give them enough opportunity to present their views thoroughly and to question each other. Behaviour is so good that teachers can afford to give pupils more freedom to work things out for themselves and to be responsible for their

conclusions. Teachers have made some progress in developing the plenary session at the end of long double lessons. Introductions are often excellent and tasks very appropriate, but chances for pupils to sum up what they have learned, speculate on its significance and suggest how their learning can be developed further are not often well provided. The school has provided very good training for teachers in just this area, and good results were sometimes apparent.

25. Nevertheless, pupils have a good capacity to work independently, because so much individual learning takes place outside the formal lesson. Teachers make excellent use of homework, and pupils respond with very good written work, which often shows rapid progress in knowledge and technique. In turn, teachers mark and assess this work very well. They often make detailed written comments, and pupils are in no doubt that their work will be carefully assessed and commented on. Teachers are very good in making accurate and helpful spoken assessments of pupils' work as well. They are tireless in running extra groups, catch-up classes, societies and expeditions, all of which add greatly to the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning. Teachers and pupils benefit from the school's extremely high expectations of the calibre of work and behaviour, and of the careful and supportive guidance which teachers and tutors give their pupils. The Headmaster's first rate expectations of academic standards gives the context for very good teaching and successful learning.
26. The teaching of pupils with SEN and of gifted and talented pupils is very good. These pupils make rapid progress, in line with all other pupils. The English department provides very good extra teaching support for EAL pupils, in a variety of contexts. For example, in Years 7 and 8, identified EAL students have small group and one-to-one tuition after school on Fridays. In Year 9, there are extra classes in preparation for the national tests. Pupils entering the school in Years 10 and 11 are given one-to-one support from a specialist teacher. Lists of EAL pupils are sent to all heads of departments for distribution to teachers. All teachers are advised to structure lessons appropriate to the needs of EAL pupils. The level of awareness among teachers of the needs of the EAL pupils and students is high.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form

27. Teaching is very good and students learn very well, making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding of often complex material. Teachers' very good command of their subjects allows them to teach with good pace and very good expectation and challenge. No time is wasted and students are expected to master new material rapidly. Helped by the very good training they have had in their earlier years, students in this school accept this rapid pace and thrive on it. Students joining the sixth form from other schools sometimes need more help to make best use of the lessons. Teachers assess students' work very well. Excellent relationships with students lead to very good interaction between teachers and students, and so to very constructive spoken assessment of work. Written comments are often very careful and constructive.
28. Since the last inspection, improvement in teaching and learning throughout the school has been good. The proportion of very good teaching has much increased and unsatisfactory teaching remains minimal.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities in Years 7-11, and a very good range in the sixth form. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of after-school activities, including extra help in subjects and the extensive sports and cultural programmes, is a strength of the curriculum.

- Deficiencies in accommodation affect standards in design technology, physical education, and to some extent in music.
- The curriculum for design technology does not meet statutory requirements in Years 7-9.
- The sixth form curriculum is very well designed for the needs of its students.
- The school is developing its curriculum well. Recent initiatives have very good potential.

Commentary

29. Overall, the curriculum is good in the main school. It has many strengths, including a good range of subjects for these pupils, with separate courses in physics, chemistry and biology, and the opportunity to learn both French and German. Courses in economics and statistics in Years 10-11 increase choice at this level. However, there are defects as well, caused by poor accommodation in DT, PE and music. Space for DT is far too limited for the presentation of a good curriculum in this subject, and statutory requirements are not met in Years 7-9. Very inadequate indoor provision for PE limits the range of activities possible. Although there is extensive music tuition, there are no practice rooms, nor are there suitable spaces for groups to perform.
30. There are many other positive features. Pupils with SEN are well provided for, and there is a good programme for gifted and talented pupils. Registers for both groups are carefully made and maintained. There is a very good range of activities for abler pupils, and the school has registered a large number of pupils with the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. However, more work is needed to enrich the curriculum in all subjects with such activities, so that all can benefit. EAL pupils have full access to the National Curriculum in all subjects.
31. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE). All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, though the deficiencies mentioned above mean that some aspects of DT and PE cannot be provided. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for their next stage of education, both in the range of subjects offered and the levels of instruction given.
32. Development of the curriculum is good, and current initiatives have very good potential. Already, there have been many positive improvements as the result of the school's recent status as a science college, for example in the improved contacts with primary schools. The school has taken advantage of the flexibility now allowed to introduce a condensed curriculum in Years 7-9, though it will be some time before its benefits take full effect. It has made very good use of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy to give focus to its initiatives in training for improved teaching and learning.
33. There is no daily act of collective worship for all pupils, though good assemblies take place twice a week. The curriculum in DT in Years 7-9 does not meet statutory requirements in a number of important ways. These are discussed in the report on this subject, in paragraphs 117-122.
34. Support for learning outside normal lessons is very good. Teachers provide a great range of extra tuition in subjects, for example in lunchtime and after-schools groups, clubs, generous individual help wherever it is needed, and in the help which older students and pupils give to younger pupils with their work. All this amounts to a considerable programme of extra teaching, and a great asset to the curriculum. Participation in sport is very good. The school has a proud tradition of team fixtures, often playing as many as ten teams on a Saturday morning. Many teachers support this programme, and in this way extend the companionship with pupils which is so strong an asset to their teaching. Drama and music programmes are very good also; there are many productions and concerts. A wide range of other activities supports the main curriculum and helps pupils learn very well; teachers make very good use of London, and there are frequent expeditions abroad.

35. Teachers are well matched to the curriculum. A notable feature is the number of highly experienced teachers who elect to return to the classroom in this school. There are not many support staff, but these are effective. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Accommodation, as mentioned above, is unsatisfactory, and is having a negative impact on the quality of education in DT, PE and to some extent in music. The accommodation which exists in these subjects is very sub-standard; the gym was condemned in 1941 and DT and music exist in prefabricated 'HORSA' huts – 'hutting operation for the raising of the school leaving age' - in the 1940s and 1950s, and long dismantled and forgotten in most schools. The school is generally short of space, and usage of science laboratories is over 90 per cent, with several lessons held in other rooms. The library is small for the size of the school. The range of books is limited at present, following a major revision of stock, but computers have been installed, and are well used and supervised. Departments have their own subject libraries.

The curriculum in the sixth form

36. The curriculum in the sixth form is very good. It is well designed for the students served by the school, with a good range of 22 AS and A2 level courses. These include additional subjects such as classical civilisation, both economics and business studies, further mathematics, philosophy, sport and physical education, Latin, media studies and critical thinking. The curriculum is very well supported by good programmes of PSHE and excellent advice and preparation for higher education or employment. There is an extensive programme of general studies, leading to an A2-level qualification. An activities afternoon is provided for sports, social service and other pursuits. As in the main school, there are very good programmes of sports, music and drama, and of extra help with subjects. There is a very wide range of activities, visits and expeditions.
37. As reported above, teachers are well matched to the curriculum and resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Several classrooms are small. Sixth formers use the library for private study, as there is nowhere else for them to work during the school day. The school copes well with this restriction, making good arrangements for younger pupils to use the library.
38. Improvement in the curriculum across the school since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Problems with the allocation of time for subjects have been solved. However, the narrow curriculum in DT remains a problem, caused by the accommodation issues described above and reported in the same terms in 1999. Governors have had no success, despite many efforts, in getting these defects remedied. This is highly disappointing in the light of the comments made in the previous report and the detrimental effect which poor accommodation is having on the curriculum and pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Standards of care are high. Pupils receive excellent advice, support and guidance. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The support and guidance given to pupils is excellent and helps them to do as well as they can.
- Standards of care are very high because teachers know pupils well and use their knowledge very effectively.
- Induction procedures for new pupils are excellent and help them settle in easily.
- A few younger pupils need extra help to organise their homework routines, to ensure that they do not spend too long doing it.
- Sixth form students are given excellent advice, support and guidance.
- Some sixth formers would like more opportunities to express their views on general school matters.

Commentary

39. Standards of care in the school are very good. The pastoral structure ensures pupils are very well known to tutors and particularly the heads of year who remain with groups after Year 7 as they move through the school. The pastoral staff cites the relatively small size of year groups as a factor in the very good care which pupils receive. This is true, but these high standards are the result of concern for boys' welfare, based on the careful records kept throughout their time at the school. Child protection procedures are appropriate. Safety procedures are thorough and regularly reviewed. There is a good awareness of Internet safety. Healthy living is currently being promoted by the senior leadership team. The house system is long established and successful. It is a good focus for loyalty and competition, and enables boys of different ages to get to know each other, take responsibility and to work well together. It plays an important part in the school's rewards system.
40. Support, advice and guidance are excellent. Here again, the strength of this provision is based on the carefully maintained records, which combine all aspects of pupils' academic and personal progress during their time in the school. These are reviewed on a routine basis to monitor progress, besides providing accurate information if the need should arise. The records are used very effectively in the process of academic tutoring to help pupils establish targets for subjects and the general organisation of their work. This tutoring is done both by the pastoral teams of tutors and heads of year, and at significant points such as Years 9 and 11 by members of the senior team. Procedures to involve pupils in evaluating their own progress and setting targets to help them improve are highly effective. They take it very seriously. Excellent relations help too. These measures combine to provide the support that enables pupils to achieve very well.
41. The school has a long and detailed programme of induction for new pupils joining the school. It is excellent because, by giving pupils greater experience of school routines before September, they settle in quickly and are ready to start work with fewer worries. However, despite this excellent overall preparation, a few pupils still need extra help with organising homework to ensure that they do not spend too much time on it.
42. Pupils' general involvement in the school's work and development is satisfactory in the main school. They are very effectively involved in work on personal targets. They play an active part in running the houses. The school has consulted them thoroughly, in an independently conducted survey, on a wide range of issues. However, they have not yet been greatly involved in policy matters. Their main forum, the school council, has not been very active until recently, because of staffing changes. Students interviewed did not perceive it as effective, for this reason.

Care, guidance and support in the sixth form

43. The standard of care for sixth form students is very good, as it is in the main part of the school. The quality of advice, support and guidance that they receive is outstanding. They are given excellent preparatory advice before joining the sixth form. The support and guidance they receive while studying in the sixth form is also excellent and helps them achieve very well. They also receive very good guidance on their future studies or employment. Students get very good preparation for university application and interviews, which they feel contributes to their success. The retention rate in the sixth form is impressively high: hardly any students fail to complete their courses. This demonstrates the quality of advice they receive.
44. Students' involvement in school life is good in the sixth form. Prefects and other leaders of activities are well consulted and work closely with staff. They are much involved in taking decisions with teachers about the many activities they help to provide. There is just one area which students feel could be developed. Although they play an active part in evaluating their work and in helping to run activities, they do not feel they have enough opportunities at present to express their views on more general matters. The very recently reconstituted sixth form council could fill this gap.

45. The previous inspection report considered support and guidance, across the school, to be very good. These high standards have been maintained, and indeed surpassed in some areas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a very strong partnership with parents. Links with other schools and colleges as well as with the community are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a very strong partnership with parents who strongly support its work and share its aims.
- The school gives parents information of very good quality about itself and the progress their children make.
- Links with partner schools are developing very well since the school acquired science college status.

Commentary

46. The school has developed a very strong partnership with parents who actively support its work and share the same aims for their children. The school provides very good general information about itself. This applies particularly to the information available to prospective and to new parents. It is extensive, attractively produced and clearly written. The information about progress that parents receive is also very good, when considered as a whole across the academic year. The combination of reports, reviews and consultation evenings ensures that parents can follow progress very well through the years. Parents want their children to do well. They make a very good contribution to their children's learning because they expect both results and achievement, and encourage their children to work towards this end. The school makes highly effective use of ICT to keep parents informed of current events at the school.
47. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges. Arrangements for new pupils joining the school are very effective, especially as pupils come from many schools over a wide area. Since acquiring science college status last autumn, links with other schools, especially its primary and secondary partner schools, have developed apace. Projects involving mathematics and science in these schools and in the community have either started or will soon do so. Close links with a number of universities are used very well to help students choose institutions and courses and to ensure a smooth transfer.
48. Links with the community are also very good. The school makes highly effective use of the many facilities available in the London area to enrich the curriculum it offers pupils. Local organisations and individuals are actively involved in the work of the school, contributing as speakers for the PSHE programme, helping students with interview techniques or with school productions. The school ensures that it too contributes in its turn. Sixth form students are active in local voluntary work. Community projects are also part of the school's work as a science college. An electronics club is already running. An environmental project starts shortly in a neighbouring park with primary school children. There is work too with local businesses. There are many benefits from these links for both students and the community.
49. Across the school, partnership with parents is stronger than at the time of the previous inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are very good. Leadership is very good; management from all key staff is very good also; governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors lead the school very well, in almost all respects. However, there are two areas in which they have not ensured that the school meets statutory requirements.
- The Headmaster and senior team lead and manage very well. The Headmaster has an excellent vision and sense of purpose for his school.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good.
- Leadership and management by all key staff are very good.

Commentary

50. Governors give very good overall leadership. They know and care for the school very well. They champion its distinguished academic and sporting traditions, and take a very close interest in the advancement of them. Governors have a very good structure for school governance, which they have carefully reviewed and which covers all necessary aspects of their role. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They are acutely aware of the deficiencies in accommodation and have tried to have these remedied over many years. However, they have not ensured that statutory requirements are met, in two respects. First, the school is not providing a daily act of collective worship, as required. Governors consider that the existing number of assemblies, two each week for every year, is right in terms of frequency, the impression made, the need for economy of time, and the limitations of space. Second, governors have not ensured that the curriculum in DT meets requirements for pupils in Years 7-9; in this, they have been greatly hindered by the lack of progress in providing adequate accommodation for the subject.
51. The Headmaster gives an excellent sense of purpose to the school. His concern for its essential values is first rate. He has the highest expectations of teachers' and pupils' academic performance, and of the benefits which careful, academic study of demanding subjects can bring. He fosters the school's distinguished sporting traditions and its many musical and dramatic activities. He knows everyone – pupils and parents – and ensures that, in addition to its rigour, the school remains a humane and civilised place to be in. When 98 per cent of pupils say that the school is a good place to be at, they are reflecting the quality of purpose which their Headmaster gives them.
52. These qualities are shared by the senior team, who with the Headmaster lead the school very well. Strategic leadership at this level is very good. The five year plan covers all necessary areas for development and review in detail. It is well reflected in the school's annual improvement plans. The current improvement plan's main priority is the further development of teaching and learning. This reflects the priorities of the local authority and is, in turn, well reflected in departmental plans. Review by the senior team is very good, and governors are regularly informed about the progress of the plan. The quality of planning in departments varies, but is good overall.
53. Strategic leadership is greatly helped by the school's openness to external review. In recent years, it has invited several significant inspections from the local authority and others, for example on middle management, citizenship, teaching and learning in Years 7-9, and of the quality of leadership and management. These reviews have been informative, instructive, and helpful in improving the good range of the modern management techniques which the school employs.

54. Performance management by the senior team is very good. Members of the team are closely linked to departments, which submit good annual reports of their progress. They are greatly helped in this by the very good management information supplied by the senior team, particularly on the performance of individual teachers of examination classes. The result of this process is a very clear and detailed analysis of department strengths and areas for improvement, supported by regular and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching, by senior staff and heads of department. The school has a very good system for the professional development of staff, based on information from its planning and performance management processes. This is very thorough, based on the analysis of the school's and individuals' needs, and closely linked to the national descriptions of teachers' competence.
55. An example of very good training, reflecting national and school priorities, is the school's detailed training and development in the national initiative for the improvement of teaching, the Key Stage 3 Strategy. The experience of this initiative illustrates the present strengths and weaknesses of planning in the school. The initiative has been very well provided, with rigorous monitoring and reporting from the school's link adviser. However, its impact on teaching was not greatly seen during the inspection, particularly in the lack of good plenary sessions to round off the lesson.
56. Reflecting the strong, well-informed lead given by the senior team, leadership and management are very good at middle management level also. Though standards vary from the excellent practice seen in English, modern languages and RE to the poor practice seen in DT, the leadership and management given by heads of department are very good overall. Departments are very competently led, for example in responding to the initiatives of the school. They are very well managed, for example in the quality of support given to staff and pupils. Heads of year lead and manage very well. Bursarial, office and support staff give very good, experienced service. The management of the admissions process, with such a volume of applications, is exemplary.
57. Systems for the analysis and sharing of data on pupils' performance are very good. Targets for individual performance are carefully set and closely monitored in review meetings and very regular reports. Pupils know their targets well and departments are good at checking overall progress in relation to the school's expectations. Heads of year and tutors monitor and extend pupils' personal development well. The school has emphasised the academic aspect of tutoring, to good effect.
58. Leaders are strongly committed to making sure that all pupils are well included in all the school has to offer and that all have equal opportunities to benefit from the education it gives. Teachers are very good role models, showing courtesy and kindness to pupils. They are very good at helping individuals make good progress. Excellent harmony and relationships between pupils of all backgrounds are marked features of the school. The management of SEN is good. Careful records are kept, the register is clear and helpful, and meetings and reviews are regularly held and well recorded. IEPs are clear. No statements of SEN are currently maintained, but a recent example was well presented and relevant; the school's good action was partly responsible for ending the need for this statement.
59. The head of English, as co-ordinator for EAL pupils, has successfully implemented an excellent programme of support for all EAL pupils. This programme of small group and one-to-one support has enabled EAL pupils to improve their English skills much earlier than used to be the case. This organised support, together with the Key Stage 3 Strategy, has been instrumental in raising standards among EAL pupils.
60. The EAL co-ordinator keeps careful records of the progress and attainment of EAL pupils. These demonstrate the effectiveness of the programme he has introduced, though these records do not include the date at which EAL pupils came to England. The school writes to parents, inviting them to consider their son's entry for GCSE in his home language. It also helps parents find good tuition. The result is a high rate of success, almost always with very good grades. The head of French also does some preparation for EAL students taking GCSE

examinations in their home languages, though this is very time consuming, to ensure that pupils are making the expected progress in these studies.

61. Financial leadership and management are very good. Governors are very well involved in budgetary planning and receive regular and detailed reports on the financial position. Minutes of their discussions reflect careful consideration of this position, prudent expenditure, and regular monitoring of progress. The bursar maintains accounts and records very well, and regular audit reports confirm that systems are sound and effective. Planning for expenditure on capital works is clear and careful. Though some of its temporary buildings are too dilapidated to be economically maintained, the school spends regular sums on them and maintains them carefully, to eke out their existence for a few more years. By very careful management, the school ensures that its relatively modest income goes a long way and helps to achieve the very good value for money the school provides.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3508962	Balance from previous year	115082
Total expenditure	3523078	Balance carried forward to the next	100966
Expenditure per pupil	3994		

Leadership and management in the sixth form

62. The governance, leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. Governors have encouraged the growth of the sixth form, particularly in their decision to admit girls, and the outcome has been an increase in numbers, courses and results. The head of sixth leads very well, working closely with the deputy head of sixth and tutors to achieve the goals of the development plan. Her management is very good also. All teachers and tutors have a close knowledge of the progress made by each student, setting them helpful targets which they monitor closely, reporting very frequently, within the school and to parents, on individual progress. One intention of management is that sixth formers shall play a positive role in the school as a whole. This is very successfully realised through a number of initiatives.
63. Since the last inspection, improvement in the leadership and management of the whole school has been very good. Many things were little more than satisfactory in 1999, but the school has greatly improved in effectiveness since then, and has been rewarded with improving results at all levels.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning (WRL)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The required provision of WRL builds effectively on existing very good practice.
- Work experience makes a very good contribution to boys' personal development in Year 11.
- About a third of students go on work experience in the sixth form, and they value these insights into professional life.
- The PSHE course makes a very good basis for learning about work.

- WRL activities are well co-ordinated across the curriculum but are not yet fully in place.
- The PSHE programme monitors effectively pupils' gains in work-related activities.

Commentary

64. The school has implemented the wider aspects of the statutory framework for work-related learning. It builds on the very good practice it had previously established. An audit of how subjects can contribute to a good overall pattern of WRL has been established, but this is only starting to be implemented.
65. Tracking individual progress in WRL, including the work experience programme, is included in the recording of progress in PSHE lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop skills which they can apply at work; an excellent example was seen for pupils in Year 10, with the visit of a very effective team of external employment consultants. Here they looked at selection procedures and identified how they could influence them with a well written letter of application and a CV of good quality. They then looked at computer databases to find job opportunities that matched their aspirations and talents.
66. Work experience is organised successfully in Year 11 and is valued by the boys. The school recognises its importance and allocates valuable time in the curriculum year to ensure that it is a success. Pupils record their part-time employment and this is used as a basis for activities in PSHE lessons. Currently, there are no accredited vocational courses in the school but the choice of subjects matches most students' ambitions to join the professions or employment at a high level.
67. The school hosts an annual careers conference for Year 10, where outside organisations provide information about careers and offer guidance. In addition, a range of problem-solving tasks is set, for example by the Army, and the response by students and their tutors is very positive. The good links with Connexions, the careers service, is again very positive. In Year 12, industry conferences are organised and the link as a science college fosters this provision. Some departments, like science, use outside speakers to develop an understanding of current affairs. For example, 90 students attended an after-school presentation on genetic modification.
68. There are some relevant extra-curricular activities. In 'Young Enterprise', for example, a group of sixth form students successfully set up a manufacturing company, and made a profit from their efforts.
69. The school recognises that WRL is a very important area for further development. A policy has been introduced, which has been ratified, is being adopted and which provides a good basis for this development. Training for staff has been provided. There are many existing areas of good practice, like music, and there is a willingness to make the necessary changes. This is underpinned by the commitment of senior managers further to develop this aspect of the curriculum, to raise students' expectations of further education and training.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Pupils attain very high standards in national examinations.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes; their ability to work independently helps them to learn very effectively.
- Excellent leadership and management have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Teachers sometimes do not vary their teaching methods enough.

Commentary

70. Results in National Curriculum tests in 2003 were very high compared with the national average and much better than results in similar schools. Very high standards were maintained in 2004. Current standards in Year 9 are also very high compared with nationally expected levels. Pupils are fluent, articulate speakers. They use vocabulary precisely and confidently during class discussions and listen intently to each other's views. Pupils read with excellent understanding and make close reference to the text to back up personal views. They use their independent reading skills profitably, for example by carrying out detailed research about the biographies of authors and poets. Pupils have an excellent command of different writing styles; their persuasive writing shows a mature use of rhetoric and they write imaginative, gripping narrative. Lower attaining pupils do not write at as much length and make occasional spelling and punctuation errors.
71. GCSE results in English and English literature in 2004 were very high compared with the national average and well above results in similar selective schools. Current standards are also much higher than those expected nationally. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the social and historical context of set texts and analyse them with maturity and insight. They take account of the views of literary critics but still make well justified personal responses. Pupils have excellent note-taking skills. They structure essays very well as a result of meticulous planning and re-drafting.
72. The achievement of pupils from all ethnic backgrounds is very good. Neither teachers nor pupils are complacent, despite pupils' high standards on entry to courses. As a result all, including the most gifted, develop their knowledge and understanding very well in all years.
73. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very high expectations. Their excellent knowledge of the subject enables them to ask very challenging questions to extend pupils' ideas and learning. They make excellent use of homework that encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and prepare work for discussion in lessons. Pupils respond very well to the challenging work and are able to work independently and co-operatively. For example, in some lessons, teaching is only satisfactory because teachers use a limited range of teaching methods, with an over-emphasis on class discussion that does not inspire or motivate. Despite this, pupils' very positive attitudes ensure that they continue to work hard and very productively. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are excellent. Pupils are very aware of what they need to do to improve. When marking books, teachers give excellent advice about how pupils can develop their writing, leading to impressive

improvements when pupils re-draft their work. However, teachers sometimes overlook spelling and punctuation mistakes.

74. The leadership and management of the department are excellent. The head of department monitors teaching and learning very closely and aims for continual improvement. All teachers are committed to achieving very high standards. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been very good, with impressive improvements in standards and examination results at all levels.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. Standards of literacy are very high. As a result, pupils deal very well with the reading and writing that they are asked to do in all subjects. Pupils are very articulate and at times witty. They participate willingly in discussions and use key terms and subject-specific terminology confidently. Many take part in the school's flourishing debating society. Pupils can select and absorb information from difficult texts in all subjects. This enables them to find information independently from books and the Internet and to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' writing is almost universally accurate, copious and fluent. Pupils have a natural facility with words and use technical terms accurately.
76. Teachers help pupils to develop their language and literacy skills well. They insist on the correct use of subject-specific vocabulary, displaying and referring to key words in classrooms. In French and German, teachers emphasise the importance of speaking, and physical education teachers also encourage speaking and listening skills very well during the evaluation of activities. However, in history and science, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to contribute to discussions. In all subjects, teachers help pupils to develop their skills of extended writing very well, but do not always insist on correct spellings or punctuation. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their impressive reading skills further, in lessons and through homework. However, the small stock of books in the library does not encourage wider reading. In English, some pupils read frequently for pleasure but others rarely use the library to extend their interest in books.

Modern foreign languages: French and German

Provision in modern languages is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are very high.
- Learning, in response to vigorous and demanding teaching, is very good and pupils achieve very well.
- Leadership and management of the French and German departments are excellent.
- Participation in lessons is very good, except for a few less confident pupils.

Commentary

77. In 2003 and 2004 GCSE results in modern languages, and also in Latin, were the best in the school. In 2003, French results were very high compared with the national average and well above the national average for all selective schools. In 2004, results continued the considerable improvement they have made over recent years, coinciding with the improved teaching methods introduced by the current head of department. This represents very good achievement. This achievement is particularly noteworthy, as nearly everyone takes French, and the range of ability entering the French examination is necessarily wider than that in German, which generally attracts talented linguists. In German in 2003, a small group of pupils obtained very high results in national terms; these results were well above the average for all selective schools. In 2004, German results improved further; one boy gained the highest marks in the country for German. Over the last four years, German results have been

consistently very high, with almost all pupils gaining A*, A or B grades. This represents very good achievement.

78. Standards in French in the current Year 9 are well above those expected nationally, and pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils develop their writing skills very effectively, with many writing at length from Year 7. Pupils are mostly very confident speaking in French about themselves. They listen very carefully to tapes and to the constant French they hear spoken by the teachers in lessons. Their textbook is interesting and demanding; it provides many reading and listening passages that challenge their high ability levels. In addition, pupils take great care to complete their homework and prepare well for regular tests.
79. All pupils start German in Year 8 with one double period a week. By Year 9, still with one double period a week, pupils have already developed good speaking skills and their pronunciation is good. They write accurately and carefully. Standards in the current Year 9 are around the national average. This represents very good achievement, considering the amount of time given to the language. Pupils' performance is due to the very carefully constructed course, which is delivered by means of a mainly oral approach. This methodology allows pupils to participate fully, and to gauge their own response against that of others, with constant, immediate feedback from the teacher on how they are doing.
80. Standards in both languages in Year 11 are well above those expected nationally for this ability group of boys. Pupils choose one or two languages for GCSE, with a significant proportion choosing two. They continue to achieve very well, especially in writing and speaking skills. The most gifted pupils produce excellent written coursework assignments. Many are confident enough to guess at meaning successfully in reading and listening tasks. In speaking, pupils in German reach particularly high standards in class and, in French, they benefit greatly from the regular extra support in oral work given by sixth formers in lunch hours. Overall, pupils' attitudes towards learning languages are excellent, and they welcome the regular, helpful assessment procedures.
81. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teaching of German in Years 10 and 11 is excellent. Overall, in both languages, teachers adopt a vigorous and demanding style and most use the foreign language constantly to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills. They use language team games regularly to develop a sense of fun and competition in learning. Opportunities for assessment are frequent in each lesson and regular unit tests provide pupils and parents with information on pupils' progress. Teachers identify underachievement early and take remedial action quickly. On several occasions in the lessons seen, a few teachers could have used the foreign language more consistently, especially to challenge the few more passive pupils. Teachers mark written homework carefully, but they do not always insist that pupils fully correct it.
82. Leadership and management are excellent overall. The head of the French department has demonstrated a strong sense of purpose and clear vision for raising pupils' performance. French GCSE results have successfully improved in response to a range of initiatives set in place by the team of very committed teachers. The programme for early entry to GCSE in Year 10 has already made a successful beginning in Year 7. The head of the German department has developed an excellent course for the second language, including a flourishing school exchange with Germany. The Year 8 French language and cultural tour is a very effective part of the curriculum. There are shortages in essential language learning equipment in both departments and ICT work remains relatively underdeveloped.
83. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations and achieve very high results.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which is used well to prepare pupils for tests and examinations.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- The quality of assessment is very good and guides teaching and curriculum planning.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills and learn independently.
- The use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

84. In 2003, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were very high in relation to the national average and these standards were maintained in 2004 also. Results were very high in relation to those in grammar schools nationally. Results in 2003 and the 2004 GCSE results were also very high in relation to national averages, with every pupil achieving a grade C or above. When results are compared with those in all grammar schools, they were very high in 2003 and are likely to be very high also, when 2004 comparisons are published. In GCSE statistics, results were very high compared to all results nationally, with a very high proportion of pupils achieving A* or A grades in both these years. There has been an upward trend in all results over the past five years.
85. Standards seen in all years are well above nationally expected levels. Achievement by the end of Years 9 and 11 is very good. Pupils produce a large volume of neat, accurate work across a wide range of topics. Both in lessons and in their written work, they show good knowledge of the subject and understand it well. In their answers, spoken and written, they express themselves accurately and effectively. Their books are very well presented, so that revision can be accurate and comprehensive. Teachers' high expectations are clearly seen in lessons and the quality of their written comments. Though pupils show many strengths, for example in data handling in Year 11, they lack the chance to undertake research, or use ICT extensively enough and to get used to learning independently of their teachers.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. Lessons are well planned, and clear learning objectives provide a good focus. Pupils speak appreciatively of the good teaching and support they receive. However, too frequently lessons do not include opportunities for investigation or research to improve pupils' independent learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of pupils' work, behaviour and attitudes. Lessons have good pace and teachers promote mathematics with enthusiasm. Assessment is very good. Pupils are set appropriate targets and their progress is monitored carefully. Presentation of work is very good. It is marked regularly, with constructive comments to help pupils make further progress. Homework effectively consolidates and extends classwork and contributes significantly to the quality of learning. Teachers use whiteboards well, but pupils make little use of ICT in lessons. Good provision is made for gifted and talented pupils, who attend weekend classes at a neighbouring school.
87. Leadership and management are good. The department has a clear vision and determination to raise standards. The development of the curriculum is effectively managed. Monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is taking place but more formal procedures need to be considered. The Head of department appreciates the potential for the increased use of ICT. Organisation is good and this is reflected in all departmental documentation.

88. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. Standards have improved in the tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE. Pupils' progress is now very good. The quality of teaching has improved. However, concerns remain about the lack of use of ICT and the opportunities for investigative and research work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

89. Use of numeracy across the curriculum is not extensive, but standards are well above average, when seen. Pupils have a good capacity to apply their mathematical skills in any subject where it is required. They have no difficulty, for example, in handling number as part of their study of rhythmic patterns in music.
90. In science, use of numeracy is excellent. Pupils have a high standard of graphical drawing and formulae calculation, and can explore and explain patterns in data. They are very confident when faced with contextual problems in science. Their strong numerical skills enhance their work in this subject. In geography, they are very competent in the application of number, though they need more practice in the presentation of statistics in Years 7 and 8. There is good use of spreadsheets and data analysis in ICT. Opportunities to exploit numerical skills are lost in DT, where there is some use of scale and measurement, but the handling of space and shape is limited. There is no use of mathematics in work on weighing or volume in DT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 9 and GCSE examinations are very high and improving.
- Pupils achieve very well and teachers provide excellent support outside the school day.
- The head of science provides very good leadership for the department.
- The recent science college status is supporting the development of several exciting initiatives which will raise standards further.

Commentary

91. Pupils come into the school with well above average standards and make very good progress. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were very high, placing the school in the top 5 per cent of all schools, and well above the results for selective schools. The 2004 results are equally strong. Over recent years the trend in results has been steadily upwards, in line with national trends. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this strong performance has at least been maintained and that standards continue to be very high. The samples of work for Year 9 pupils were outstanding and showed a high proportion of pupils working at levels well beyond those expected.
92. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were very high in comparison with all schools. The school is particularly successful in single science subjects - biology, chemistry, and physics - and overall results including double award science are well above those of selective schools. The 2004 results at GCSE show an overall stronger performance than in 2003. The inspection evidence indicates that these results are likely to improve further in 2005 as standards continue to be very high. The samples of work indicate excellent use of number skills to support science and very high levels of commitment from pupils. Overall, the achievement of the pupils is very good.
93. Teaching and learning are very good. In most lessons seen, teaching was good with a small number of satisfactory and very good lessons. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and very high expectations. They give generously of their time outside lessons, for example in

leading revision sessions. A particular strength is teachers' high quality of questioning and the chance they give pupils to reflect on their understanding through group discussion. Practical work is very well used to develop theoretical understanding. The use of homework and teachers' help with revision are excellent. Sometimes, teachers spend too much time on the detail of presenting work rather than challenging pupils' thinking, or do not provide enough variety of presentation. Assessment is good. Teachers know pupils' strengths very well and marking is thorough. However, comments rarely set targets for future learning.

94. Leadership and management are very good. The staff form a very hardworking and committed team. Schemes of work are very well developed. Some monitoring of the teaching has taken place and the head of science has a good understanding of the strengths in teaching across the department. However this aspect is not sufficiently well targeted at developing specific aspects of the department's work. The recent success in becoming a science college is a major achievement for the department. The new initiatives are beginning to have a very positive effect. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Science college status opens exciting avenues for further development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching has helped improve achievement after a period of some decline.
- In 2003 and 2004 there was a drop in achievement, particularly the proportion of higher grades in external examinations.
- Good implementation of the national Key Stage 3 strategy is consolidating standards in Years 7-9.
- There is some weakness at departmental level in the recording and use of assessment data in guidance and monitoring and tracking attainment in Years 7-9.

Commentary

95. Standards are well above average in comparison with all schools, and above average compared with results for boys' selective schools. At the end of Year 9, 100 per cent of pupils were recorded as gaining Level 5 or above in teacher assessments, and 86 per cent Level 7 or above. Despite a recent drop in GCSE grades, standards are above average. But this drop led to unsatisfactory achievement in the most recent GCSE examinations, when the percentage of A* and A grades fell to 43 per cent from a high of 67 per cent in 2002. This is well below the school average at this level. That downturn in achievement derived from a period of staffing instability; work seen during the inspection shows the department has recovered from this, and that achievement for current pupils is good, sometimes very good. The national Key Stage 3 strategy has been successfully introduced into Years 7-9, and teachers' success in implementing this is consolidating standards in these years. Pupils work hard; their enthusiasm and commitment ensured good achievement in all the lessons seen and the coursework scrutinised.
96. Teaching and learning are good and are now a key strength in ICT. Equally, the positive attitude and energy of the boys are important factors in their success. Lessons proceed at an excellent pace. Well prepared teaching and good planning, particularly in Years 7-9, allow for a common approach from all teachers in the department. This now requires further development.
97. Leadership and management in ICT are satisfactory overall, with a kind and mutually supportive management style. There has been some lack of staffing continuity, but good recent appointments have strengthened the team, who enjoy a strong ethos of mutual support. There is a sound development plan. The department has worked well in

restructuring the curriculum in Years 7-9 for completion in two years rather than three. However there is scope for improvement in organisation and communication. The departmental handbook needs further improvement, and pupils complain of a lack of coherence where classes are shared among teachers. The recording and tracking of attainment are under-developed, while assessment procedures in Years 7-9, which do not record progress against national curriculum levels, are inadequate.

98. Some poor and cramped accommodation constrains teaching, but substantial investment since the previous inspection in staffing, training, resources (including whiteboard technology), infrastructure and technical support leaves the department well placed to build on its recovery. This provision has improved since the last inspection, with investment in resources and staff training. Overall, improvement has been satisfactory.

ICT across the curriculum

99. The use of ICT to promote learning in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils use ICT extensively in independent learning (often at home) for research on the Internet, analysis of data and presentation of material. There is some exceptional quality in a range of subjects, notably history, media studies and English, where pupils have incorporated text, images and graphics to generate beautifully presented work. Following the successful specialist school bid, there is now very good provision of ICT resources in science.
100. Most departments include ICT in their schemes of work, but its use is not yet common in all areas of the school. In English and humanities subjects, some work is word processed, but spontaneous use of ICT (for example in drafting and redrafting text) is hindered by the difficulty of securing access. Save for the use of whiteboards in display, the use and provision of ICT in mathematics are unsatisfactory, and its use in art is limited by the resources available in this subject. Music technology is well used in Years 10 and 11, but not in Years 7 to 9. In design technology, there is a mini-network for graphics, and some computer-aided manufacture (CAM) equipment, but no associated computer-aided design (CAD) resources. There is a statutory breach in failing to provide experience in the use of control technology.
101. The school is aware of and responsive to these issues. The extensive provision of interactive whiteboards laptops for teachers (and associated training) is helping to improve the skill base on which more effective use of ICT in learning can be built.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work, including GCSE examinations, are very high.
- Excellent pupils' achievement is the result of very good teaching and pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Very good leadership and management are effective in improving standards.
- Greater access to ICT facilities and more fieldwork would further enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

102. Results in GCSE examinations have significantly improved to be very high against the average for all schools and well above average for selective schools. In 2004, close to two-thirds of the pupils attained an A* grade. All pupils met or exceeded expected levels of attainment. Pupils did better in geography than in almost all other subjects.

103. By Year 9, standards have significantly improved since entry in Year 7 and are well above average. Achievement over Years 7 to 9 is very good. Pupils have a very good grounding in geographical skills. Map work is of a high standard. There is accurate presentation of statistical data and analysis is good, but more practice is needed in Years 7 and 8. Knowledge of place is good and the understanding of spatial patterns and processes is well developed. Higher attainers are well challenged. Average and lower attainers also achieve well and EAL pupils are extremely well catered for. There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils of different ethnic groups. By the end of Year 11, standards are very high. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is excellent. This is due to teaching of consistently high quality and pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. The best independent study GCSE projects are of a very high standard. The regular testing of work over Years 10 and 11 and excellent preparation for examinations through booster classes contributes greatly to the very high level of achievement.
104. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Relationships are very good and the relaxed yet purposeful air in lessons is conducive to good learning. Teaching strengths include teachers' very good command of topics taught, the positive encouragement and engagement of pupils in active learning, and the use of teaching methods, often including modern technology. However, there is scope for more paired and group work. Homework reinforces and extends teaching and learning excellently. The best teaching is lively and challenging, with brisk pace and very high expectations. Assessment overall is good but there is a need to involve pupils more in assessing their work and setting targets for improvement. Learning would be improved if lesson aims were more precisely focused and tested thoroughly for effectiveness.
105. Leadership and management are very good. Curriculum planning, including the two year National Curriculum pilot programme, is very good, but suitable pathways for pupils on completion of this course have not been determined. Staffing is a considerable strength and the newly qualified teachers (NQTs) have fitted in well. There is a good, coherent programme of ICT, but problems of access to computer facilities have caused difficulties. Fieldwork undertaken provides very effective learning but is inadequate in Years 7 to 9, and needs funding. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, particularly in raising standards.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are well above standards for selective schools.
- Assessment is very well used to support pupils' progress.
- Teachers organise a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good teaching practice is not sufficiently discussed and shared.

Commentary

106. Pupils enter the school with historical skills only slightly above the national average level. However, by the end of Year 9 they have made good progress and attained standards that are well above those for all schools, and above those for selective schools. Results at GCSE have been consistently very high in comparison with all schools nationally, and well above those in selective schools.
107. These high standards were seen in many lessons, and particularly in essays and analysis of sources. All pupils, including those with EAL, write clearly, persuasively and copiously. They can extract the information required from the text book or contemporary source material, and make good use of it. When asked to speak, they are articulate. Use of ICT can be very good, as in booklets on Roman Britain, but this tends to be rare.

108. Achievement, as observed during the inspection and over time, is generally very good, particularly in Years 9 to 11. Very good progress is brought about by high competence in absorbing information, and producing a very high volume of written work.
109. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. It is slightly better in Years 7 to 9 (where it is very good) than in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' great strength is in exposition, and inspiring pupils to read, digest, and write. In the best lessons, teachers use their imagination to stimulate interest. They have high expectations, manage their classes with skill, and make excellent use of homework. They employ role-play and small group work effectively. They organise a wide range of extra-curricular activities for all year groups. They mark assiduously, and use the records to identify those who need support. They give time for additional classes to help pupils prepare for examinations. Teachers know their subject, but could often make better use of their knowledge to illustrate a topic with detail not given in the text-book. In weaker lessons there could be greater emphasis on getting pupils to think for themselves.
110. As a result, learning is very good as to absorbing and reproducing the required factual information. This, coupled with a growing facility in clear written expression, leads to the skills which produce excellent examination results. However, in some lessons pupils have little encouragement to ponder, to challenge received opinion, or to use their undoubted dialectical skills.
111. Leadership and management are both good. Objectives are appropriate. There are annual evaluations of targets and results, analysing each teacher's contribution, and exploring ways in which weaknesses can be surmounted. However, good practice is not shared widely enough. Assessment is used very well to identify individual weaknesses and departmental trends. More pupils choose history in Year 10 than in any other optional subject.
112. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. At that time, results were below those for selective schools. As a result of improved teaching and more rigorous assessment, results are now well above those for selective schools. However, there has been little advance in the use of ICT.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is excellent.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Very large numbers of pupils take GCSE examinations and the results are outstanding.
- Not enough provision is made for the range of abilities within some classes in Years 7 - 9.
- In some classes in Years 7 - 9, teachers do not always help pupils relate the subject to their own lives and experiences.

Commentary

113. At the end of Year 11 in 2004, standards of attainment in the GCSE course were very high in comparison with national averages. They were also well above the results for similar schools. 100 per cent of pupils gained the higher grades of A* to C. This was also the case in 2003 when pupils also gained 100 per cent grades A* to C. Standards seen during the inspection were also well above nationally expected levels. Pupils have a strong knowledge and understanding of many elements of the syllabus, such as the key beliefs of Christianity and Buddhism. They are good at expressing their opinions on a range of moral issues, such as abortion. Their written skills are strong, as their work includes a significant amount of extended writing. Pupils make use of ICT in some of their work. The achievement of pupils in

lessons during the inspection and over time is very good. The progress of pupils who have EAL is very good.

114. At the end of Year 9, standards were well above those indicated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have a strong knowledge and understanding of a number of world religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. They can talk with confidence about various aspects of holy books. They can make clear reference of many of the more philosophical aspects that surround religious traditions. Their written skills are strong and they are good at expressing their opinions and being able to justify them. Achievement, as in Years 10-11, is very good.
115. Overall, teaching is very good. Some of the teaching is satisfactory and some is excellent. Lessons are well planned and have strong content drawn from world religions. Objectives are clear and so learning is strong. Where the teaching is very good and excellent, the pace is brisk and the content of the lesson is put across with confidence and clarity. This is less so where the teaching is satisfactory. At times in Years 7 - 9, opportunities are lost in helping pupils to see what relevance their learning might have to their own lives and experiences. More provision could be made for the range of abilities in Years 7 - 9. Homework is well set and an active and effective assessment policy is in place. Overall, high standards are set in teaching and pupils respond very positively to this, as reflected in the impressive GCSE results.
116. The department is led with energy and strong commitment. Leadership is excellent and management is very good. Staffing is good. Progress since the last inspection has been very good, and the department's outstanding examination results have been maintained. Accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are very good.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology (DT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is not rigorous enough to ensure that the little time allocated to the subject is well used.
- There is not enough teaching time in Years 7-9 adequately to cover the programmes of study, so pupils have a very poor foundation for the GCSE course.
- The curriculum in Years 7-9 does not meet statutory requirements.
- The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are poor.
- Pupils underachieve. They do not achieve the standards they could.

Commentary

117. GCSE results are just above the national average, although the numbers of pupils who enter is relatively small. When considering pupils' ability on starting the course and their achievements in their other subjects, they are not doing well enough. Their attainment in work seen during the inspection was also at an average level, far lower than their capabilities. At the end of Year 9, most pupils are still working at level 4 of the National Curriculum. All pupils achieve similarly.
118. In lessons in Years 7- 9, pupils' achievement is poor. They make insufficient progress, both for their own ability and in relation to the gains they should make over this period. There is insufficient challenge for most pupils, and particularly the most able.

119. Teaching in the earlier years fails to provide sufficient challenge to the pupils. Because of the very limited time available, less than half the average, there is too much to cover in the time available. Teaching tends to focus on giving practical experience of working in resistant materials, and because of this, too little attention is paid to developing wider skills. In consequence, design skills are weak and drawing skills too are underdeveloped; neither do pupils gain experience of CAD. CAM, although observed, is not used to help pupils learn. These weaknesses mean that the National Curriculum is not being taught as it should be. Pupils do not study complex control systems including feedback, pneumatics and microprocessors, or use ICT to design sub-systems and utilise Smart and modern materials sufficiently.
120. In the earlier years, unsatisfactory teaching leads to unsatisfactory learning and pupils are insufficiently challenged intellectually. Pupils do not work hard enough, and neither is the work demanded of them of a sufficiently high standard. In consequence, pupils are underachieving. In the GCSE years, teaching is broadly satisfactory, although pupils start from a very low base. The absence of time in the earlier years is never really overcome. Often, tasks undertaken in Year 10 are more usually seen in Years 8 and 9. Because pupils are motivated and have chosen to follow the subject, their progress is satisfactory. They produce good coursework, although its organisation needs improvement.
121. Leadership and management are poor. Although the school management has tried to improve teaching and learning and supports the department, its interventions have been ineffective. The department's problems are compounded by the poor - and undemanding - quality of resources and by poor premises. On a day-by-day basis, there is insufficient strategic planning to overcome the significant weakness in the department.
122. The last two inspection reports raised key issues for action regarding the provision for this subject. Although money has been spent and some improvements made, this investment has been insufficient to bring the provision up to the standard expected. Despite the efforts of the senior managers and governors, accommodation is still poor and the resources for learning insufficient properly to cover the National Curriculum as required. In addition, far fewer pupils follow an examination course than in schools nationally. In consequence, the progress made since the last two inspections has been poor.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well, both by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Standards are well above the national average in GCSE examinations.
- Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge.
- The large size of some groups affects standards and achievement.
- Pupils have very limited opportunities for producing images employing ICT.

Commentary

123. When pupils enter Year 7, their drawing and painting skills are weak. However, they enjoy the subject and make good progress in their first year. This progress is continued throughout Year 8 and into Year 9, when pupils experiment with a wider range of media and materials. By this stage, the majority is producing work of a standard that is well above expected levels. Achievement is very good from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9.

124. In the 2003 GCSE examination, attainment was well above the national average. Standards were also well above the average when compared with other selective schools that year. In 2004 there was a slight decline in standards, but attainment remained well above the national average. However, these pupils achieved higher grades in their other school subjects, which suggests that they are not quite achieving their full potential in art and design. In 2004 there were no A* grades, but nine A grades. Achievement from the start of Year 10 to the end of Year 11 is very good.
125. Teaching is good overall with some very good features, so that pupils learn well. Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge. In the most successful lessons, these qualities lead to very effective use of the interactive whiteboard. This engages pupils well in discussion about the work of other artists and designers. However, in a minority of lessons, pupils make slow progress because objectives are not clearly set and the management of pupils is only just satisfactory. Assessing, recording and tracking systems lack rigour at present and require greater detail to ensure that all pupils are provided with accurate and detailed feedback on the quality of their artwork.
126. Leadership is very good and management good. The head of department has a very clear vision of how the department should be developed. She is very enthusiastic about the subject and communicates this enthusiasm to pupils at all levels. Management of the department has been made more difficult by staffing considerations. There has been some turnover of staff. The teacher appointed three years ago, who also teaches DT graphics, has received considerable support from the school during this time.
127. Accommodation is just satisfactory. The second of the main studios is small and problems are created as a result of class sizes that are too large for both studios. This has an adverse impact on standards and achievement. Resources are adequate for work within a traditional model of the curriculum. However, pupils have very limited access to computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers as means of generating images. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The school is aware of the need to improve the accommodation.

Commentary

128. The six pupils who took the GCSE examination in 2003 gained either A or B grades. Of the six pupils who took the examination in 2004, five gained A or B grades. Comparison with the national average is difficult, due to the small number of pupils involved.
129. For current pupils, standards in Year 9 are above the nationally expected level. Pupils enter school with broadly above average musical abilities and their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 9 pupils show a good knowledge of simple notation and understand basic chord structures. They identify the way different effects are created in a piece of music and use keyboards well to improvise their own sounds for a short film score. Pupils with SEN and those with EAL make the same progress as other pupils. More musically able pupils make good progress.
130. Standards in Year 11 are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils identify important features in short extracts of music. They accurately name the instruments and show skill in using notation to record pitch and rhythm. They understand a wide range of musical terms

and explain these well when answering questions. They use music technology effectively to devise and refine their compositions. More musically able pupils make very good progress in all aspects of the work.

131. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9, and some good teaching was seen. Very occasionally, however, there is insufficient challenge in lessons and this affects pupils' achievement. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good. Lessons are planned well and teachers make effective use of their own expertise to help pupils learn. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson, when the teacher enabled pupils to understand the way a composer had used different musical devices in a composition. Satisfactory provision is made for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The provision for music technology is satisfactory and has been improved since the last inspection.
132. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has been in post for just over a year and has identified specific ways to raise pupils' achievement. Assessment procedures are good and are used to inform the way the curriculum is planned. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their performing skills. There are various rehearsal groups, and concerts are regularly held in school. There has been a very successful performance of the musical, *Grease*. Over 140 pupils receive lessons from peripatetic teachers. These teachers make a valuable contribution to pupils' musical development. Resources are good and there is a well-equipped keyboard room. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Although the department has been refurbished, there are no practice rooms. This causes difficulty for group work and when peripatetic teachers are in the department.
133. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The standard of pupils' work in Years 7 to 11 has remained the same and the provision for music technology has been increased. Schemes of work are now in place. However, the accommodation still remains inadequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and respond very positively to good teaching.
- Standards are well above average by the age of sixteen.
- Poor accommodation restricts the breadth of the curriculum and sometimes the quality of learning.
- There is very good leadership and management of an improving department.
- There is a very strong and successful programme of extracurricular sport.

Commentary

134. During the inspection only games were observed. Although teacher assessments in 2004 and 2003 showed very high standards, standards of the current Year 9 in performance, knowledge and understanding are above nationally expected levels for this age group. Standards are well above nationally expected levels in Year 11. All pupils, including those from all ethnic backgrounds, those with EAL, and gifted and talented pupils, achieve well by the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Pupils achieve well, partly because they are highly motivated, and work purposefully in lessons, even when conditions are difficult. Partly also, they respond very well to good teaching, and make good progress in developing a range of skills such as rucking in rugby and stick handling in hockey. Achievement in indoor games is sometimes restricted by the quality and small size of facilities.
135. Teaching is good, with some very good features. Teachers display very good subject knowledge and consistently high expectations, translated into a brisk pace and sharply focused practices which enable pupils of all abilities to learn well. This was seen particularly

in Year 10 and 11 hockey lessons, in which teachers also gave frequent and expert feedback, enabling pupils rapidly to improve their stick handling technique. Successful team teaching allows pupils to work at an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative and to evaluate their performance, which is an improvement on the previous inspection and contributes to the rate of progress and the high standards achieved. Lessons are less effective when their pace is less brisk and when teachers dominate too much, so that pupils learn too passively.

136. Leadership and management are very good. This has resulted in significant developments, for example in regular monitoring and a thorough review of provision. The department works very well as a team. The specialist staff are very well complemented by other staff with particular areas of expertise. Assessment of pupils' progress over time is thorough, although not yet fully developed. Indoor accommodation, both for gymnasium and changing facilities, is poor. Partly as a result, the quality of learning is sometimes restricted, and the curriculum, although meeting statutory requirements, is relatively narrow and dominated by games. There is no GCSE course. However, there is a very strong extra-curricular programme, and the school achieves notable successes in a range of inter-school sports, including rugby, cricket, hockey, athletics and cross-country running. Students from the school have gained representative honours at county and international levels. The school has been awarded the Gold Sportsmark Award in recognition of all it has achieved.
137. The accommodation has not improved since the last inspection, or indeed for many years before. However, there have been significant improvements in standards, progress, teaching and leadership. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus was on citizenship. PSHE, which also includes careers and citizenship, was sampled. Lessons were seen in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. No lessons were seen in Year 11, which would have been on careers, because of mock examinations. Lessons are generally well planned. The teaching in lessons sampled was predominantly satisfactory, though some good and very good lessons were also observed. The programme of visiting specialist speakers is extensive, well chosen and makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A detailed policy for the teaching of citizenship has been implemented.
- A thorough audit of subject departments has been completed.
- Pupils in Year 9 receive separate, effective, lessons in citizenship.
- Arrangements for monitoring of citizenship have yet to be fully completed.
- Many lessons in other subjects have strong elements of citizenship, but their content of citizenship is not always fully appreciated by the pupils.

Commentary

138. Pupils' standards of attainment are well above average. Their work in the Year 9 citizenship classes covers many of the aspects requiring specific knowledge. Consequently, pupils can talk with confidence about subjects like the media. They can explain how commercial pressures can often influence judgements found in newspapers and other information services. Pupils also have a strong knowledge and understanding of other issues concerning topics like the environment, local government, and the diverse aspects of British society. They also have a wide knowledge of many global issues. There are many opportunities in the school for pupils to develop their skills of enquiry and communication, and skills of participation and responsible action. Many subject departments such as religious education

require pupils to be able to reflect and justify opinions in a fluent way. This they can do very convincingly. The PSHE and WRL programmes also enable pupils to develop a wide range of the skills indicated in the requirements of this subject. The achievement of pupils is very good.

139. The teaching seen in the Year 9 citizenship classes was good, and pupils learnt well. Lessons were well prepared and an imaginative and stimulating range of activities was used. The pace of the lessons was fast and so a significant amount of learning took place in the time available. Clear teaching demonstrated a good understanding of the subject matter. Good homework was set.
140. Many subject departments contribute to the teaching of citizenship, and examples of this were seen during the inspection. This makes a valuable contribution to the overall provision of the subject. At times however, maximum benefit was not gained, because pupils were not aware that a particular topic contained a significant element of citizenship. Opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning in citizenship are sometimes lost in this way.
141. Leadership and management are good. Much work has been done to make citizenship a significant part of the school curriculum. Arrangements for the monitoring of its teaching and effectiveness across the school are currently being developed, but are not yet complete. The staffing is appropriate for the present requirements, as is the accommodation. Resources are good. This subject is new and was not reported in the last inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 11 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	5	100	78.3	40	21.6	46	25.5
Biology	12	91.7	63.5	50	10.4	40.8	19.8
Business studies	6	100	75.3	83.3	15.4	53.3	25.7
Chemistry	20	95	70.3	25	13.2	33	23
Classical studies	3	100	89.1	100	36	56.7	36.5
Economics	8	100	71.6	62.5	18.6	51.3	25.8
English literature	2	100	86.2	50	17.4	50	29.7
French	3	100	79.8	100	19.4	60	28.2
General studies	13	100	73.6	38.5	16.9	40	25.5
Geography	5	100	75.5	80	20.4	52	27
History	13	92.3	82.2	23.1	20.8	36.9	29.2
Information and communication technology	14	92.9	66.6	35.7	8.8	40.7	20.6
Mathematics	16	93.8	59.9	43.8	14.1	40	20.5
Music	2	100	79.8	0	16.9	35	27.5
Physics	11	100	66.4	45.5	14.8	41.8	22.4
Sports/PE	3	100	72.2	66.7	11.8	46.7	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	7	100	98.3	57.1	50.2	91.4	87.1
Biology	42	100	96.6	42.9	40	83.8	79.3
Business studies	11	100	98.9	81.8	39.4	103.6	81.8
Chemistry	34	100	97.7	61.8	50	95.3	85.7
Classical studies	17	100	99.6	70.6	58.1	98.8	92.8
Economics	20	100	98.8	85	54.3	104	89.8
English literature	34	100	99.4	100	44.9	115.3	85.5
French	9	100	99	88.9	53.1	108.9	88.9
General studies	105	100	94.9	46.7	30.5	88.2	72.9
Geography	18	100	98.8	66.7	46.4	97.8	85.2
German	6	100	98.6	100	49.6	110	86.3
History	25	100	99	64	45.6	102.4	85.1

Information and communication technology	19	100	96.3	26.3	25.7	76.8	71.1
Mathematics	63	100	96.8	65.1	56.6	96.5	89.5
Music	1	100	98.2	100	37.1	120	79.5
Physics	11	90.9	96.7	45.5	45.3	83.6	82.6
Religious studies	9	100	99.1	66.7	49.5	100	87.4
Sports/PE	8	100	97.8	37.5	30.9	77.5	75.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English literature and French were inspected and are reported below. German was sampled. In German lessons seen, teaching was excellent and students achieved very well.

English

Provision in English is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and students' achievement is excellent.
- Very good teaching constantly challenges students to improve even further.
- Students are very committed to their studies and willingly take responsibility for their own learning.

Commentary

142. A-level results in 2004 were very high in comparison with the national average. All 35 students gained A or B grades and 27 gained the highest grade. In addition, eight students achieved the Advanced Extension Award, with merits or distinctions.
143. Current standards in Year 13 are also very high. Students have an excellent understanding of the historical, social and cultural context of set texts. For example, they express articulate opinions about the themes of race and colonialism in Forster's *A Passage to India*. They refer to the views of a range of literary critics but are still able to develop and justify personal responses to literature. Students' writing is impressive. They plan and structure essays skilfully to ensure that they respond directly to the question and make excellent reference to the text to back up their views.
144. In Year 12, standards on the AS-Level course are higher than those expected nationally. Students are confident, articulate and prepared to offer their views in class. They have a firm understanding of how writers achieve effect through the use of language. At this stage of the course some lower attaining students still tend to write descriptive rather than analytical essays, but all are developing their skills of analysis very well.
145. Students' achievement is excellent. They enter the courses with very high standards at GCSE but build very well on these throughout the sixth form.
146. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' knowledge of literature is excellent. They have very high expectations of students. When marking students' work they give very helpful advice and ask challenging questions to enable students to improve their essays. Many lessons are taught at a very good pace but occasionally teachers dominate class discussions too much. Students respond extremely well and the quality of their learning is excellent. They are very committed to their studies and willingly complete frequent homework tasks in which they research information and present their ideas to the rest of the class. They are very aware of the assessment objectives for each unit of work and their assessment of their own

and each other's work means that, along with the teachers, they set themselves very high standards.

147. The leadership and management of sixth form provision are excellent. The head of department evaluates teachers' work and students' achievement closely to identify appropriate areas for development. Teachers work very effectively as a team and give their time willingly to provide further, individual support for students.
148. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. A-level results have improved each year since 1998, culminating in the outstanding results of 2004.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

149. Standards of language and literacy are very high. Students are highly articulate. They read demanding texts with understanding and write at length, using appropriate terminology and technical terms in all subjects. Teachers mark students' written work regularly and provide good advice to help them to improve the structure of essays when necessary. In most subjects, they ask students to contribute regularly to class discussions, but in some other subjects, for example science, teachers often miss such opportunities and dominate discussion.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level and AS results have risen considerably over the last four years.
- Teaching is very good overall and students learn and achieve very well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Students have very good attitudes towards the subject.
- The monitoring of students' independent listening and reading work is not rigorous enough.
- There are currently few opportunities for students to visit France.

Commentary

150. In 2003, A-Level results were well above average in national terms. Students achieved very well and above predictions in relation to their GCSE grades. In AS examinations all students entered gained the two top grades, an achievement above their teachers' predictions. This represented very good achievement. Results in 2004 were equally good. Results have shown a steady rise over the last four years.
151. Standards in the current Year 13 are above average. Students work hard and achieve very well, because most participate well in lessons, and teachers provide regular assessments and feedback on their progress. The most talented students express their ideas and opinions very clearly and with good pronunciation. All students listen very carefully to the teachers' rapid French and the majority clearly understand well. Overall, students' knowledge of vocabulary is good. However, a few less confident students do not take part as well as others in class discussions. Students have very good attitudes towards the subject and most show a keen interest in the tasks they are doing. Homework assignments are usually completed on time.
152. Students preparing for AS-level are also working above the standards expected nationally. Students transfer well from GCSE to the more complex demands of the A-level syllabus in grammar and language structures. Their attitudes and commitment to learning are very good. They receive extra help with their speaking skills and repay this support by helping Year 11 pupils with their oral tests.

153. Teaching and learning are very good overall, and students learn very well as a result. Teachers speak almost entirely in rapid French, so as to develop students' skills of speaking and listening effectively. Teachers provide interesting and up-to-date materials and encourage students, not only thoroughly to understand written passages, but also to develop an evaluative and critical stance towards the content. Teachers monitor students' work carefully and begin to assess them regularly from the first term of their AS-level studies. More complex grammar work is introduced at an early stage and teachers encourage students to keep up with their self-study booklets. However, teachers do not monitor students' independent work in reading and listening as closely as they should.
154. Leadership and management are very good overall. The course is well designed and intrinsically interesting to the students. Teachers share information on good practice in lessons and monitor and discuss students' progress with them. They organise a highly successful system of student support for Year 11 pupils' oral examinations. However, apart from the work experience offered, which only one student has taken up this year, there is no further organised opportunity for students to visit France. Neither the department nor the library has any designated area where students could have access to listening and reading support materials for independent study.
155. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. A-level results have improved considerably over the last few years and students' progress is now very good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range and flexibility of courses offered give students choice and help raise attainment.
- Teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- The department offers excellent academic support.
- Students do not use computer technology enough.

Commentary

156. A-level results in 2003 and 2004 were well above the national average and progress was very good. Results compare favourably with those of similar selective grammar schools. AS-level results were well above average. Standards in further mathematics are also well above average, where students have a very secure understanding of matrices and other related concepts. Written work indicates an extensive coverage of course content. Students' presentation is excellent and notebooks will provide a valuable source for revision. Students achieve very well, making very good progress over the one and two year courses.
157. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to apply skilful question and answer techniques to develop understanding and consolidate learning. Lessons are brisk and teachers have high expectations, as do the students of themselves. Students are consistently challenged and respond positively to additional support and guidance. However, there are few opportunities in lessons for students to use ICT, develop investigative skills or learn independently. However, a full range of courses and enrichment activities is offered to meet the differing needs and career intentions of students. This is a very popular subject. The large number of students choosing it are excellently supported by their teachers, who give them a great deal of help to learn and succeed.
158. Leadership and management are good. The head of department provides a very good role model in all her work, particularly in the classroom through her own commitment to high standards.

159. Since the last inspection progress has been good. Standards at A-Level have improved significantly, with more students gaining A or B grades. AS-level grades have shown an upward trend. Progress is very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

160. Students' competence and confidence in handling number is very good. Subjects make a variety of contributions to developing their numeracy skills. For example, students do significant statistical analysis in modern languages, work confidently with complex number problems in science and make extensive use of number application in ICT and geography.
161. The economics department has a specific strategy for the development of numerical skills. This is very well applied by the teachers, so that students make rapid and confident progress in all aspects of work associated with number – its calculation and the numerical and graphical analysis of information.

SCIENCE

Chemistry was inspected at AS and A2-level and is reported below. Biology and physics were also sampled. In both these subjects one lesson was seen. Teaching was good and students made good progress.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are very high and improving.
- Achievement is very good. Students are given very good individual support.
- Overall, teachers have excellent subject knowledge and work very well as a team.
- The head of department is an excellent role model.
- The potential for further development through the science college status is very good.

Commentary

162. Students start this course with above average standards. At AS-level, there has been a steady improvement in results over recent years with significantly higher ones in 2004. The improvement in A2 results has been even greater, with the proportion of students achieving A-B grades nearly doubling over three years and standards well above average in comparison to all schools. The current inspection confirms this improving picture and students are on course to achieve very highly in examinations at the end of Year 13. Overall achievement is very good.
163. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. As a team, the staff has excellent subject knowledge and this is used to very good effect in lessons, for example in explaining principles to develop students' understanding. Half of the lessons observed were very good. The level of challenge in lessons is very high because teachers continually expect the students to apply their learning to new ideas and theories. For example, in a Year 12 lesson on halogens, students recalled how different bonding in a variety of molecules would affect melting and boiling points. There is a very strong link between practical work and theory. In lessons on transition metals, the different colours of compounds were explored through experiment and then explained, drawing on theory taught previously. Very strong schemes of work ensure that learning progresses smoothly from lesson to lesson, as ideas are built upon each other systematically. Teachers produce a very good range of supportive notes to help students in their individual study and many of these are excellent. The students make very good use of these outside formal lessons. They find the staff very supportive, always willing to help and

put in extra time. The students' folders are very well kept and several are excellent. They are detailed and show excellent use of number in calculations and the presentation of data. The students have very positive attitudes and high aspirations to do well when they leave school. Although students listen well in lessons, they are sometimes too passive and teachers do not use strategies which would support more active involvement.

164. The head of science provides very good leadership and management of the curriculum and teaching and is an excellent role model for students. The school manages the transition from GCSE to AS-Level very well, mainly because they know many of the students very well, and there are very firmly established work habits. The progress of each student is tracked very tightly and there is a very good rapport between teachers and pupils. Numbers of students opting for the subject are high and growing. The school makes a significant contribution to science education at this level. There are 119 students following chemistry courses at AS and A2 levels. There are 110 biology students and 37 physics students. Innovation arising from the science college status is beginning to take effect through activities such as entry in national competition and Advanced Extension Award classes. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Computing was inspected at AS and A2 levels and is reported below.

Provision in computing is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been high pass rates over time in both AS and A2-level computing.
- The quality of work produced by AS and A2-level students shows that standards are being maintained and improved.
- Achievement is sustained by consistently good teaching.

Commentary

165. Standards are good in AS-Level, very good in A-Level, and good overall. Pass rates at AS and A2 compare favourably with national averages. The proportion of high grades (A or B) is lower than for other subjects in the school, but still above the national average.
166. A-Level results in 2003 were the best ever for the school, with 52 per cent of grades at A or B, and 38 per cent at A. Although there was a dip in 2004 (following a period of staffing instability) work seen from the current Year 13 is consistently of good or very good quality, both from boys and girls. Standards in AS-Level are considerably above national averages: 35 per cent of passes in 2003 were at Grade A or B against 9 per cent nationally, and even in 2004 - when there was a dip from normally high standards - the proportion of high grades remained ten percentage points higher than national averages. This represents good achievement, and students were also achieving well in the classes seen and work inspected.
167. Despite a low profile of AS-Level grades, there is evidence from their work that students on the second year of the course are on target to improve their grades in the A-Level examination. There was expertise in programming and a sound understanding of system development. Projects showed well developed skills in research and analysis.
168. Teaching is consistently good or very good, matching sound preparation and classroom practice with excellent computing expertise. Members of the team have strong industrial or commercial experience which lets them share insight on "real world" applications.
169. Students learn well, responding positively to this good teaching, both in commitment to individual tasks and whole-class activities. Students have very well organised folders

containing notes, handouts, printouts of work and downloads from the internet. Students are briefed to avoid plagiarism, and make good use of ascription protocols in acknowledging work they have downloaded. Folders represent a good record of work and a valuable resource for study and revision.

170. Leadership and management of computing are satisfactory. There is sound tracking and recording of achievement; management of examination board deadlines and of attainment criteria is sound also. The department has supported newer colleagues in their development from graduate trainees or newly qualified teachers to very strong professional competence. However, communication among teachers where classes are shared is not wholly effective.
171. The good standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained.

ICT across the curriculum

172. The previous report noted a deficit in the use of ICT to support the curriculum. There is now extensive use of ICT in most sixth form subjects, and students have high levels of ICT skill which they use extensively in independent learning, presentation and research. Students are adept in making presentations with the help of ICT, and make extensive use of ICT in their work at home.

HUMANITIES

History, geography and religious studies were inspected at AS and A2 levels, and are reported below. Philosophy, critical thinking, classical civilisation and Latin were sampled.

In the one lesson observed in philosophy, teaching and achievement were both good. In critical thinking, teaching and achievement were very good. In the two lessons observed in classical civilisation, teaching and achievement were both very good; and in the one lesson of Latin, teaching and achievement were good.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work in Year 13 are very high compared with the national average.
- Very good teaching in Years 12 and 13 results in very good learning.
- Students are very well motivated, have a strong commitment and achieve very well.
- An induction course in study skills and the provision of ICT facilities would help to promote students' independent study.

Commentary

173. Recent A-level examination results have been consistently well above the national average. The AS-level results in 2004 were very high and showed an improvement on the previous year's results, particularly in the proportion of students attaining the highest grades. Most students on both courses performed to their expected levels or above.
174. Standards of work seen on the AS-level course are well above average and on the A-level course very high against the national average. Very good achievement is evident over Years 12 and 13. Students in Year 12 show very good knowledge and understanding of introductory topics covered in both physical and human geography. Some, especially students joining the school in Year 12, would benefit from the provision of pre-course reading and an induction study skills course. A major strength of the course is the emphasis placed on independent study and the very good use of case studies to illustrate concepts. Critical analysis develops

well, particularly in Year 13. Higher attainers read widely around the topic and a good synthesis of views is developed. The best individual coursework, based on fieldwork in Dorset, is stimulating and of high quality.

175. Teaching and learning are very good overall, in both years. Teachers show good command of their subject when presenting topics and when monitoring students' progress. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and organised with the purpose, through enquiry activities, of developing students' learning. Lessons are characterised by very high expectations and challenge, brisk pace and high productivity. Students are given good opportunities to contribute to discussion and develop their ideas, and many do so well. However, in Year 12, female students do not contribute enough to discussions. At times, teachers do too much for students and learning suffers. Students' attitudes, behaviour and motivation are excellent and make a major contribution to the very high standards attained. Students use resource materials well and gain great benefit from practical assignments, particularly in activities related to fieldwork. They have very good competence in key skills, including the application of ICT to their studies.
176. The AS and A-Level courses are very well led and managed. The programme of study is well co-ordinated, with staff working well together as a balanced and strong team. Students would benefit from the wider application of the very thorough examples seen of teachers' marking. The use of geographical journals helps to extend students' reading, and computers would provide a further necessary support for independent learning. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are expected to study hard, and produce an extensive quantity of work.
- Teachers have very good relations with students and provide conscientious support.
- Students gain from opportunities to debate, research, and learn from each other.
- Except in the best lessons, students have too few opportunities to think for themselves, and to challenge the conventional wisdom.

Commentary

177. Results in the AS-level examinations have been above the national average, but, with only a tenth of candidates attaining grade A, lower than the department had hoped for. However, in A-level examinations, results are consistently above the national average, with two thirds of candidates achieving grades A and B.
178. These results were borne out by observation of lessons. Students research widely, from the library, text-books, and the internet. They can extract what they need, and structure their essays rigorously. In debate they are articulate, able to represent the aims of different sections of society such as statesmen, businessmen or factory workers. They can argue about the reasons for historical change, and assess the value of the sources available.
179. Achievement is very good. Students themselves speak warmly of how much they have improved in their handling of source material, and the organisation of essays. In general, they enjoy the intellectual challenge of studying history and make very good progress as a result.
180. Teaching varies from excellent to satisfactory, but overall is very good. Teachers have very high expectations. They know the subject well, often using their local knowledge to good effect. They plan conscientiously, and ensure that students take detailed notes. They encourage debate. In one lesson students engaged in lively role-play, which brought out the different attitudes held by Americans to the New Deal. There is close attention to the

examination marking scheme, so students can assess their own performance and know what they need to do to improve. Marking is thorough and helpful. Regular assessments of each student's progress ensure that any weakness is dealt with promptly. Teachers have very good relations with students and give them regular, conscientious support. They make themselves available to give a great deal of personal guidance, and students benefit greatly as a result.

181. In weaker lessons, the teacher relies heavily on the text-book, and provides little additional information or insight. Some lessons follow the same pattern, lacking an imaginative approach so as to stimulate a fresh and personal response to the topic. At worst, lessons may require extensive memorising of facts but little thinking.
182. Learning, accordingly, varies from satisfactory to excellent, and is good overall. Students all know what they should do, and how to acquire the necessary knowledge. They gain from the opportunities their teachers give them to debate, research, and learn from each other. They take excellent notes that help them revise. However, only in the best lessons do students challenge the views of teacher or text-book, or express alternative interpretations of the past.
183. Leadership and management are both good. Providing extra classes to improve AS performance is a well directed initiative. Evidence of the department's overall success is the large and increasing number who choose to study history in the sixth form.
184. There has been very good improvement in A-Level success since the last inspection. Previously results were below the national average, but are now above.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The A-level examination results are very good.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

185. In 2004, the standards of attainment in A-level examinations were very high in comparison with national averages. The results were also well above those of selective schools. Seventy per cent of the students gained an A or B grade in the A-level, and 90 per cent of students gained an A or B grade in the AS-Level. These results are an improvement on the 2003 results.
186. Standards seen during this inspection were also well above nationally expected levels. Students have a very good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of the examination syllabus. These include the events and circumstances of the Exile in Old Testament studies, and the many responses to the problem of evil and suffering within the Christian tradition. Students' written skills are good. Students are also good at reflecting on and responding to the topics of religion and human experience. The achievement of students seen during the inspection and over time was very good. There is insufficient evidence, particularly written work, on which to make judgements about standards of work in the religious studies course within the general studies programme.
187. Overall, teaching is very good. Some teaching is excellent. Lessons are well planned and a very effective range of activities is used. These include music and DVD's. The teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and so teach with clarity and confidence. This engages and maintains the attention of the students and so they learn very well, with diligence and enthusiasm. The pace of the lessons is brisk and considerable demands are made on

the students. Consequently, much ground is covered in the time available. An effective marking and assessment policy enables students to identify where any improvements in their work can be made. Overall, high standards are set by this teaching, and this results in impressive examination results.

188. The department is led with energy and strong commitment. Leadership is excellent and management is very good. The provision of staffing is good. Progress since the last inspection has been very good, as there is now a religious studies unit within the general studies programme for all students. The number of students taking the A-level course has risen. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design was inspected at AS and A2 levels and is reported below. One lesson in media studies was seen; teaching, learning and students' achievement were all very good.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good progress from the start of Year 12 to the end of Year 13.
- Teachers employ a range of teaching methods that are suited to the set tasks.
- Standards are above nationally expected levels at the end of Year 13.
- Studio space is satisfactory, but there are limits on the scale of objects that can be produced.
- Students have very little opportunity to develop concepts and ideas through the use of ICT.

Commentary

189. In the GCE AS-Level examination in 2003, attainment was well above the national average with 64 per cent of students attaining the highest grades A-B. In 2004 there was a decline in the number of students achieving the highest grades, but attainment remained well above the national average. In the GCE A-Level examination in 2003, 70 per cent of students attained the highest grades which was well above the national average and in 2004 standards remained well above.

190. Students in Year 12 make good progress. They analyse the work of artists such as Picasso and Roy Lichtenstein to inform their own painting. Their written annotations are of a very high standard and show the evolution of ideas over time. Students in Year 13 make very good progress and they develop their drawing and painting skills through analysis of the paintings of artists such as Caravaggio and Rossetti. There is improvement in the students' use of media and materials, which can be seen in studies in the visual diaries. The retention of students is very good, with only two students having left the course at the end of Year 12.

191. Teaching and learning are very good in the sixth form. Teachers are very well informed and provide support and advice that is based upon their detailed understanding of the AS and A-level specifications. In the most effective lessons, they employ a variety of different teaching methods that range from whole-group discussion to interaction with individual students. Teachers have high expectations and encourage students to develop their direct observational skills through figure drawing and studies of still-life groupings. Students are expected to carry out independent research and to analyse and evaluate their own artwork and that of other artists.

192. Leadership is very good and management good. The head of department has a very clear vision of how she would like to see the department develop over time. Students are encouraged to use digital photography as a means of collecting visual information for

development into final pieces of work. Spoken assessment during lessons is of a high standard and students are given relevant feedback on the quality of their work. However, more formal written records are lacking in rigour.

193. Accommodation is just satisfactory. Sixth form students have one small studio, which is set aside exclusively for their use. The bulk of their work is carried out in the larger of the two main studios. Storage is unsatisfactory and much three-dimensional work is located at the back of this studio. Resources are just adequate, but students have very limited access to computers in the art studios, and so cannot develop their skills of research or greatly use ICT as a tool during school time. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good and students spend much more time on direct observational drawing.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education was inspected and is reported below.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well and have very positive attitudes towards the subject.
- Standards are above average.
- Teaching is good and results in good learning; skills of independent learning are encouraged.
- The leadership and management of this successful department are very good.

Commentary

194. The percentage of students gaining an A-B grade in the 2004 Advanced Level examination was lower than in 2003, but well above the national average. The inspection confirmed that standards in Year 13 are above expected levels for this age group. This represents good achievement, particularly since most students have not taken a GCSE course in physical education, and consequently have had little experience of sports science. Although some students find bio-mechanics challenging, they make good progress in developing their understanding of social and cultural issues such as hooliganism in sport, women and sport, and comparative sports provision in countries such as France and the United Kingdom. Their progress is aided by very good communication skills; students enjoy discussing relevant topics and respond well to opportunities for independent, active learning, for example researching on the internet. Students of all backgrounds share in this good achievement.
195. It was possible to observe only a few lessons during the inspection. However, teaching was good. Teachers conveyed very good subject knowledge through explanation and questioning, which was particularly effective when they made students substantiate their answers. The emphasis on active research and learning, seen for example in a Year 13 lesson on hooliganism, succeeds in giving students the confidence to debate. Assessment is another strength: marking is constructive and very helpful in showing students how to improve and reach their targets. Students have very positive attitudes, enjoy the subject, respond well to the good teaching and learn well as a result.
196. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has moulded a good team and there has been very good monitoring and evaluation of progress. There is a wide range of opportunities for sport in the sixth form. Although it is voluntary, many take part and some make a valuable contribution to the school's success in sport.

197. The sixth form examination course had only recently been introduced before the previous inspection and was judged to have made a promising beginning. There is too little evidence to make a judgement on improvement since then.

BUSINESS

Economics was inspected at AS and A2 levels, and is reported below. One lesson of business studies was inspected in Year 12. Teaching and students' achievement were good.

Economics

Provision in economics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-Level results are well above national averages.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching reflects the strength of subject knowledge and challenges students appropriately.
- Students achieve well.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

198. A-Level results have been well above national averages for the past three years and show an improving trend. In all three years, all candidates gained a pass grade and achievement in terms of prior attainment has been good. A-level entries have also remained consistent, reflecting the popularity of the subject. Only the core subjects of mathematics, English and science, and also history, attract more students. In addition, a number of students choose to study economics to AS-Level to broaden their area of study before they specialise, usually in mathematics and science at A2. Last summer 31 students entered at AS-Level and 80 per cent of these achieved the top A-B grades. Results overall show an improvement since the last inspection when they were already well above national averages.

199. Observations of lessons and a scrutiny of students' work confirm that standards remain well above average and achievement is good among current sixth form economics students. Year 12 students have a very good knowledge and understanding of economic theory in relation to the market economy. Year 13 students understand the key goals of government policy and how economic theory can be applied in the management of the economy. They understand the economics of international trade and of the global economy, as was seen in a lesson on the UK trade performance. They use a range of economic vocabulary showing a clear understanding of economic concepts and can apply what they have learned to case studies, actual organisations and the real economy. All have developed the higher order skills of evaluation and analysis to write essays using appropriate economic, market or mathematical models. They have very good research skills and use a wide variety of sources including the Internet, economic journals, newspapers and texts to add to their knowledge. There is clear progression in both thinking and learning.

200. Teaching and learning are very good. Very good subject expertise is used to motivate and inform students. Expectations are high and challenging tasks are set. Students are challenged to debate topical economic issues, as was seen in a lesson on the global effects of the tsunami disaster. However, some students lack the confidence to take a full part in oral discussions; overall, students have better developed written than oral skills. Students' work is assessed on a regular basis with detailed comments designed to indicate how they might make progress. Students feel very well supported and receive regular feedback on how well they are doing. Relationships are very good.

201. The very good teaching and learning and the good achievement made by students are due to good leadership and management by an experienced teacher, assisted by two specialist teachers. However, the accommodation for economics is spread over two buildings and two of the rooms allocated are small and in one case inconveniently sited. Teaching and resources are dispersed, sometimes in rooms allocated to other subjects, and the department has no base, making day-to-day communication difficult for both teachers and students. There has been good improvement since the last 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	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Pupils' achievement	2	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	1	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well pupils learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	2	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	2	2

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