

INSPECTION REPORT

WALLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Wallington

LEA area: Sutton

Unique reference number: 103012

Headteacher: Mrs B Greatorex

Lead inspector: Mr J Bald

Dates of inspection: 17th to 20th January 2005

Inspection number: 269001

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 students: 11 to 18
Gender of students: Female
Number on roll: 1248

School address: Woodcote Road
Wallington
Surrey
Postcode: SM6 0PH

Telephone number: 020 86472380
Fax number: 020 87739984

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr L Smith

Date of previous inspection: March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is above average in size and has a large sixth form. It has recently become a specialist engineering college, and holds the Schools Achievement, Artsmark, Sportsmark and Investors in People awards. It has international school status, and the Investors in Careers award. Two-thirds of students are White, and a third come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these students are of Asian heritage. A high proportion of students have English as an additional language, but very few are in the early stages of learning English. Students joining Year 7 have reached very high standards for their age, and the proportion who have special educational needs is well below average. The school population is very stable, and its social and economic circumstances are well above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17932	John Bald	Lead inspector	
32690	Julian Webb	Lay inspector	
14871	Beryl Buteux	Team inspector	English (main school)
33160	Natalia Power	Team inspector	Religious education English (sixth form)
30553	Richard Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
32966	Rod MacKinnon	Team inspector	
8552	Wallis Hart	Team inspector	Biology Chemistry (sixth form)
30597	Robina Howells	Team inspector	Science (main school)
33727	Nick Vinall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
2183	Peter Thompson	Team inspector	Business studies Design and technology (sixth form)
1782	Andrew Lyons	Team inspector	Design and technology (main school)
20533	David Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design
4223	Garth Collard	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
1795	Joyce Sanderson	Team inspector	History English as an additional language
4426	Terry Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (main school)
17522	Nigel Stiles	Team inspector	French, Classical civilisation (sixth form)
31821	Brian McCann	Team inspector	Physical education (main school)
8622	Heather Housden	Team inspector	Physical education (sixth form)
8139	Barbara Johnstone	Team inspector	Music
10270	Sandra Teacher	Team inspector	Special educational needs
1510	Sheila Browning	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections

6 East Point
High Street
Seal
Sevenoaks
TN15 OEG

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-9
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	10-14
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	14-20
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	20-22
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23-49
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	50

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides very good education and is a harmonious learning community. Standards are very high at GCSE and well above average at A-level. Achievement in Year 11 and in the sixth form is very good, though some students could achieve more by Year 9. Teaching and learning are very good overall, and good in Years 7 to 9. Students enjoy school and work hard; relationships are very good. Leadership and management are good, with very good features; the very good leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a clear trend of development and improvement. Value for money is very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are high, with seven-tenths of GCSE and A-level passes in the top two grades.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge, high expectations, and foster a love of learning.
- There is an excellent working partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Most middle management is effective, but some managers do not monitor teaching closely enough.
- Sixth form students make a very strong contribution to school life and leadership.
- Students have many opportunities for learning beyond lessons, and for creative work.
- Students receive excellent care and guidance, including careers guidance and work experience.
- The taught week is too short, and there are weaknesses in accommodation and ICT resources.

When the school was last inspected, in 1999, standards were high and achievement very good, though there were some weaknesses at A-level. Accommodation was very cramped. Since that time, there have been satisfactory improvements in the main school. GCSE results have improved, but the school has not adapted its provision sufficiently to meet new developments in the National Curriculum, and accommodation is inadequate. The sixth form has shown good improvement, particularly in the consistency of standards across subjects. The headteacher and senior managers have placed the school in a very good position to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is very good. Standards are very high in Year 9 and Year 11. Achievement is very good in Year 11, and good in Year 9. GCSE results have been improving at an above average rate. They represent very good progress and achievement for all groups of students, including those with special educational needs. Students with minority ethnic backgrounds do very well. Students' creative work is very good. Achievement in Year 9 is good across a broad range of subjects, but students do not always reach the highest levels of the National Curriculum. Standards in the sixth form are well above average and achievement is very good.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Behaviour and attitudes are very good, and often excellent. Relationships are very

good among students of all backgrounds. Attendance is very high, but there is some lateness in the morning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan very well, expect high standards and offer many opportunities for creative work. Most teaching is demanding, though a minority in Years 7 to 9 does not move students on quickly enough. Students' hard work, in class and at home, makes an important contribution to learning throughout the school.

The main school curriculum is satisfactory. It has some very good features, but the taught week is too short to provide enough teaching time for all subjects. Resources for learning are adequate, apart from a shortage of ICT equipment that the school is tackling. Accommodation is inadequate, particularly in the library, the canteen, and for physical education. Care, guidance and support for students are excellent, and there is excellent work experience in the main school and sixth form. The school has a good relationship with parents and with other schools, and a very good relationship with the community. Relationships with local businesses are excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed good management systems across the school. Their own leadership and management are very good, and there is very good leadership and management of the sixth form, of care and guidance to students, and of several subjects. The work of the governors is satisfactory. They are well organised, monitor finance effectively, and are taking steps to tackle the school's weaknesses in accommodation and the curriculum. Statutory requirements are not met for the National Curriculum in citizenship, or for a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents have positive views of the school. A minority expressed concerns about the consistency of achievement, teaching, and behaviour. Inspectors found that these areas were all very good overall. However, inspection evidence confirmed these parents' views on some aspects of achievement in Year 9. Concerns about teaching and behaviour were confirmed only in a very small number of lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that each subject has adequate accommodation, teaching time and resources, including access to ICT.
- Improve middle management's monitoring of teaching to ensure consistent challenge to all students.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure full teaching of the citizenship National Curriculum, and report to parents on standards in the subject.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides very good education. Standards are very high and students achieve very well, both in their work and in their personal development. Students' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are excellent, and many show strong qualities of leadership and service to others. Teaching and learning are very good, and the sixth form is led and managed very well. Standards and the consistency of achievement across subjects have shown significant improvement since the last inspection. The cost-effectiveness of the sixth form is very good.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are high, with over two-thirds of passes at grades A and B.
- The very wide range of subjects provides very good opportunities for all students.
- Teachers know their subjects in very good detail, and share their learning very well with students.
- Excellent teaching in textiles leads to work of outstanding creativity and beauty.
- Care, guidance, support for students, and opportunities for work experience, are excellent.
- There are many opportunities for the enrichment of learning outside lessons and for creative work.
- Some subjects have too little access to ICT, and there are too few books and other resources in the library.
- Accommodation for physical education is inadequate, and too few students take part.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good. Teaching, learning and achievement are very good in English and French, and provision is led and managed very well.
Mathematics	Very good. Teaching and learning are very good, standards well above average and achievement very good. There is a wide range of courses.
Science	Very good in chemistry and biology. Very good teaching and learning, and innovative courses lead to high standards and very good achievement.
Information and communication technology	Very good. Very good, and sometimes excellent, teaching leads to high standards. Achievement is very good and the subject is increasingly popular.
Humanities	Very good in geography and history, good in classical studies. Students achieve very well in response to very good teaching in history and geography. Standards in the new course in classical studies are above average and achievement is good, but some students could achieve more.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Excellent. Imaginative teaching, and an outstanding creative response from students, lead to work of high quality, and often of great beauty.
Visual and performing arts and media	Very good in art and design. Standards are high and achievement very good. Teaching is imaginative, and provision is led and managed very well.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision is unsatisfactory , as facilities are inadequate for the needs of the sixth form population. Teaching, learning and achievement for students

taking advanced courses in physical education and dance are **very good**.

Business	Good. Standards are above average and sometimes higher, and teaching is good. Some students with English as an additional language have difficulty with their written work. Overall, however, achievement is good.
General education	Very good. Sixth form students have a wide and carefully planned range of opportunities to develop their learning, social and leadership skills, both in additional teaching and in opportunities for work experience and service.
<i>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'.</i>	

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Advice, guidance and support are excellent. There are extensive and very effective arrangements to guide and support students joining the sixth form, including those who are new to the school. Teachers and sixth form tutors know students very well, and guidance is closely matched to individual needs, with very high levels of support for students who most need it. Standards and progress are monitored very closely, with very effective guidance on improving work. Excellent work experience builds very well on the provision in the main school, and gives outstanding preparation for the world of work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. Standards, teaching and learning are closely monitored, and there is a very strong sense of teamwork and common purpose among all staff and students. Finance is closely monitored. New courses are developed to meet students' needs in the context of other local provision.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Almost all students expressed very positive views of the sixth form to inspectors. They particularly appreciated the levels of personal support from teachers, and teachers' knowledge of their subjects. A small minority of students had concerns about teaching methods and teachers' subject knowledge in individual classes. Inspectors found some justification for these views, but no evidence that they led to teaching that was less than satisfactory. The school has begun to take action on these concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are very high in Year 9 national tests and GCSE, and well above average at A-level. Achievement from students' starting points is very good overall. It is very good in examination results and in students' work in Year 11 and the sixth form. Achievement in Year 9 is good across the full range of subjects, but the highest-attaining students do not consistently reach outstanding standards for their age. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE and Year 9 national test results are consistently very high; GCSE achievement is very good.
- A-level results are consistently well above average and represent very good achievement.
- There are high proportions of A* and A grades at GCSE, and A and B grades at A-level.
- There is a high level of consistency in examination success across all subjects.
- Students with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve very well.
- Gifted and talented students achieve very well, but could achieve more in some subjects in Year 9.
- Students with special educational needs achieve very well as a result of very effective support from teachers and other students.
- Students achieve very well in creative and practical subjects, and in their work outside lessons.
- Some subject leaders do not use National Curriculum levels consistently enough in monitoring standards.

Commentary

1. Students join the school with very high standards in English, mathematics and science, and above average standards in ICT. However, their standards in other subjects, both practical and creative subjects and academic subjects that are not tested in Year 6, are often broadly average for their age.
2. From this complex starting point, overall achievement in Year 9 is good. Test results are consistently well above average, and have been in line with those of similar schools over the past two years. In 2004, they were well above average in English, in line with similar schools in mathematics, and below average in science. Test results and teachers' assessments in mathematics showed three-tenths of students reaching exceptional standards for their age – three levels above the expected Level 5 – but very low numbers achieving this in other tested subjects. Lesson observations in mathematics also indicated that students could achieve still more if the level of challenge were more consistent – where teaching was excellent, the whole class reached an exceptionally high standard in the topic covered. On the other hand, students' achievement in other subjects, including creative and practical subjects, was good to very good in every subject except citizenship and ICT, where it is held back by lack of teaching time.
3. Students' achievements in Years 7 to 9 prepare them well for their GCSE courses, and the school is taking action to improve the match of teaching to the full range of students' learning needs in all subjects. However, some subject leaders do not yet use National Curriculum level descriptions, or other equivalent measures, to track progress and ensure that work is set at a consistently challenging level, and this aspect of middle management needs to be made more consistent.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	43.8 (42.1)	33.3 (33.4)
mathematics	46.1 (46.2)	35.5 (35.4)
science	41.7 (42.0)	33.1 (33.6)

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

4. Very good teaching, combined with close attention to the requirements of examinations and high levels of commitment from students, leads to very high standards and very good achievement at GCSE. There are significantly fewer variations between subjects than in most schools. Standards are significantly above average in every subject, with seven-tenths of passes at A* and A grades and a low proportion below grade B. The value-added measure, which measures GCSE standards against students' standards on joining the school, is well above average, and GCSE results have been well above those of similar schools in each of the past four years. The standard of work seen during the inspection reflected these examination results closely.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	99 (100)	51 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	97 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	417.0 (57.3)	282.5 (34.7)

There were 188 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. A new system for calculating points was introduced in 2004.

5. The school's high levels of care and guidance ensure that students with special educational needs achieve very well, and they reach similar standards to those of others in their classes by Year 11. Students with English as an additional language also achieve very well, though there is some variation in their results between subjects. The school has identified a growing number of these students who have weaknesses in grammatical features of writing and some aspects of comprehension. It has begun to develop teaching methods to meet their specific needs, though this work is in its initial stages. Gifted and talented students achieve very well over their school career, though they are among the students who could achieve more in some subjects by Year 9. The achievement of all students is boosted by their participation in enrichment activities. No trend in Year 9 results was available at the time of the inspection, but the trend in GCSE results has been above average since the last inspection, despite the very good results that were already being achieved at that time. The school exceeded its targets for 2004. This represents good overall improvement in achievement since the last inspection, and the school is very well placed to improve further.

Sixth form

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

	School results	National results

Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	98.1 (99.5)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	69.2 (67.0)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per student	345.6 (336.5)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 163 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Almost all students proceed to the sixth form, with an additional twenty joining from other schools. Students begin their sixth form courses with well above average standards in their subjects, and some with very high overall standards. Very good teaching and their continued commitment to study, enable students to bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level very successfully, so that A-level results are well above average and achievement is very good. As at GCSE, there is a high level of consistency between subjects, and the school takes effective action when standards fall below the expected level. There are no significant variations in the sixth form achievement of different groups of students, though, as in the main school, a small number of students with minority ethnic backgrounds have some difficulties with advanced literacy skills, particularly in business education. The overall quality of work seen during the inspection was well above average, and showed very good achievement. Sixth form standards are now very consistent, and have shown good improvement since the last inspection, when several subjects did not meet their targets.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good in the main school and excellent in the sixth form. Attendance is very high, and punctuality is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' very positive attitudes and hard work make a key contribution to achievement.
- Students willingly take on positions of responsibility and are anxious to support one another.
- There is a high level of harmony among students from all ethnic backgrounds.
- Sixth form students take a leading role in the school's life and work.
- Behaviour is almost always exemplary, but there are occasional lapses.
- Attendance is very high, and unauthorised absence is very rare.
- Most students arrive on time in the morning, but more could be done to promote punctuality.
- There is good overall provision for spiritual development, but no daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

7. Students are very positive about the school. They enjoy its working environment, and have a sense of pride in being part of a very high achieving community. Students have a real desire to succeed, as well as to support and help others. Relationships are very good, and often excellent, enabling all groups of students to grow in confidence and self-esteem over their time in the school. Students from all ethnic backgrounds work together in harmony and make friends. The popular and varied programme of activities outside lessons is very well supported and much appreciated, and opportunities to take responsibility are grasped with enthusiasm. Students are keen to contribute to the smooth running of the school through traditional roles such as form captains and prefects, and many do much more, especially in the sixth form.
8. The school has very high expectations of good behaviour. It is very good overall, and most is excellent. Lapses in behaviour are few in number, but they do occur, and the concerns expressed by some parents about behaviour before the inspection were partly borne out. The school is revising its behaviour policy to tackle them more effectively. Movement around the school is not easy in cramped and narrow corridors but students manage to do so without undue disturbance. There have been no permanent exclusions for many years and students confirm that there are no incidents of bullying or racial harassment.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	793	3	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	11	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	24	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	142	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	26	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	81	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	19	0	0
Black or Black British – African	29	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	12	0	0
Chinese	31	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	33	0	0

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

9. Attendance is very high and is closely monitored by tutors. Most students are punctual in the morning, but too many are late. Some of this unpunctuality is caused by transport difficulties, but some students take a casual attitude to being on time, and the school does not monitor punctuality and the late book closely enough. The school began action on this point following feedback received during the inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.2
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.

Personal development

10. Provision for students' spiritual development is good, and many departments contribute. There are very good opportunities in English through the use and interpretation of poetry. In religious education students reflect on personal beliefs and learn to understand and respect others' religions. Some excellent practice was seen in the personal, social and health education

programme where a careers poster competition was used to promote self-esteem and to encourage very high expectations. However, spirituality was not a strong feature in most of the assemblies and tutorial periods seen, and there were missed opportunities in some lessons. The school does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Attractive and aesthetically pleasing displays around the school that enhance learning and contribute to students' spiritual development.

11. Very good provision for moral development is embedded in the aims and ethos of the school, and consistently reinforced. Moral issues and the importance of acting responsibly arise in the work of many departments, and students respond sensibly and with interest. The moral values that inform decision making and the consideration of right and wrong are a strong feature in religious education, and students learn to respect rules and the performance of others in sport and physical education. Teachers are very good role models, setting very high standards of morality, expecting and maintaining a very good working atmosphere throughout the school.
12. Provision for social development is excellent. Students' ability and preparedness to work well and harmoniously together, to demonstrate very high standards of courtesy, consideration and respect is a very strong feature throughout the school, and outstanding in the sixth form. The school is a very inclusive community where differing groups of students work together very well in an atmosphere of trust and harmony. There are many opportunities and great encouragement for students to take responsibility in the school. These include regular contributions to assemblies, working as tutor group captains and as representatives on the School Leadership Board.
13. The school makes very good and wide-ranging provision for cultural development. Work in many departments reflects the range of cultures represented in the school and in modern society, and there are frequent special events. Provision for cultural development makes an important contribution to the school's harmonious atmosphere and builds all students' confidence. There is a particularly extensive programme of educational visits to theatres and galleries, and students have many opportunities to take part in performances. The school's very successful annual programme of plays and productions encourages a large number of students to participate in both school and public theatre venues. There are many opportunities for students to contribute to the technical and scenic elements. Generous time and great effort is given to fundraising events that support local, national and international charities.

Sixth form

14. Sixth form students play a leading role in all aspects of the school's life and work, and their contribution is much appreciated by the headteacher and staff. Their excellent attitudes and behaviour set a strong example to other students. Work undertaken by the sixth form includes organising a sports programme and supporting tutor groups in the lower school, and running the 'Friendly Faces' support and advice centre. Attendance is very high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. Teaching is very good overall – it is good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school. It is very good in the sixth form, where the wide range of courses meets students' needs very well. Care, guidance and support for students are excellent. The school has very good relationships with other schools and the community, and a good working relationship with parents.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, and leads to very good achievement. Teaching is almost always very good in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. It is good in Years 7 to 9, where it has some very good features, but could at times be more demanding. Teachers' use of assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and students work closely together, and share a commitment to high achievement.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is almost always very good, and frequently excellent.
- Lessons are planned in very good detail, with very good pace and time management.
- Teachers make very good use of the available ICT facilities.
- There is a small but very significant proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Some teaching in Years 7 to 9 spends too much time consolidating existing skills.
- Students are exceptionally conscientious in completing homework and coursework.
- Work is well marked, with good guidance on improvement.
- Much assessment in Years 7 to 9 does not use National Curriculum level descriptions, or equivalent measures, to promote the highest possible standards.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 205 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (3%)	103 (50%)	69 (34%)	23 (11%)	3 (1%)	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.

15. Teachers and students work with a strong sense of common purpose throughout the school. This is the basis of the school's very good relationships and working atmosphere. It leads to learning that is consistently good or better, and very good overall. Teachers plan lessons in detail, manage classes very well, and sustain a very good pace of work. They set frequent homework, which students complete to a very good standard, and mark work regularly and well. With rare exceptions, caused by difficulties in recruiting specialist staff, teachers have broad and deep knowledge of their subjects, and use this to generate a sense of shared intellectual investigation. Where the teaching is excellent, this leads to exceptional progress.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent understanding of the mathematics of Ramanujan, combined with excellent planning and relationships, enabled a Year 8 class to investigate differences between proof and demonstration.

There was a sense of suspense as the Year 8 class awaited the teacher's arrival...not surprisingly...some students correctly anticipated that they had found the second solution for the expression of 1729 as the sum of two cubes, first identified by the mathematician Ramanujan. This led to a focus on the difference between proof and demonstration. Students' mathematically correct and concise expressions reflected the teacher's excellent explanations, warmly couched in clear and precise language such as 'from that we could argue...' A conundrum for which a general solution had been deduced in another lesson was projected for reference. Fired by this excellent introduction, students tested, on partners, their argument to express the relationship of the exterior angle of a triangle to the interior angles with the mature mathematical language expected of A* GCSE students. A wonderful sense of deep thinking pervaded the room as students confidently gave explanations to the class and explored a variety of approaches together. Well-judged praise such as 'that is lovely', referring to a student's algebraic statements served to enhance appreciation of an elegant solution. Armed with substantial homework questions to develop concepts and applications, the students' imagination was further captivated by the idea that mathematicians sometimes 'set their own games and own rules'. This

excellent learning experience, taking just three-quarters of an hour, was rooted in a fascination for mathematics, which the teacher had engendered in the class since Year 7.

16. The best qualities of the teaching appear most consistently in Years 10 and 11, where a close focus on examination requirements leads to intense concentration on standards and achievement. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is very good in just under half of the lessons, and most of the remainder are good. In a fifth of lessons, teachers concentrate too much on reinforcing skills that are already secure. Learning remains almost always satisfactory, but work lacks breadth and challenge. The school has identified this issue in some mathematics and science lessons. It is working to improve the position by focusing more closely on the higher levels of the National Curriculum, but this is not yet carried through with sufficient consistency by some middle managers. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, which stems from weaknesses in designing tasks for students, is very low.
17. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 does much to broaden the scope of students' achievement across subjects, particularly in those where they have not reached such high standards in their primary schools. Teachers throughout the school make very good use of available resources, including ICT where it is available, and offer a very good range of practical and creative activities. There are particular strengths in art and design, music, design and technology and physical education in this respect, and physical education teachers are particularly effective in overcoming the disadvantages of inadequate accommodation. Across the school, teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. Most teaching is also very well matched to the needs of students with English as an additional language. Provision for those with specific difficulties in writing is satisfactory, and the school is working to develop it.
18. The overall quality of assessment and its use in planning is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, where teachers focus students' attention closely on the requirements of examinations and ways of meeting them. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, and includes good, informative marking in most subjects, though a minority of marking does not give enough guidance on improving work. In some subjects, notably design and technology, teachers use information from the National Curriculum level descriptions to ensure that students are working towards the highest levels of which they are capable. Most subjects, however, do not do this consistently, and this is one reason why the highest-attaining students are not consistently reaching the highest possible standards in Year 9. The school is taking steps to improve this aspect of assessment, and there were signs of improvement in some classes and subjects during the inspection. However, more action is needed from middle managers to maximise the use of assessment to raise standards.

Sixth form

19. The strengths in teaching and learning in GCSE courses are maintained and extended in the sixth form. Teaching during the inspection was very good or better in over two-thirds of lessons, and good in almost all of the remainder. Sixth form students work with great maturity and sense of purpose, and are particularly conscientious in preparation and homework. Teachers provide very effective additional support to those who need it, though the scope of independent learning in some subjects is restricted by limited access to ICT and by library resources that do not fully meet their needs. There was some excellent teaching in ICT. Consistently excellent teaching in textiles results in work that is beautiful as well as technically excellent.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets the needs of most students well, but some aspects need to be improved, particularly provision for citizenship, for using ICT in all subjects, and for collective worship. Its overall quality is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities for learning outside lessons. The

sixth form curriculum is very good. The school has good teaching and support staff and, overall, adequate resources for learning. Accommodation is inadequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum makes good to very good provision for English, mathematics and science subjects.
- Teaching time over the week is too short, but there are plans to extend it.
- Statutory requirements are not met in citizenship and for a daily act of collective worship.
- Provision for students with English as an additional language and for gifted and talented students meets their needs well in the long-term, but its consistency could be improved.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good, with very good features.
- Students are very well prepared for the next phase of education and the world of work.
- Opportunities for the enrichment of learning and for creative work are very good.
- Accommodation is cramped and inadequate, particularly for physical education and the library.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

20. The curriculum provides a broad and generally balanced programme. It makes good provision for personal, social and health education, with very effective sex and relationships education and education against the misuse of drugs. Further good features include drama, Latin and critical thinking in Years 10 and 11. The school's outstanding arrangements for work experience and highly effective guidance prepare students particularly well for higher education and for work. However, teaching time over the week is an hour below that recommended nationally, and this has made it difficult for the school to adopt new requirements for the National Curriculum that have arisen since the last inspection. There is barely enough time for several subjects, including ICT and religious education, and too little to cover the National Curriculum for citizenship in Years 7 to 9. Work experience in Years 10 to 12 is particularly well organised, and careers education is very effective. The school's new status as an engineering college builds well in its very good provision for design and technology, but is too recent to have made an impact on the curriculum.
21. Teachers and teaching assistants make very effective provision for students with special educational needs, adapting work well to meet their need, and ensuring very good long term progress. The school has identified an increase in the number of students with English as an additional language who have difficulties with some aspects of English. The curriculum meets these students' needs well overall. Specialist teaching is not yet fully adapted to their specific needs, but is satisfactory and improving, with support from the local education authority. Gifted and talented students benefit from very good learning opportunities over their time in the school, but the level of challenge to them could be made more consistent, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
22. Students have very good opportunities to work creatively across a wide range of subjects, and to take part in productions. Most subjects offer one or more clubs or other opportunities for learning outside lessons, and almost all students take part. There is a particularly well-organised and systematic programme of educational visits.
23. The school has a sufficient number of teachers and support staff, and they are, overall, very well qualified for their work. It has, however, experienced some recent difficulties with staffing in some subjects. The headteacher's very close attention to the quality of teaching and to the skills new staff can bring to the school is making an important contribution to improving staffing, teaching, and middle management. There is a good level of participation in professional development training, and this is being extended to all of the school staff.
24. The school is significantly bigger than at its last inspection. While the school has made improvements to its accommodation since that time, some basic weaknesses have not been

tackled. Facilities for physical education remain inadequate, with only one gymnasium, very poor changing facilities and no showers. Many classrooms are too small and cramped, corridors are narrow, the library and canteen are too small and there are insufficient toilets. The local education authority has determined that the library is half of the size required for the number of students. Much of the building is in need of refurbishment, but outside areas are reasonably well maintained. The school plans to address most of these weaknesses in the near future, and to improve accommodation for physical education through building a new sports hall, though it has no funds for this project. Resources for learning are adequate overall, but there are too few ICT facilities to enable all departments to make full use of their potential for teaching and learning, and the library is too small to hold the books needed to support learning. The headteacher has identified areas of spending that can be adjusted to free more funds to modernise the school's resources.

Sixth form

25. The sixth form curriculum meets students needs very well through a range of 30 subjects at AS and A-level, which can be adapted very well to individual needs. Students applying for Oxford or Cambridge universities receive effective additional support. All students also attend a course designed to enhance their leadership and management skills and can work towards a key skills qualification or take part in a Young Enterprise scheme. Work experience is very effectively continued in Year 12. The curriculum is further enhanced, by very good extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. The sixth form meets the needs of all groups of students equally effectively. Teachers are very well qualified and knowledgeable about the subjects and courses they teach. Resources are good, and resources for A-level ICT are very good, though some subjects would benefit from better access to ICT. Students have their own purpose built sixth form building, which is spacious and well maintained, but opportunities for research are limited by the lack of books in the library for many subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is very good, and provision for care, advice and guidance is excellent. Students have very good opportunities to be involved in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships throughout the school provide a consistent basis for advice and guidance.
- Academic and careers guidance, including work experience, is excellent.
- There is excellent support for students in public care.
- The headteacher and senior staff make an important personal contribution to students' care and well being.
- Guidance through the personal, social and health education programme is realistic and effective.
- There is highly effective additional support for students when they most need it.
- Arrangements to support students joining the main school and sixth form are excellent.

Commentary

26. The school has developed excellent systems to introduce new students to the school and to their classmates. Information from the very wide range of primary schools attended by students is carefully collated, and sixth form students help ensure that new students get to know each other quickly and make friends. The school's trusting and caring environment then provides excellent support for students of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Close monitoring of their academic and personal development ensures that well-informed support and guidance is readily available. A confidential counselling service has recently been organised following a survey of students, and several students told inspectors how effective

they had found it. Additional help for students who need it is readily available and very effective, and the school is particularly well organised in its support for students in public care. Parents of students with special educational needs told inspectors how much they appreciated the level of support their children received, both from staff and from other students. Guidance provided through the personal, social and health education programme is very well organised and realistic, building students' confidence and providing them with very clear information on potential dangers.

27. Students receive exceptionally clear guidance on option choices and careers. By the time they come to make choices, students are used to thinking about their own personal profile and the opportunities available to them in school and beyond. There is a range of interesting activities that capture the students' imagination and ensure that they consider the widest possible range of options. Year 9 students research professions of their choice and produce posters for a competition. Students in Year 10 and 11 are able to make good use of the Internet for a form of psychometric profiling to better match their post 16 choices to their strengths and interests. Specialist teaching of careers is very highly skilled, and benefits from close co-operation with Connexions.

Sixth Form

28. Care and guidance for sixth form students, including those new to the school, is excellent. Students in Year 12 settle in quickly, and their parents expressed to inspectors their appreciation of the care taken to monitor their progress especially during the first term. Full and comprehensive support systems ensure that high standards are maintained. The excellent careers service continues in the sixth form with an extensive range of contacts used to ensure that students have first hand information from universities, colleges, professions and businesses to help plan their future. Practical experience continues with careful planning of gap years for some students, who return to recount their experiences a year later.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with other educational establishments are good in the main school, and very good in head of the sixth form. The school has a very good partnership with the community, and good partnerships with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents provide strong support to the school and are closely involved in their children's education.
- The school makes good use of surveys of parents' views, and uses newsletters well to feed back to them.
- Parents strongly appreciate the additional support provided to students who most need it.
- There have been some lapses in communication with parents, which the school is addressing.
- Students' annual reports give good information on most subjects, but do not include citizenship and personal, social and health education.
- Very close links with the community provide extensive opportunities for students to broaden their experience of, and outlook upon, life beyond school.
- Sixth form students provide valuable help to students in other schools.

Commentary

29. The school keeps in close touch with parents through personal contacts, the work of parent governors, and regular questionnaires at its well-attended parents' evenings. A full-page report on the questionnaire returns, the issues raised and the planned response by the school is included in an autumn newsletter, making it clear that suggestions are welcomed and acted upon. Parents at a very well attended Year 12 parents' evening during the inspection said that communication had improved, and that they appreciated the detail and frequency of

newsletters. Parents of students joining the main school and sixth form have very good information about the school, and all parents have good access to teachers, the headteacher and senior staff. The prospectus is attractive and informative, and the governors' annual report to parents contains full information. The school accepts, however, that there have been some lapses in the distribution and delivery of letters to parents and of newsletters. It plans to tackle this by improving internal distribution procedures and by developing the use of its website. The process for providing information for parents about students' academic progress has improved recently with the introduction of a parental feedback section in the annual reports. Students' annual reports are informative on most aspects of achievement and personal development, but do not include standards in citizenship and personal, social and health education.

30. Overall, parents' views of the school are very positive, and they provide close support for their children's education. A minority of parents at the parents meeting and in replies to the questionnaire were concerned about behaviour, overall achievement and the consistency of teachers' subject knowledge. Inspection evidence showed that achievement in the long term was very good, though it could be improved in Year 9. Inspectors found that most behaviour was excellent, but that there was a small amount of misbehaviour in some classes. The school has begun to deal with this by reviewing its behaviour policy and working with the teachers in these classes. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects was found to be very good overall, with outstanding features, but the school had identified one area in which subject knowledge needed to be developed, and was taking action to improve it.
31. Partnerships with the local community, particularly with over 1000 businesses and employers, benefit the students greatly. Numerous visitors to the school contribute to broadening the students' knowledge of many subjects, and make an important contribution to their personal development. The school has a very effective relationship with other schools and colleges, and with teacher training institutions, particularly King's College, London.

Sixth Form

32. Sixth form students have a very positive view of the school and the opportunities it provides. They derive great benefit from the school's very good relationships with universities and local colleges. The annual careers evening for students in Years 12 and 13 ensures that students and their parents have detailed advice on admissions criteria for universities and entry to a wide range of professions. Students give valuable help in local schools, particularly to students with learning difficulties and refugees.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and management, and the sixth form is very well led and managed. The overall effectiveness of other aspects of management is good. The work of the governors is satisfactory, and they have recently made good adjustments to their procedures. The school does not meet statutory requirements for citizenship, or for a daily act of collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An excellent partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher provides clear direction for the school and is improving all aspects of leadership and management.
- The sixth form, and provision for care, support and guidance to students, are very well managed.
- The senior leadership team is well organised, but some responsibilities overlap with middle management.
- Some subject leadership is outstanding, but some is not focused closely enough on raising standards.
- An excellent handbook provides very clear guidance and information to all staff.

- The school pays close and effective attention to securing equal opportunities for all students.
- Improvements in accommodation since the last inspection have not kept pace with the needs of the school.

Commentary

33. In her two years in the school, the headteacher has formed a clear view of its strengths and of areas that need to be improved, and has taken effective action. She has remodelled the senior leadership team, and paid careful attention to the appointment of new staff, particularly the deputy headteacher and other staff with leadership and management responsibilities. With the deputy headteacher, she has identified areas for improvement in departments, and established good lines of responsibility from subjects to senior managers. These arrangements are effective overall, but there are still some overlaps between middle and senior management responsibilities, and the organisation of subjects into faculties does not always make a clear contribution to effective management, particularly where subjects in a faculty have relatively little in common. The overall quality of middle management is good, and very good leadership and management in several departments are raising standards and improving achievement. Some middle managers, however, do not make fully effective use of assessment and monitoring to ensure that students are consistently reaching the highest possible standards in Years 7 to 9. The school makes an important contribution to initial teacher training, and makes very effective provision for all new staff, including newly qualified teachers. The very clear and well-organised staff handbook makes an excellent contribution to guidance and consistency.
34. The school improvement plan is an effective working document, and is reflected in the development plans of departments and faculties. It is carefully costed, with funds effectively allocated to meet educational priorities. The headteacher has recently improved the schools' analysis of expenditure, and areas of potential saving have been identified, with steps taken to put these savings into practice at the earliest opportunity. The school has good policies for promoting race equality and to ensure equality of access and opportunity for students with special educational needs. These are closely reflected in its work, and the school makes good use of data to track the achievement of all groups of students. Plans to improve accommodation, which has not developed quickly enough to meet the needs of the expanding number of students since the last inspection, have been brought forward, though improvement in physical education facilities depends on new building that is still in the planning stage. All of these steps indicate increasingly efficient use of the school's broadly average funding.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,973,300	Balance from previous year	52,001
Total expenditure	4,872,064	Balance carried forward to the next	153,237
Expenditure per pupil	3,945		

35. Governance is satisfactory. Governors keep in effective touch with the school, and have recently begun a series of organised visits. Monitoring of provision for students with special educational needs is well established and very effective, and parent governors are making an effective contribution to the governing body. Policies meet statutory requirements and are regularly reviewed. Since the last inspection, however, governors have not ensured that the teaching week is long enough to meet new developments in the National Curriculum, and have moved too slowly to make essential improvements in accommodation. These issues are now being tackled, and the principles of best value are being applied effectively, both in purchases and in analysis of the services the school provides. The circumstances of the school make it

impractical to provide a daily act of collective worship involving all students, but more action could be taken to improve the spiritual content of assemblies and morning tutorial periods.

Work-Related Learning (WRL)

Provision in work-related learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work experience provides an excellent introduction to a range of career options.
- Most students take at least two courses with work-related content, and achieve very well in them.
- WRL is very effectively integrated into the personal, social and health education programme.
- The school has an exceptionally wide range of partners in the community.

Commentary

36. Students begin to learn about the world of work in Years 8 and 9 and progress to a satisfactory range of courses with work-related contents in later years. In Year 8, students learn about the links between jobs, income and lifestyles and consider the implications of these links on the lifestyle they want for themselves in Year 10 very well. Most students take at least two courses with a work-related content in Years 10 and 11 – business education, design and technology and ICT. Standards in these courses are high, and achievement is very good. Students relate what they learn to the world of work effectively, and many speakers from industry and commerce take part in the courses. The school's recent designation as an Engineering College has added impetus to a review of the work-related content of all courses. An engineering day is held for Year 9 and 10 students each year and the Young Enterprise programme is run for students mainly in Year 12. The school's long-established work experience programme is a major strength.

Example of outstanding practice

Three work experience placements, between Year 10 and Year 12, provide excellent opportunities for students to sample a wide range of career choices, and to develop responsibility and social skills.

Provision for work experience is exceptionally well organised and managed. The school has held the Investors in Careers award for ten years, and has built up a database of over a thousand partner companies and organisations. Students are encouraged to add to this by finding their own placements. Two-thirds do so each year, and their excellent attitudes during their work experience lead to a constant stream of new entries to the database. Students in Year 9 accompany a parent or relative to work over two days, and are further prepared for their placements in personal, social and health education lessons. The school keeps in touch with them during their placements by visits or telephone. Students record and evaluate their work through the school's 'World at Work' booklet. Students who had completed the full programme told inspectors that they had enjoyed it and that it had greatly helped them in decisions about their future.

37. All activities are very well managed and co-ordinated, and standards are closely monitored. Students keep a 'World of Work Skills Record' in which they note the key and other work-related skills they have developed. Staff are very highly qualified, and the school has an advanced skills teacher for careers.

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

- Results at GCSE and in Year 9 national tests are consistently very high.
- Standards are high in reading and writing, and outstanding in speaking and listening.
- Students achieve very well by the end of Year 11 but some could do better in Year 9.
- Students with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Highly skilled teachers stimulate students to become independent learners.
- Students' responsible attitudes and clarity of purpose contribute much to their achievement.

Commentary

38. Standards are very high in Year 9 and Year 11. Achievement is very good by Year 11, but teachers' assessments show few students reaching exceptional standards for their age in Year 9, and this aspect of achievement could be improved. Speaking skills are very high throughout the school, and students express their thoughts, ideas and opinions fluently. Their writing is accurate, well organised, and often enlivened with originality and humour. Teachers foster an individual approach to all tasks, and their skilful questioning encourages students to think for themselves and search out the meanings from stories, plays, poems, and non-fiction material. As a result, students develop and apply a wide range of research skills. Students with English as a second language achieve well, and often very well, particularly in speaking and listening, where their confidence grows significantly as they move through the school. A minority of these students, however, have features in their writing that reflect the structures of their home language rather than English. The school has identified this issue and is beginning to tackle it. Students with special educational needs reach very high standards, and their achievement is very good.
39. Teaching is good overall, and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan their lessons well and provide a range of activities to match the needs of different groups of students. Their sensitive approaches stimulate critical thinking and inspire students to sift their ideas carefully and select the most relevant arguments to support their views and comments. Teachers make increasingly effective use of a wide range of methods, including independent and group work. Students respond enthusiastically, developing their own learning styles and achieving very clear understanding of the texts that they study. In a minority of lessons in Years 7 to 9, planning does not match work closely enough to students' learning needs, and this limits achievement. Teachers mark students' written work in detail, indicating the standards achieved, targets to attempt and ways to improve. This enables students to evaluate their own learning and sustains their efforts to achieve as well as they can. Assessment systems enable teachers to track the individual performance of all students, to identify weaknesses and provide help where needed. These are not, however, linked closely enough to the highest levels set out in the National Curriculum.
40. Leadership and management are very good, and responsibility is very effectively shared throughout the department. The best possible use is made of the department's cramped accommodation and resources, including those in the library, are used to good advantage. The department takes care to involve all students in its work, providing sympathetic and effective support for those who need it, with good use of sixth form mentors for younger

students. Its caring ethos is reinforced by attractive displays of the written work of students of all abilities. Provision has shown good improvement since the last inspection, and the school is well placed to develop it further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Provision is very good. Each department has considered the use of language and literacy in its subject, and has policies for developing key vocabulary and for promoting discussion and writing. These are used very well across the whole school. The quality of discussion is consistently high and students are encouraged to write at length, though teachers are not always consistent in correcting spelling and punctuation mistakes. Teachers make effective use of the library, despite its cramped facilities.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have an excellent command of their subject.
- Students achieve very well and standards are well above average.
- Teaching is very good in all the languages offered.
- Leadership and management of the faculty are very strong indeed.
- Assessment arrangements are particularly effective in helping students to progress.
- Students are not sufficiently challenged to initiate the spoken language.

Commentary

42. By Year 9, standards in French, German and Spanish are well above average. Levels of comprehension of the spoken and written language are very high. Students have a very good grasp of tenses and structures because of the focused emphasis by teachers on mastery of grammar; this enables them to produce extended language. On the other hand, while students speak accurately and usually with excellent pronunciation, they are still reticent to initiate the foreign language for real communication. Written work is normally very accurate, and often imaginative. These high standards are sustained to Year 11, and are reflected in the high level of A and A* grades in all languages at GCSE. Students in Year 11 have a very wide vocabulary, can produce complex language and have no difficulty in understanding spoken language at near-native speed. Overall achievement is very good in all three languages.
43. Teaching is very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and all use the foreign language exclusively for all instructions and communication in the classroom. This ensures that students have regular exposure to the foreign language and contributes to their outstanding levels of comprehension. Teachers structure their lessons very well to include a wide range of activities and resources, and the increased use of ICT to present lessons and reinforce learning is enhancing students' motivation. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers praise their students frequently and in almost every case students thrive in lessons, which are relaxed yet purposeful. Consequently students have a very positive attitude to their studies, behaviour is predominantly excellent and they collaborate very well in group activities. Students are willing to question, offer ideas and take pains to produce accurate work but would benefit from more challenge to speak the foreign language unaided and for their own purposes. Strong assessment, including helpful and constructive marking, gives students a very clear picture of their progress and what they need to do to improve.
44. Leadership and management are very good. The faculty is particularly well organised, with high quality documentation and planning. It supports a wide range of language courses, including opportunities for enrichment at all levels. Teaching, learning and standards are closely and effectively monitored. Teachers in management posts teach to a high standard

and have built a very strong sense of teamwork and commitment among their colleagues. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection both in Year 9 and at GCSE, particularly at the highest grades. There has also been a significant improvement in teaching, including very effective use of ICT. Overall, improvement has been very good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high, and GCSE results show very good achievement.
- Teachers know the subject very well; teaching is very good in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, but pace, challenge and the range of teaching strategies in most lessons need to be improved.
- Almost all students work very hard, but a small number sometimes misbehave in lessons.
- Assessment is thorough, but is not always used well to set targets for students.
- Leadership is good, but management could do more to promote the most effective teaching.

Commentary

45. In Year 9 national tests in 2004, nearly all students reached two levels higher than the expected Level 5, with a third securing Level 8. These results are in line with those from recent years, and with those of similar schools. At GCSE in 2004, two-thirds of students gained A* or A grades compared to 10 per cent nationally, and a significant number of talented students secured A* or A grades for GCSE statistics. The standard of work seen during the inspection was similar. Students' confidence in using appropriate mathematical terminology is a particular strength. Overall, this pattern represents good achievement in Year 9, and very good achievement in Year 11. There are no significant differences in the achievements of different groups of students.
46. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. There is a small but very significant amount of exceptional teaching. Teachers throughout the school know the subject very well. They set consistently challenging and interesting work in Years 10 and 11, and learning in these year groups is very good. However, too much work in Years 7 to 9 consists of large numbers of relatively unchallenging questions. This does not build effectively on the high levels of knowledge and understanding which students bring from their primary schools. Nevertheless, students' very good attitudes and consistent application to work in class and at home result in good learning. The best teaching in Years 7 to 9 is excellent, and demonstrates students' ability to understanding complex mathematical ideas when fully challenged (see cameo following paragraph 15 above).
47. Most students take pride in working accurately and neatly, so that their exercise books form a valuable source for reference and revision. There was, however, a small amount of misbehaviour in a minority of lessons during the inspection, all in Years 10 and 11. This did not affect the overall quality of learning and achievement, but confirmed the views of some parents that there was some inconsistency in behaviour in mathematics lessons. While ICT facilities are limited, they are used well.
48. The department is well led. Teachers' work and students progress is supported by methodical and caring leadership, which engenders good working relationships and structures the programme efficiently. Management is satisfactory, but there is too little monitoring of teaching, promotion of best practice and involvement by teachers and students in target setting. This limits the benefits to teaching and learning of the department's thorough assessment procedures. Significant numbers of more capable students are well catered for by being entered for World Class Tests in Year 9 and for GCSE in statistics at the end of Year 10. There has been satisfactory improvement in provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Provision is very good. Students have excellent numeracy skills, which are widely used and extended across the curriculum. There are particular strengths in the use of algebra in ICT, the application of mathematics in design in design and technology, and in the analysis of data in a wide range of subjects, including science, humanities and physical education. Mathematical concepts of space are used very well in art.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are high, and represent good long-term achievement.
- Standards in Year 9 national tests need to be improved, and the school is working to do this.
- The newly appointed head of science provides very good leadership and management.
- The best teaching is very good and at times excellent; this makes a key contribution to improvement.
- Teaching in a minority of lessons is not challenging enough for the students.
- The revised curriculum plan and long-term assessment procedures are very good.

Commentary

50. Results in Year 9 national tests and at GCSE are very high. This represents good long-term progress from the very high standards with which students join the school. However, there was a dip in standards in comparison with those of similar schools in 2004 Year 9 tests, and teachers' assessments showed very few students reaching very high standards for their age. There are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups of students, and overall, achievement in science is good. The school accepts that students need to achieve more by Year 9, and is taking suitable steps to achieve this. There was evidence during the inspection of a new scheme of work with improved emphasis on the higher levels of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. Students in Year 10 were making particularly good progress during the inspection.
51. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It ranges in most lessons from satisfactory to good, with some very good and excellent teaching. Where teaching is good or better, learning goals are realistic but challenging, with good scope for higher-attaining students to tackle demanding ideas. Information from assessment is used well in these classes to ensure that students are working at the highest level of which they are capable, and do not spend too much time reinforcing skills that are already secure. Where teaching is very good or excellent, lessons are made enjoyable, with well directed praise to reinforce learning, and very effective support to students who need it. In some lessons, though, teachers do not assess the students' level of understanding closely enough, and set work that is not fully demanding.
52. By encouraging group-work presentations, teachers contribute well to the students' speaking, listening and social skills. There is ample opportunity in class work and homework for students to apply and develop their writing and mathematical skills. Teachers know the students who have special educational needs and they adjust their teaching accordingly. The curriculum identifies topics that contribute to the students' personal and cultural development, and these are addressed well in lessons. Next year, the curriculum will be enriched by the inclusion of science clubs, museum visits and field trips.
53. Leadership and management are very good. The new head of science has analysed data, identified the department's strengths and weaknesses and thoroughly evaluated the current

situation. Very good long-term assessment procedures are in place, and the head of science has established a database to which teachers will now contribute so that the progress of individual students may be better tracked and monitored. Student self-evaluation and target setting is being introduced, and some teachers have already established this routine. A revised system of monitoring is underway to further improve the quality of short-term planning, teaching and marking. Very good use is made of the departments' interactive white boards, laptop computers and good quality software but the department does not have the benefit of its own computer suite and access to the school's suites is restricted.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 11, standards are well above average and achievement is good, despite very limited teaching time.
- Teaching is very good and enables students to make rapid progress in lessons.
- Students respond keenly to the high level of challenge in the tasks set.
- Assessment is very good in Years 10 and 11, but some students in Years 7 to 9 need more feedback.
- Teaching promotes high levels of independent learning skills.

Commentary

54. Students join Year 7 with above average standards. Teachers' assessments show above average standards in Year 9, though few students reach very high standards for their age. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average in Year 9, and well above average in Year 11, where standards matched GCSE results. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and is good in Years 10 and 11. Overall achievement is good as a result of very good teaching, despite teaching time that is only just adequate to meet statutory requirements.
55. All students have a high level of competence and confidence in using computers. Year 7 students combine text, images and sounds to create high quality presentations. They speak confidently about them and receive very good constructive criticism from their peers. With spreadsheets they show a high level of numeracy skills in writing formulae to model situations. These skills are further developed in Year 9 with some challenging problems requiring a high level of intellectual initiative. Year 8 students use computer aided design software to create imaginative three-dimensional designs of mobile phones. GCSE students pick up new skills quickly and show excellent capacity to work independently in coursework assignments.
56. Teaching and learning are very good for the GCSE courses. The specialist teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and use it to challenge and support students with tasks requiring intellectual effort and initiative. Very good assessment helps to raise standards. In Years 7 to 9, where non-specialists teach most classes, teaching and learning are good with very good features. The work is challenging, and students are keen to improve and respond keenly. Good lesson planning and very positive relationships help to maintain pace and promote high standards. Homework is used well to extend learning, but some classes in Years 7 to 9 receive insufficient feedback about how to improve.
57. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for the future and a very good team commitment. The head of department provides a high level of support for the non-specialist and trainee teachers. Results are analysed in detail and inform decisions. Sophisticated use of data for target setting and tracking is in place. There is extensive support for learning outside lessons. Technical support is good and Internet access is safe and well monitored.

58. Since the last inspection there has been very good improvement. The Year 9 curriculum has improved and resources are much improved. The number of students for GCSE is much higher and standards have risen. The school accepts the need to increase teaching time in the context of its proposed extension of the taught week. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The resourcefulness of staff and students results in good overall provision, despite very limited resources. Students have a very high level of competence in ICT and there is much use of word-processing, spreadsheets, desk-top publishing and multi-media software. Many staff shows good skill and confidence in using ICT to enhance learning in lessons. However, the number of computers is below average for the size of the school and access to them is difficult for some subjects, and particularly for design and technology. There is extensive and very effective use of ICT in science, and resources are used well in modern foreign languages, history and mathematics. Newly acquired interactive whiteboards are used well.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very strong leadership and management are raising standards.
- Teaching is well informed, carefully planned and challenging.
- Assessment and target setting are very effective.
- Relationships are positive, and students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- There are too few opportunities for students to use computers.

Commentary

60. Standards in work seen in Years 7 to 9 are above average, and achievement is very good because many students enter the school with very limited geographical knowledge. Standards in work seen in Years 10 and 11, and at GCSE are well above average and achievement is very good. The percentage of A* and A grades is very high. Achievement is very good across the school because of the very high standard of teaching, close monitoring of each student's progress and a strong focus on improving the quality of examination answers. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of students.
61. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers know the subject very well, and their enthusiasm for their subject encourages students to work very hard. All students are valued and lessons are very carefully planned to ensure that the work matches the individual learning needs of the full ability range. Students are encouraged to undertake their own research enquiries, to engage in collaborative tasks and to play an active role in their own learning. Marking and assessment is very good across the years and students are fully aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve their work. In Years 7 to 9, tests and portfolios of student work have enabled teachers to produce more accurate end of Year 9 assessments. This assessment makes good use of National Curriculum level descriptions. A strong emphasis is placed on improving literacy standards. Teachers work very hard to give students the confidence and expertise to write extended pieces of work and analyse more complex evidence materials. This support has helped the more able students to secure higher-level grades. Limited access to computers restricts students' opportunities to use the Internet for research.

62. Leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for improvement and a strong team spirit. Teachers are highly committed and generous with their time and help. Self-analysis, through very close monitoring and evaluation of students' progress, has made a significant contribution to raising standards. Resources are managed effectively and the curriculum is enriched by a range of challenging extra-curricular activities. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers foster a love of learning and independent study skills. Standards are very high.
- Students' attitudes are excellent. Their work is thoughtful and a pleasure to read.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Assessment is consistently and effectively used to help students to make progress.
- Many topics contribute to citizenship, but this link is not made explicit in lessons.

Commentary

63. Standards are very high and achievement is very good in Years 9 and 11. Students' understanding of history is broadly average when they join the school. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average. Students acquire a solid foundation of knowledge and begin to develop analytical skills. Personal research projects in Years 8 and 9 encourage independent study skills and thinking. The resultant writing is extended and a pleasure to read. Most of this work is very well produced with the help of ICT, both for research and presentation. On occasions, students interpret statistics or use graphs to express ideas effectively.
64. At the end of Year 11, standards in lessons and in GCSE examinations are very high. They improved further in 2004 when the number of A*-A grades increased and students did somewhat better in history than in their other subjects. In the lessons and work seen, there was work of a similar very high standard. Students show depth of knowledge and understanding and the capacity to reach independent judgements. Their very good literacy skills and terminology help them write precisely and fluently in coursework and essays.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Students are always willing to co-operate with teachers and they are interested and engaged in lessons. They deliberately choose demanding topics for their personal studies. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their subject that they use in their questions to challenge students. Their lesson aims are very clear and planned, for example, to improve analytical skills.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent historical knowledge and a clear focus on developing analytic skills and judgement led to excellent progress in analysing the work of the League of Nations.

The lesson, the first of three, was carefully planned to help students apply their clear knowledge and understanding of the League, and in particular of its failure to ensure disarmament, to the demands of the examination. Expectations were explicit: A* and A grades were to be achieved by analytical answers. The teacher organised the groups and assigned each student a country, whose situation the group had to explain. The whole class then challenged and tested the conclusions presented by each group. Students then had to decide on the relative importance of all factors discussed to the position of each country. This format gave very effective scope for the highest-attaining students to weigh evidence from a range of viewpoints. The teacher provided additional support for other students where needed, through skilful questioning that enabled them fully to grasp the issues and the techniques of analysis they needed. The excellence of the lesson lay in the detailed planning of each small step and activity, so that all the students could build up their individual understanding and achievement to a very high standard.

66. Marking is excellent. From Year 7, students can follow their own progress in relation to their target grades for National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades, and use the detailed comments to help them improve. This is a significant factor in raising standards. Students with special educational needs receive extra support from teachers as necessary. Homework is an integral part of learning; it may be used to introduce or consolidate lessons and is always followed up by teachers.
67. Leadership and management are very good. There is a strong sense of purpose, teamwork and commitment to high standards. Data are well understood and used to track progress. The schemes of work are good, but as yet do not provide fully for the subject's contribution to citizenship. Opportunities are identified but the issues are not explicitly noted or discussed. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. High standards have been maintained and the proportion of very good and excellent teaching has increased

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are consistently very high, particularly at A* and A grades.
- Achievement outside the GCSE course is good, but is limited by barely adequate teaching time.
- In some lessons, the highest-attaining students could achieve more.
- The head of department supports non-specialist teachers well.
- There is too little use of ICT.
- The high quality of discussion makes an important contribution to students' personal development.

Commentary

68. GCSE results are consistently very high, and are particularly strong at A* and A grades. The standard of work seen during the inspection, which included RE in and National Curriculum as well as the GCSE course, was well above average, though the quality of written work outside the GCSE course was limited by the short time allocated to the subject. Students in Years 7 to 9 show sophisticated understanding of complex religious and moral topics, though the range of

their work is also limited by very restricted teaching time. Discussion is of very high quality throughout the school, and makes a very effective contribution to students' moral, social and spiritual development. Achievement is good overall, and very good in the GCSE course.

69. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Work is well planned, with well-chosen topics that interest students and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Non-specialist teachers receive good support from the head of department. Marking is thorough and gives good guidance on improving work. Grading work according to examination criteria is enabling students to monitor their own progress, but the highest-attaining students are not always identified and fully stretched. ICT is insufficiently used in teaching and learning.
70. Good leadership and management ensure consistency in teaching and well-organised documentation. The head of department ensures that teachers are monitored and that paperwork is orderly. Progress since the last inspection has been good; more students are taking the subject, and standards in Years 10 and 11 have risen.

TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in Year 9, and excellent at GCSE, where results are exceptionally high.
- Teaching and learning are very good, and have outstanding features.
- Students' exceptional commitment to their work is an essential factor in their achievement.
- Excellent leadership and management have led to a high level of commitment from all staff.
- Shortage of accommodation and resources, particularly ICT, are limiting achievement in Year 9.

Commentary

71. Students begin with broadly average standards. Their work improves to reach well above average standards in Year 9, and very high standards at GCSE. 2004 GCSE results, where 95 per cent of students achieved A* or A grades, were stunningly high. Overall, achievement in Year 11 is excellent. In Year 9, achievement is very good. Students do very well in design and in making, but standards and achievement in computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) are lower, as students have too little access to the necessary technology. The range of courses is wide, and is to be extended in the context of the engineering college.
72. Students' very good grounding, in the principles and practice of design in Years 7 to 9, leads to very high standards in coursework in Years 10 and 11. Throughout the school pupils are meticulous in matters of detail and make work of the highest standards of quality and finish. This the outcome of very effective teaching, which matches high expectations with interesting projects. Teachers know the subject in great detail, and plan highly enjoyable lessons, with very good pace and challenge. The technician joins the teachers in supporting learning, and his work is very highly valued by staff and students. Students' work outside lessons, and teachers' regular and detailed assessments contribute much to the quality of learning. Teachers give freely of their time to ensure that students fully understand their work, and are clear in their thinking. In the examination years, teachers open their rooms at lunchtime and after school to ensure that students have time to complete their complex and challenging projects.
73. Leadership and management within the subject are excellent. The head of faculty gives a very strong lead, and is ably supported by other teachers with management responsibilities. The

level of teamwork is exceptional and new staff are very effectively introduced, so that they quickly make a full contribution. The effectiveness of the department is, however, held back by weaknesses in accommodation and resources that were identified at the last inspection and have only recently begun to be tackled. New accommodation planned for food technology has not yet been built, there is still too little storage space, and limited access to ICT resources is seriously restricting experience and achievement in CAD/CAM. The outstanding teamwork and commitment of the department has enabled it to maintain and develop its provision despite these handicaps, and overall improvement has been good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students progress from broadly average standards in Year 7 to well above average standards in Year 11.
- Imaginative and purposeful teaching in almost all classes enthuses students, who work hard and creatively.
- In a minority of lessons, the pace of work needs to be improved, and evaluation made more rigorous.
- Students study art from a very broad range of cultures and traditions.
- Teachers have too few opportunities to use ICT in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

74. Standards among students joining the school are broadly average. By Year 9, standards are significantly above average, and achievement is very good as the result of very effective planning and teaching. Good features of the work are the great emphasis placed on the development of good drawing and painting skills and students' confidence in the manipulation of a wide range of two- and three-dimensional materials. Students learn the value of research and experimentation with regular homework that supports artistic development and cultural understanding as well as encouraging individuality.
75. By Year 11, standards are consistently well above average, and students do very well at GCSE. Many students have developed impressive skills in a range of two- and three-dimensional media. In many cases, drawing skills are very accomplished and many finished pieces are developed to very high standards of artistic competency and originality. Research is extensive, often prolific and presentation is very imaginative. Students' knowledge of artists and other cultures is broad and influential in their work. Students with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who are gifted and talented also achieve very well in all years. Overall, the achievement of all groups of students is very good.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very high expectations of all students, who are well informed of the criteria by which their homework and coursework is regularly assessed. Work is almost always challenging and interesting, though in a minority of lessons the pace of work and its evaluation of could be more demanding. Relationships are very good, and students develop very positive and enthusiastic attitudes. Visits to galleries and work with visiting artists enrich learning opportunities. Literacy and mathematical skills are very well developed.
77. Leadership is very good. Very high standards are set by a highly experienced and very enthusiastic specialist, with a strong commitment to maintaining very high standards. Management is also very good. Organisation and planning are very thorough. Improvement

since the last report has been good, but further improvement is needed in ICT facilities in Years 7 to 9. Teachers and support staff share in the sense of purpose and pride in achievement, and there is a strong sense of teamwork in the department. Attractive displays of work, in art rooms and public areas, make a significant contribution to the school's climate for learning.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students taking music at GCSE achieve high standards in response to very good teaching.
- Talented students make excellent progress.
- Students have many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and performances.
- Students develop good understanding of music from a range of cultures.
- There are too few facilities for ICT and music technology in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

78. Students begin with average standards. They reach above average standards by Year 9 and well above average standards by Year 11, where GCSE results in recent years have been well above average to very high. This represents good achievement by Year 9, and very good achievement in Year 11. Achievement is boosted by the school's wide programme of extra-curricular activities and performances. Gifted and talented students make excellent progress. Students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to other students. Overall, achievement is very good.
79. By Year 9, students have good knowledge of the keyboard and read from a simple musical score. Students in all years show well-developed vocal ability. By Year 11, students show good performing skills. They compose and perform short group pieces to demonstrate the techniques used in Indian music. They use music technology effectively to devise and refine their instrumental compositions. They understand many musical terms and make reference to these when answering questions.
80. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in the GCSE course. Teachers make effective use of their own high levels of musical knowledge to promote learning and to refine students' compositions. Lessons are planned well to engage students' interest and to develop a wide range of skills. There is good provision for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills. The provision for music technology is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and has been improved since the last inspection. It is very limited in Years 7 to 9 due to a shortage of computers. Teaching and learning in instrumental lessons and in enrichment activities are very effective.
81. Leadership and management are very good, and the head of music has built a successful department. Assessment procedures are good and are used well to give a clear overview of students' progress. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enables students to develop performing skills in and out of school. A production of *The Pirates of Penzance* during the inspection involved a large cast and orchestra, and was performed to a high standard. Over 200 students receive lessons from peripatetic instrumental teachers. Students are entered for external music examinations, and many achieve success at the Reigate and Sutton Music Festivals. Accommodation is very good and has been improved since the last inspection. With the exception of ICT, resources are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards and the quality of teaching in Year 11 have been improved, as well as the accommodation and resources.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well as a result of very good teaching and their own interest and enthusiasm.
- GCSE grades are outstanding and have been so since the examination was first offered.
- Strong leadership of a highly committed team results in an excellent ethos for learning.
- Teachers provide extensive opportunities for involvement outside lessons.
- Indoor accommodation is limited; changing facilities are inadequate; there are no showers.

Commentary

82. GCSE results in 2004 were outstanding, as they have been for several years, with no passes lower than a grade B and more than thirty per cent of students gaining an A*. The smaller number of students who studied GCSE dance in their own time obtained equally impressive results. Standards in Year 9, and among students not taking GCSE in Year 11, are above average. Standards at GCSE level in Year 11 are exceptionally high. This is also the case in dance in Year 10. Some students join the school with good standards, but overall standards are broadly average. Achievement from this starting point is good, and very good at GCSE. Gifted and talented students reach very high standards in athletics, dance, gymnastics and netball.
83. Teaching and learning are very good. The consistent approach taken by all staff towards planning and creating a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in lessons has a positive impact on standards. Teachers introduce topics clearly and they use questions well to clarify students' thinking. Opportunities are provided in many lessons for independent learning and for students to comment on each other's work, particularly in gymnastics and dance. Teachers offer very effective help and guidance. As a result, students are very keen to learn and enjoy what they are doing. Their exemplary attitudes contribute to the progress that they make. Teachers provide an extensive range of activities outside normal lessons that increase opportunities for involvement and help to raise standards further. Sixth form students organise some of these activities.
84. As a result of very good management and excellent leadership, teachers work extremely well together. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect, co-operation, commitment and enjoyment. Teachers are very good role models for students. Whilst facilities for dance are excellent, there is too little indoor accommodation for physical education. The changing rooms are inadequate and there are no showers. Good improvement since the last inspection includes a significant increase in the number of students taking the GCSE. Dance is now offered as part of the option system. Questionnaires and follow-up interviews are used very effectively among younger students as a means of seeking their views and checking their understanding. Teachers are making more use of ICT, and to support their work. The school received the Sportsmark award in 2003.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Provision for business studies was sampled. Over a quarter of students take the subject in Years 10 and 11, and GCSE results in 2004, were very high. A Year 11 lesson observed was thorough and detailed, with good pace and challenge, and students were on track to achieve their predicted grades, almost all A or B.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled extensively by observing lessons in each year group, and citizenship was fully inspected. The school has an effective programme for personal, social and health education. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and the best is very good. Students achieve well, and the programme makes an important contribution to their personal

development and to their ability to deal with difficult situations they may encounter outside school. Leadership and management are good, and there is very effective co-operation with local education authority support services.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

- There is too little teaching time to cover the National Curriculum for knowledge and understanding of citizenship.
 - There are no procedures at present for assessing, recording and reporting the subject.
 - The contribution of subjects to citizenship is inconsistent.
 - There are good opportunities for students to participate and take responsibility.
 - The school is taking steps to address these issues as part of its proposed extension of teaching time.
85. The school provides a good range of opportunities for students to develop their personal and social skills, including the skills of responsible action. However, lack of teaching time, and of a systematic approach to planning, leave students with a very limited knowledge and understanding of the provision for citizenship as set out in the National Curriculum, and their achievements are not assessed and reported to parents. As a result, and despite the school's positive ethos, standards are below average in Year 9 and Year 11, achievement is unsatisfactory, and provision for citizenship does not meet statutory requirements.
86. The student leadership board is an effective channel of communication between staff and students. Involvement in charity fund raising, anti-litter and anti-bullying projects have encouraged individual initiative and a sense of independence. However, these positive inputs are not linked to a coherent citizenship course, and, as a result, students do not have a clear understanding of what citizenship means. Whilst the skills of communication and enquiry are developed in many subjects, there is little opportunity for their direct application to citizenship topics. The contribution of departments is inconsistent. Some have clearly identified citizenship elements in their schemes of work while others are less advanced. As a result, students' experiences of citizenship are incidental to their learning and the links are usually not recognised.
87. During the inspection no specific citizenship lessons were observed because the subject has not been identified in the school curriculum as a separate subject. Citizenship elements were seen in some of the personal, social and health lessons but students and staff were often unaware that they were part of citizenship. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There is no coherent scheme of work, and delivery of citizenship elements lacks co-ordination. There has been little staff training for the introduction of the subject. An audit of provision has been completed but teaching remains incidental to subjects, rather than planned and taught as specific citizenship topics. Little has been done to monitor, evaluate or develop the teaching of the subject across the curriculum. However, the school has recognised the deficiencies in its provision and the recently appointed subject co-ordinator is determined to give citizenship a higher profile in the school curriculum. She has already established clear priorities and appropriate targets which are fully supported by the headteacher

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	3	100	78.3	100	21.6	53.3	28.5
Biology	15	93.3	63.5	33.3	10.4	39.3	19.8
Business Studies	10	90.0	75.3	70.0	15.4	46.0	25.7
Chemistry	9	100	70.3	55.6	13.2	48.9	23.0
Classical Studies	2	100	89.1	50.0	36.0	50.0	36.5
Communication Studies	7	100	87.2	57.1	24.9	45.7	32.8
Dance	1	100	82.0	100	21.9	60.0	29.7
Drama	2	100	86.6	50.0	19.8	50.0	30.9
Economics	6	83.3	71.6	66.7	18.6	43.3	25.8
English/English language	4	100	85.3	75.0	16.1	52.5	29.0
English Literature	11	100	86.2	18.2	17.4	36.4	29.7
French	7	85.7	79.8	28.6	19.4	34.3	28.2
Design and technology	6	100	72.6	83.3	13.9	55.0	24.3
Geography	3	100	75.5	33.3	20.4	43.3	27.0
General Studies	1	100	73.6	100	16.9	60.0	25.5
German	3	100	81.6	0	18.9	30.0	28.8
History	3	100	99.0	60.0	45.6	45.0	29.2
Information technology	19	100	96.3	72.6	25.7	45.0	20.6
Mathematics	52	92.3	96.8	76.9	56.6	31.5	20.5
Music	2	100	98.2	100	37.1	60.0	37.8
Other languages	2	100	97.3	100	66.7	47.0	23.2
Other social studies	33	100	97.4	81.8	42.5	45.0	22.4

Physics	20	100	96.7	45.0	45.3	36.7	31.2
Religious studies	9	100	99.1	88.9	49.3	50.0	25.9
Spanish	13	100	98.2	84.6	53.5	40.0	26.5

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	14	100	98.3	92.9	50.2	115.7	87.1
Biology	55	100	96.6	60.0	40.0	96.0	79.3
Business Studies	17	100	98.9	70.6	39.4	95.3	81.8
Chemistry	51	100	85.7	64.7	50.0	96.1	85.7
Communication Studies	33	100	97.7	97.0	50.0	106.1	85.7
Drama	17	100	99.6	88.2	42.8	107.1	85.1
Economics	19	94.7	98.8	42.1	54.3	80.0	89.8
English/English language	26	100	99.2	84.6	36.4	104.6	81.1
English Literature	38	100	99.4	71.1	44.9	103.7	85.5
French	12	100	98.8	58.3	46.4	95.0	85.2
Design and technology	19	100	97.8	89.5	35.0	113.7	77.9
Geography	16	100	98.8	75.0	46.4	105.0	85.2
German	10	100	98.6	80.0	49.6	102.0	86.3
History	16	100	99.0	43.8	20.8	98.0	85.1
Information technology	2	100	96.3	50.0	8.8	89.5	71.1
Mathematics	26	88.8	96.8	23.1	14.1	98.1	89.5
Other languages	1	100	82.5	100	47.7	120.0	79.5
Other social studies	10	90.0	67.8	70.0	15.1	110.0	95.6
Physics	14	100	66.4	64.3	14.8	106.7	81.6
Religious studies	6	83.3	82.2	33.3	26.1	88.0	82.6
Sociology	2	100	72.1	50.0	19.6	102.2	87.4
Spanish	4	75.0	77.1	50.0	17.0	103.1	88.7
Sports/PE studies	8	100	97.8	100	30.9	110.0	75.4

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give students good examination techniques and wide knowledge of the subject.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons, and bring out the best in all students.
- Very good marking and assessment help students monitor their own progress.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning, and are well organised.
- Leadership and management are very effective, and there is very good teamwork.

Commentary

88. AS and A-level results are consistently very high, particularly at grades A and B, and the standard of work seen during the inspection was equally good. Students' folders are very well organised and contain copious and helpful notes. Essays are well researched, and class discussions are conducted at a sophisticated level, showing clear understanding of complex issues. Teachers carefully explain strategies for meeting exact examination criteria, and at the same time introduce wider issues that are crucial to their understanding of the subject. Both of these factors contribute to high achievement.
89. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of the individual and, in the long term, succeed in their aim of bringing out the best in each student. They ensure that students know the texts they study in very good detail, and give very clear explanations, though occasionally work could be matched more closely to the needs of the highest-attaining students. Teachers mark work thoroughly and helpfully, providing clear guidance for students to monitor their own progress. Students learn willingly and, through structured and sometimes exciting discussion, are encouraged to think for themselves.
90. Leadership and management are very good. The partnership between the heads of faculty and department, each taking responsibility for different aspects of the subject, works harmoniously and to the benefit of the students. The enthusiasm of the leaders ensures that the many teachers delivering the course in the sixth form work as a team. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Students at that time relied too heavily on their teachers, and now take much more responsibility for their own learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

91. Provision is very good, and excellent in history, ICT, design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. Most departments encourage students to discuss ideas at a very high level and provide opportunities for extended and sophisticated writing. Technical vocabulary is taught to a very high standard, and some written work in design and technology is presented exceptionally well. The library is used to the limit of its capacity, but it is too small to provide effectively for the full range of students' needs.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students reach well above average standards in both Years 12 and 13.
- The highest-attaining students reach particularly high standards.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan lessons very well.
- Very good teaching leads to well-motivated students and very good learning.
- Work experience in France contributes very well to students' experience and achievement.

Commentary

92. A-level results have been well above average in most recent years, but fell to above average levels in 2004. Nevertheless, this represented good achievement for these students, who began with GCSE results that were lower than those of most year groups. AS results were well above average in 2004. The standard of work seen during the inspection was well above average in speaking and listening and in writing, and the highest-attaining students achieve exceptionally high standards. Overall, achievement is very good.
93. Students write in complex French on a wide range of relevant topics, including rights and responsibilities, health, the area of Languedoc-Roussillon, and poetry. Higher-attaining students make excellent use of idiom, adventurous language and accurate use of grammar. They use evidence skilfully to support arguments and opinions in their written and spoken work. Although a few students are less confident in their use of tenses, they have excellent comprehension skills. Students bridge the gap from GCSE very quickly in Year 12, and rapidly move on to very high quality work which contains complex language and ideas.
94. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers deploy their excellent French skilfully, so that students enjoy their work and pick up on the teachers' usage and expression. The teachers' high expectations that students use French all the time leads to rapid increase in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of complex language. Teachers prepare a very diverse range of materials that are relevant, challenging and interesting, sometimes from personal resources available to them in France. This personal and lively teaching motivates and encourages the students, who respond very well to the teachers' commitment. Students develop their research skills very well, the vast majority participate very well in discussions and tackle sustained pieces of work with enthusiasm.
95. The sixth form aspect of the department is very well led and managed. Very good attention to analyses of students' results in examination modules identifies gaps in students' knowledge or experience and these are quickly addressed. Students' work experience in France provides a very good opportunity to consolidate and improve their oral fluency and confidence, and to increase their awareness of contemporary French society. The department has made very good improvements in its work since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

The inspection covered the wide range of AS and A-level modules, including pure mathematics, mechanics and statistics.

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Large numbers of students study A-level mathematics. Standards are high and achievement is very good.
- Teaching is very good overall, with much imaginative presentation of mathematical ideas.
- Progress and achievement benefit from thorough and effective assessment and marking.
- Students are committed to the subject, and work very hard in and out of school.
- The department offers a good range of courses, with very good opportunities for gifted students.
- Good leadership and management have developed strong teamwork, but occasional weaknesses in teaching are not effectively identified.

Commentary

96. A-level results were well above average in 2004, and three-quarters of students achieved A and B grades. This showed good recovery from a slight fall in standards in 2003. The

standard of Year 13 work during the inspection was very high. Students' very well developed skills in pure mathematics enable them to focus fully on concepts for statistics and mechanics. Students' files contain a comprehensive range of marked examples and practice papers, which provide excellent support for revision.

97. Teaching is very good overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Learning from the end of Year 11 to the end of the A-level course is well rooted in a very sound base of knowledge at every stage. Teachers help students develop excellent study habits, and students work very well independently, both at school and at home. Students appreciate the approaches that teachers employ to develop their confidence and interest, using relevant and sometimes amusing examples. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers take a narrower approach to presenting work, and learning is less effective. Students take a pride in their work, which is almost always accurate and presented logically; teachers' constructive marking supports their high standards.
98. Leadership is good, with very good features in the teamwork and commitment that runs through the department. Management is satisfactory. A large number of students, including the gifted, are attracted by the comprehensive and flexible range of AS courses, including further mathematics; three quarters of them go on to A-level. Students are taught by more than one teacher, and there is close liaison to ensure cohesion of the well-planned courses. However teaching is not monitored closely enough to identify and eliminate its few remaining weaknesses in teaching. Overall, the department has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

99. Provision is very good. Students' mathematical skills are very successfully applied to work in other A-level subjects. They contribute significantly to achievement in science, with statistical applications in biology, algebraic manipulations in chemistry and for physics, an appreciation of the strong links with the mechanics modules in mathematics. Detailed analysis of coastal movement statistics contributes well to geography fieldwork. Students competently model economic systems in business studies, and adeptly apply numeracy to ICT and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Chemistry and biology were inspected fully, and provision in physics was sampled. The quality of work sampled in physics was satisfactory, with satisfactory teaching and learning and above average standards.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Experimental and investigative work is very well organised.
- Interactions between students and specialist teachers are very good.
- Students increasingly enjoy the freedom they are given to learn in their own style.
- Students need more experience of ICT for data handling and analysis.
- Leadership and management are very good, and there are very good priorities for improvement.

Commentary

100. A-level and AS results are consistently well above average, and the subject is popular with students. The standard of work seen during the inspection was well above average throughout the sixth form. Students in Year 12 collected data accurately and manipulated both numbers

and units in complex calculations. Students in Year 13 confidently used chemical knowledge and techniques when solving problems in academic and technological contexts. They confidently evaluated their data and procedures, though they had too little experience of computerised data logging and analysis. Achievement among all groups of students is very good.

101. Teaching and learning are very good. Practical work is very well organized, and activities are consistently challenging. Very good teaching and technical support ensure that students work safely with precision, speed and total concentration in a purposeful atmosphere. Very effective use of questioning to the whole class ensures that students contribute very well. Year 13 teachers adjust teaching very well to build on students' growing knowledge, and help them to become independent researchers. Routines for reviewing progress are well established and effective, and guidance to students is accurate and sensitive. Relationships are good and students are proud of their project work, and of their progress and achievement. As one Year 13 student put it, 'Last year we were carrying out experiments. Now we are thinking for ourselves.'
102. Very good leadership and management have created an enthusiastic team of specialists. Systems to engage students actively in deciding the next best step to improve are developing well. The subject has made very good progress since the last inspection, particularly in standards and achievement, and has very well thought out priorities for future development.

Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results are well above average and students achieve very well.
- The new course is challenging, interesting and highly valued by the students.
- Very good opportunities enable students to understand and to develop key skills.
- Most students benefit from the on-line assessment tests.

Commentary

103. A-level and AS results have improved to well above average levels since the introduction of a new A-level course. The subject is popular and a high proportion of students complete their courses. Standards in work seen during the inspection were similarly well above average. Year 12 students use their very good skills with language, number and computers for study and research very well. They develop very good data-collection techniques and, through data analysis, a very good understanding of key biological concepts. Year 13 students in addition write detailed evaluative investigation reports, and confidently apply their biological knowledge to current medical and social issues. Achievement is very good.
104. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers and students work in an atmosphere of mutual confidence, and have a strong working partnership. Students become enthusiastic about learning, and are allowed much freedom to think and express their views. Activities are challenging and varied, and teachers respond quickly and sensitively to the needs of individual students. Textbooks are used very well to complement and extend information obtained through ICT. Students, through role-play and thoughtful dialogue, develop a very good understanding of problem solving in the wider community. Teachers ensure clear progression in Year 13, building confidence and giving students high expectations of success in biology and in the community.
105. Very good leadership and management have led to very good improvement since the last inspection. School biology targets were then not met, and are now mostly exceeded. A new course has been established, and there is very good use of ICT, particularly in the laptop

computers in Year 12. There are very good links with senior management, and there is a strong sense of teamwork among the teachers. All have high aspirations and the skills to

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have raised standards and doubled student numbers.
- Teachers know the subject and examination requirements very well, and plan very effective lessons.
- Students respond keenly to the high level of challenge in the work; literacy standards are very high.
- Excellent assessment shows students exactly how to improve their work.
- Excellent accommodation and resources of high quality provide a very good learning environment.

Commentary

106. In 2004, A-level and AS results were well above average. During the inspection, the standards of work seen in Year 13 were well above average, and those in Year 12 very high. Nearly a quarter of Year 12 students study AS level ICT, and their starting point is very high. Achievement in both years is very good.

107. Teaching and learning are very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge, and use this to motivate, challenge and support students. Planning of theory lessons and practical tasks is very good. Students have very good attitudes and are keen to learn new skills. Folders of work are very well organised and literacy standards are very high. Written assignments and tests are marked very thoroughly, with a wealth of individual comments to help students to improve. Students are very well prepared before they start their spreadsheet and database coursework assignments. The coursework guides are of an excellent standard and students' planning benefits greatly from contact with local small businesses. Standards of coursework are well above average in Year 13 and very high in Year 12. Some of it is outstanding.

Example of outstanding practice

Gifted students created complex spreadsheets for running a small business. Very detailed prior planning and skills development were seen to underpin the very high standards of work seen.

Over the previous months the teacher's excellent subject knowledge had enabled students to develop their technical skills in a professional spreadsheet programme to a very high level. Students had researched the computing needs of a local small business and had agreed a design that included provision for the functionality and layout of the operator's various screens. The first drafts were written of the formulae and macro coding needed to perform the functions and to switch efficiently between screens. Each student arrived with an apparently untidy grid of A4 sheets joined together. But the very detailed planning and annotation on each sheet combined with the very high level of technical skills developed previously resulted in excellent progress during the lesson. Broad smiles and some discreet air-punches showed the immense satisfaction gained by students from their work. They showed very good determination in overcoming problems themselves but knew that they could rely on excellent support from the teacher if needed.

108. Leadership and management are very good. The two teachers work well together as a very effective team, committed to high standards. Students' work and progress are monitored very well. The head of department has held her post for only 18 months but in that time student numbers have doubled and standards are now very high. The excellent accommodation and

very good teaching resources contribute significantly to the excellent learning atmosphere in lessons. At the time of the last inspection there were no A level candidates so the current situation represents very good improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

109. Provision is very good. Students enter the sixth form with very high levels of competence in ICT and use it extensively for word processing, spreadsheets, multimedia presentations and desktop publishing. Further skills improvement classes are available within the sixth form enrichment programme. In a very good Year 12 lesson students showed excellent initiative and advanced skills in seeking material for their presentations. The work was differentiated to match students' previous experience. The working atmosphere was very good and productivity very high.

HUMANITIES

Classical studies, history and geography were inspected fully, and provision in religious education was sampled. The quality of work sampled in religious education was good. Standards were well above average, and teaching and learning seen was good, with effective use of ICT.

Classical Studies

Provision in Classical Studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average, and students achieve well.
- Teachers know the subject very well, and prepare lessons in very good detail.
- Students prepare carefully, carry out high quality research and take very good notes.
- The organisation of some lessons in Year 13 does not make the most of students' potential.

110. Classical Studies is a new subject to the school. AS results were well above average in 2004, but no students have yet taken A-level. Nationally, standards reached by the relatively small numbers of students taking this subject are particularly high. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average, with very high standards among some students. Students write good notes, with perceptive comments that show depth of understanding of the characters and the action in the books they study. They have very good understanding of the background history and politics. All the students present their work very well, and much of their independent work is word-processed.

111. Teaching and learning is good overall. In individual lessons, their quality ranges from very good to satisfactory. Teachers' deep understanding of the subject equips them to provide stimulating lessons with a good level of challenge. They have generally high expectations. The vast majority of students are committed to their studies and take good responsibility for their own research and preparation. However, a significant minority of students in Year 13 feel that some teaching strategies are inappropriate, and that time is not used productively enough for them to make the progress they would like. Inspection evidence showed that some lessons were very well organised and taught, but that the use of time and planning in some others could have been better matched to students' learning needs.

112. Sixth form teaching is shared between two teachers. A new head of department has been in post for a term. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The head of department has a clear vision for the future of the subject and day-to-day management progresses smoothly, though there is very limited monitoring of teaching. The department enjoys a good range of appropriate resources.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results are well above average, and achievement is very good.
- Very good teaching motivates students and encourages hard work.
- Students develop their independent learning and research skills very well.
- Strong leadership and management ensure clear educational direction.
- Very good marking, assessment and target setting is helping to raise standards.

Commentary

113. Results in the 2004 AS and A -level examinations were well above average, and standards in work seen in Years 12 and 13 were equally high. This represents very good achievement. In 2004, all A-level candidates passed with grade C or above, and three-quarters with grades A and B. Numbers studying geography are rising and achievement is very good among all groups of students.
114. Teachers' close attention to course planning and study techniques enables students to adapt very well to sixth form work. They can handle information skilfully and use a wide range of statistical methods and graphical techniques. Most read and synthesise detailed text quickly.. Students are highly motivated, interested and want to succeed, taking pride in their work. They have high expectations of themselves.
115. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, and plan interesting and challenging lessons. Their enthusiasm for their subject has a considerable impact on students, who readily contribute to their own learning by making substantial contributions to discussions and asking thoughtful questions. Teachers encourage them to undertake their own enquiries, and this helps to prepare them for higher education. Highly constructive marking provides critical feedback on the quality of written work, and specific guidance on how to improve. Students spoke very positively about the consistently high quality of teaching, valuing the stimulus given by the different teaching styles of the specialists. Fieldwork provides a strong evidence base for individual research studies, and has helped most students to improve their skills in data collection and presentation.
116. Leadership and management are very good, providing clear vision and opportunities for all members of the team to contribute to the development of the subject. All aspects of the department's work are carefully monitored and identified. Strengths and weaknesses are discussed openly as a way of bringing about improvements. The subject has made very good progress since the last inspection.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

- Teachers have complete command of their subject and convey their enthusiasm to their students.
- Students achieve very well because they are highly motivated and work very hard.
- Examination results are well above average.
- Assessment and marking give students very clear understanding of how to improve.

Commentary

117. Standards are well above average and achievement is very good throughout the sixth form. AS and A-level results are consistently high. Students begin A-level studies with very good literacy skills. By the end of Year 13, the structure of their essays is clear, linked to the question and well expressed. Students extract information skilfully from complex texts and documents and use it to good effect in argument. They acquire a good depth of knowledge and understanding that they apply effectively. High-attaining students follow several strands of a question, comparing and analysing, to reach a soundly based judgement. Almost all students show these skills in at least some of their work.
118. The basis of the consistently very good teaching and learning lies in the expertise of the teachers and in the quality of relationships. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed, encouraging students to work hard and prepare for lessons thoroughly. Very skilful questioning constantly extends students' knowledge and understanding. Lessons are carefully planned so that students develop analytical skills and also an understanding of how and why marks are awarded. This, with detailed correction and comment on their essays, helps many reach high standards. Progress is carefully tracked and help is available for any who experience difficulties. Teachers emphasise oral skills, so students are articulate and communicate well. They develop independent study skills. High attaining students read widely as well as consulting the Internet.
119. Leadership and management are very good. The head of the department leads a team of committed teachers, working hard to ensure that all students reach their potential. There is a strong sense of purpose within the department. Visits to conferences extend the curriculum, and the history society, with its emphasis on historiography, helps to prepare higher attaining students for university study. Students value the help and advice they receive. There has been a substantial improvement in standards and the consistency of teaching since the last inspection, and overall improvement has been very good.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are very high and achievement is excellent.
- Excellent teaching promotes very high standards of technique, presentation and creativity.
- Students' attitudes and response are always very good and often excellent.
- The range of courses is very comprehensive.
- ICT is used very well, but its scope is limited by the range of available facilities.

Commentary

120. A fifth of students take courses in either food technology, graphics with materials, resistant materials or textile technology. In 2004, the combined GCE examination result was very high; all students passed, and nine out of ten students obtained A and B grades. Students performed best in resistant materials and textile technology. Food technology was not examined in that year. Standards in lessons are similar to those in examinations. The individual nature of the coursework enables gifted and talented students to demonstrate their ability and flair to the full. Students achieve very well in all courses, and their overall achievement is excellent.
121. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is excellent, and they motivate and manage students very well.

Lessons and coursework tasks are extremely well planned. Students receive very effective help and advice on ways to improve their work and maximise grades in examinations. Relationships are excellent. As a result, the attitudes of the students are always very good and often excellent. Students are very keen to learn and in most lessons engrossed in their work. As a result, the quality of some of the coursework is outstanding. The quality of work in textile technology is particularly high. Very good use is made of ICT to present work and analyse data, but there is scope to develop this further by extending the range of facilities available to students.

Example of outstanding practice

Careful planning, encouragement to be imaginative and very effective individual help and advice enabled gifted students to demonstrate their talent and flare to the full in A-level coursework.

Students were given scope to develop individual design briefs around the theme of fashion garments in textile technology. Each student had chosen to design and make a different garment – costumes for a theatre company which are timeless and easily adapted for different uses, trendy fashions for young men, styles of underwear which could be worn as outer garments. The work was extremely well planned, and the teacher ensured that students were well aware of the purpose and function of each part of the coursework folder. Students undertook very thorough research on the internet, in fashion magazines and by finding out the views of others. Many design ideas were imaginative and innovative. The quality of coursework folders was outstanding. Layout and the quality of the annotated drawings were perfected, often to a high professional standard. Colour was harmonized on each page of the folders in pastel shades – background of the word processed text, colour of the sketches and colour of the graphs and bar charts - to increase the visual impact of the work. In the lesson seen students were engrossed in making their final designs. The teacher was managing learning extremely well by giving each student very effective individual help and advice on how to improve her work. Relationships were professional and the outcome beautiful.

122. Leadership and management within the department are excellent. The head of the faculty is very well supported by three heads of departments, and teamwork is very strong. Accommodation and resources are adequate but there is too little access to ICT facilities. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. The high quality of teaching and learning has been maintained, and standards and the range of courses improved.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A-level results are high, and all groups of students achieve very well.
- Students work skilfully and creatively, using a very wide range of materials and media.
- Students develop high levels of skill in research and experimentation.
- Work is presented to a very high standard, and is often very beautiful.
- There are outstanding opportunities to visit centres of excellence, including Italian cities.
- The head of department and teachers work very well together for the benefit of the students.

Commentary

123. Standards are consistently high at A-level, and there are very good opportunities for students who have not taken GCSE in art. With established skills in self directed learning, students are challenged to explore and select visual information and a range of media in relation to their own chosen themes. They learn to manipulate a wide variety of fine art, including three-dimensional materials and processes in order to communicate their ideas, very successfully and skilfully. There is much work that demonstrates very good levels of inspiration, inventiveness and confidence. Research and experimentation are extensive, often prolific, combining a wealth of ideas with very high presentation skills. A very strong emphasis on the importance and development of drawing techniques underpins all work.
124. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are very enthusiastic, know the subject very well, and are very well organised. There are very high expectations of all students. Assessment is very thorough, and individual tutorials and regular target setting ensure that students are very well informed of their progress and areas for improvement. Students have many opportunities to share their ideas work with teachers and other students. Visits to galleries and opportunities to experience the art of Rome, Florence and Venice further enrich learning. Literacy skills are very well developed. Relationships are excellent. Attitudes are extremely mature and very enthusiastic. Off-site life-drawing classes after school provide a very good opportunity to advance formal drawing skills, although not all students choose to pursue this. The print workshop at a local Art College provides additional, very good learning opportunities, and there is scope for the skills acquired to be further developed in school.
125. Leadership and management are very good. Planning and record keeping are very thorough. Links with colleges are well established and result in significant numbers gaining places at art school each year. The head of department provides a very clear vision and direction for the subject. Very high standards and a very good reputation within the school have been maintained since the last inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There is very low participation among students in physical education, and accommodation is inadequate.
 - The A-level course is of high quality, and the leads to very high results and very good achievement.
 - A-level teaching is very well thought out to meet the needs of the students.
 - Students make excellent use of their literacy and communication skills.
 - A-level students have very good attitudes to their work, and relationships are excellent.
126. Provision in physical education is not meeting students' needs to an acceptable standard. Very few take part in physical activity, and there is no competitive sport. Overall provision is therefore unsatisfactory, despite the high quality of teaching, learning and achievement in A-level courses.
127. A-level courses in physical education and dance were inspected. Standards in these courses are very high, and achievement is very good. This results from rigorous preparation, excellent relationships and high motivation. In dance, students move with poise, fluidity and good body extension. They show good understanding of movement principles and notation. Students' very high oral and written skills enable them to analyse, debate and hypothesise intelligently in

Sports Studies. Information communication skills develop effectively, especially through students' extensive independent research.

128. A-level teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' have an outstanding command of the subject, structure and assess work carefully and give students very helpful feedback. This ensures that standards are consistently above course requirements and students know what they have to do to improve. Students' commitment to and interest in all areas of their work spill over to younger students for whom they run extra-curricular activities. The personal and social development of students following the Community Sports Leaders' Award is excellent.
129. Leadership is very good and management good. Teachers are totally committed to high standards. However, the work of the department has outgrown the current structure and this limits curriculum development. Although a minority of students are involved in extra-curricular activities, too few regularly participate. Despite very good improvement in examination work since the last inspection, overall improvement in provision for physical education has been unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in accommodation have not been tackled, and provision has not been developed effectively to meet the needs of the whole school population.

BUSINESS

Provision in business education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are well above average.
- Teaching is good, and engages students' interest, so that they work hard.
- A small number of students with minority ethnic backgrounds have difficulties with written English.
- Accommodation is barely adequate, and 45-minute lessons give too little scope for extended learning.

Commentary

130. A fifth of students take courses in either economics or economics and business. In 2004, A-level results were well above average over the range of subjects offered in the department, with the best results in economics and business. Standards in lessons seen were above, and sometimes well above, average. A small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, however, find comprehension and writing difficult and need extra help. Oral skills are generally very good, and students' overall achievement is good.
131. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Most teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They introduce topics well and ensure that they are thoroughly explored in group discussions. Lessons have very good technical content. Homework is set regularly and all work is marked and commented on comprehensively. A good variety of teaching methods are used. Relationships are very good and sometimes excellent. In a small number of lessons, the range of teaching methods is more restricted, and students have too few opportunities to become involved. The very wide range of learning needs among students in Year 12, some of whom have not previously studied the subject, creates difficulties for teachers, and sometimes slows the pace of work. The scope of teaching is also limited by the short time allowed by single 45-minute lessons.
132. Leadership and management are good. Teachers work well together and are keen to improve standards. A significant turnover of staff in the recent past has adversely affected standards and examination results. The department is recovering from this. Accommodation is barely adequate and there is a shortage of both office and storage space. However, access to ICT is very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The scope of

courses has been extended and standards have been maintained, though some weaknesses in teaching identified at that time have not yet been fully tackled.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

133. Enrichment opportunities for the sixth form, and teaching beyond students' A-level subjects, were inspected. Overall, these additional teaching and enrichment opportunities are very good, and cover a wide range of academic, aesthetic, business and performance activities. All students take part. Students have many opportunities to see dramatic performances in English and French. Work experience extends to France, Germany and Spain, and students may study Italian and Japanese. History students make a visit to Versailles, and have good enrichment sessions in preparation for their University studies. Participation in physical education is limited by inadequate facilities, but some students take part in the sports leader programme. A Religious Studies conference is held annually. Students attend fortnightly sessions on key skills and Year 12 students follow a very well designed and successful leadership programme that prepares them very well leadership roles in a wide range of contexts. During the inspection the leadership course was focused on elections in Great Britain and Iraq; discussion focused on the qualities that make a leader. The school plans add distance learning courses in law and critical thinking from September 2005.

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	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Pupils' achievement	2	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	1	1
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	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	4	5
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	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	3
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	3

The effectiveness of management	2	3
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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).