

INSPECTION REPORT

THE HEWETT SCHOOL

Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121173

Headteacher: Mr T Samain

Lead inspector: Mr M Beale

Dates of inspection: 22 – 26 March 2004

Inspection number: 259380

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	12 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1505
School address:	Cecil Road Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR1 2PL
Telephone number:	01603 628181
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Marion Wright
Date of previous inspection:	23 February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large school with a very large sixth form, although numbers on roll in both have fallen considerably since the last inspection. There are slightly more girls than boys. There are almost 300 spare places in the main school at present. The school suffered from considerable mobility during the last academic year with over eight percent of students leaving during the year and only two percent joining. The school serves a socially and economically mixed catchment area; free school meal eligibility is close to the national average. The vast majority of the students are of white-British backgrounds with no other group represented in significant numbers. A small number of students have English as an additional language. There are five children from Traveller families and seven students are in the care of the local authority. The proportion of the students with special educational needs is below average, but the number with statements is average. The school has a unit for eight Year 9 students with statements; they have 60 percent of their lessons in the unit and 40 percent in mainstream classes. The main areas of higher need are for students with social, behavioural and emotional, moderate learning and severe learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to the main school is average. Less than half of Year 11 stayed into the sixth form, but many others join from other local schools. Students from a local 11-16 school have automatic access to the sixth form at The Hewett through a partnership arrangement as recognised in the title 'The Hewett Framlingham Earl Sixth Form'. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is average. The headteacher is newly appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Lead inspector	Citizenship
32697	David Smith	Lay inspector	
1963	Sibani Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	English (12-16) English as an additional language
32379	Bob Brewster	Team inspector	Mathematics
30563	Jackie Pentlow	Team inspector	Science (12-16) Biology (sixth form)
4126	Clive Parsons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Chemistry (sixth form) Physics (sixth form)
8096	Nigel File	Team inspector	Religious education
33220	Julia Harris	Team inspector	History
30545	David Castell	Team inspector	Geography (12-16)
31685	Val Girling	Team inspector	Art and design
31628	Ann George	Team inspector	Music
12001	Alan Goodier	Team inspector	Design and technology
11754	John Broadbent	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
32724	Geoff Jepson	Team inspector	Physical education (12-16) Special educational needs
23268	Kevin Corrigan	Team inspector	Physical education (sixth form) Business studies (sixth form)
4351	Jeanne Strickland	Team inspector	English (sixth form) Theatre studies (sixth form)
31333	Keith Grimwade	Team inspector	Geography (sixth form)
3162	Philip O'Neill	Team inspector	Psychology (sixth form) Sociology (sixth form)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is ineffective in areas of its provision and gives unsatisfactory value for money. It has serious weaknesses in teaching, attendance and punctuality. The sharp decline in GCSE results from 2000 to 2003 represented poor progress for many students. These matters have been identified by the headteacher and are being tackled robustly with considerable support from the local education authority. Achievement remains unsatisfactory overall, but many students are now making at least satisfactory progress and standards are starting to rise. Numbers on roll have fallen sharply over the last few years; this has caused substantial budget difficulties and the need to reduce the teaching staff. Long-term staff absence through illness and difficulties in recruiting permanent staff have proved to be barriers to raising achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher, senior staff and governors have arrested the decline in the school, set sharply focused plans for the future and established challenging targets for its success.
- Too many teachers have low expectations of the students' work and behaviour; this is particularly so in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and music.
- Attendance is very poor and many students are regularly late to school and to lessons.
- Staff do not consistently set challenging homework, which they require all students to undertake and complete conscientiously.
- The recently established Student Achievement Centre is having a significantly beneficial effect on the educational and personal development of the students.
- Middle managers are not contributing sufficiently to improving teaching and to raising standards.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 is unsatisfactory, although there are clear signs that key weaknesses are now being tackled with some signs of success. For example, the work of staff is only now beginning to be systematically monitored and standards evaluated so that plans can be prepared to eliminate any shortcomings and raise achievement. Indicators such as examination results and attendance have either fallen or not kept pace with national improvements. Other areas that were identified as needing attention in 1998 have not been tackled with much success. There are improved assessment procedures, but these are not being used consistently as a tool to raise standards. Art and design planning in Years 8 and 9 has improved but timetabling arrangements are now affecting achievement adversely. Requirements for teaching religious education to all students are still not met above Year 9 and reports to parents lack information on all subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.
The A* grade puts the school's GCSE performance in the top five per cent of similar schools.*

The 2003 GCSE results represented poor progress for many students during their time in the school. High levels of absence significantly affected the results of individuals. Standards are rising where the impact of recently taken action is starting to take effect, although **achievement is unsatisfactory overall**. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are below average by Year 11. Standards are below average in ICT and are poor in music.

In spite of the action being taken, attendance and punctuality are improving only slowly. Several students also absent themselves from individual lessons even though they are marked present in school. **The students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural is satisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is unsatisfactory. This is largely because **teaching is unsatisfactory overall**; it is much weaker in Years 8 to 11 than in the sixth form, where teaching is good. The curriculum is subject to a thorough review, which is seeking to introduce more suitable courses in Years 10 and 11 and to establish clear routes for all students beyond the age of 16. The school has good plans to deal with current shortcomings in the range of courses for students from Year 10 upwards. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the students. Assessment information is not used to establish accurately the next steps in learning, to set sharp targets for individual students and then guide them to achieve higher standards.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The strong and highly effective leadership of the headteacher is supported well by senior management and governors. Shortcomings are being tackled robustly in the structures, systems and effectiveness of other managers. Governors have established a sharply focused and challenging five-year plan against which to evaluate the improvement of the school. They undertake their roles well, but do not ensure that requirements are met for teaching religious education from Year 10 upwards, for collective worship and for reporting to parents on all National Curriculum subjects. The school has been operating with a budget deficit for some time, a situation made worse by the requirement to repay funding caused by falling rolls. Plans are now in place to eliminate this deficit.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents largely support the school but have some concerns about its decline in recent years and increased poor behaviour last year. Many parents and students are concerned that the school's liberal traditions are being undermined by the introduction of new rules for behaviour. The headteacher is aware of this. However, a main priority has rightly been to stabilise the school by eliminating the poor behaviour that had developed even if rules are temporarily resented by some pupils who, by contrast, feel safer and more secure now.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- continue the drive to raise achievement and the quality of teaching, learning and the use of assessment throughout the school and particularly in English, mathematics, science, ICT and music;
- tackle as a matter of considerable urgency the casual attitude to attendance and punctuality of many students and their parents;
- ensure that homework policy is clear and its implementation rigorously monitored so that homework is consistently set and contributes to raising achievement;
- develop the role of middle managers so that they provide more effective leadership and are made accountable for provision and standards in their areas of responsibility;

and meet statutory requirements:

- for reporting to parents;
- to teach religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form;
- for collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT THE HEWETT SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory sixth form. It is also cost-effective, although declining numbers have placed a considerable burden on funding. The staying-on rate from the school is low compared with nationally, but students who join from other schools enlarge numbers considerably. Achievement is satisfactory and examination results have been close to the national average for the last few years. Teaching is good overall. Improvement in provision since the previous inspection is satisfactory, although requirements for all students to study a suitable religious education course are still not met.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The wide range of courses available, particularly at A Level, enables most students to follow courses that suit their needs and aspirations and gain places in higher education; however, provision of vocational based courses is limited and the development of key skills receives insufficient attention.
- Sixth form development and improvement are receiving close attention from the headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- Teaching is more effective than in Years 8 to 11 because staff use their good subject knowledge effectively to focus successfully on developing skills and students' understanding of examination requirements.
- Procedures to ensure that students regularly attend lessons and do so on time are not sufficiently rigorous and consequently attendance levels are unsatisfactory.

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	<p>Provision for English is good. Positive student attitudes and good teaching are leading to above average standards.</p> <p>Provision for French is satisfactory. Able students respond well to challenge. Overall A Level results are in line with national averages.</p>
Mathematics	<p>Provision for mathematics is satisfactory. Good teaching supported by positive student attitudes brings about good achievement.</p>
Science	<p>Provision for biology is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory as is teaching, leading to average standards.</p> <p>Provision for chemistry is satisfactory. A Level results were below average in 2003; current achievement is satisfactory and standards are just below average.</p> <p>Provision for physics is satisfactory. Satisfactory teaching and learning are leading to satisfactory achievement and average standards.</p>
Humanities	<p>Provision for geography is good. Students respond well to the good teaching; this enables them to achieve above average standards.</p> <p>Provision for psychology good. The teachers' very good command of the subject material enthuse the students to achieve well.</p> <p>Provision for religious education is very good. A Level results are well above average with knowledgeable teaching and strong student interest.</p> <p>Provision for sociology is satisfactory. Good teaching and the positive</p>

	approach of the students is leading to them achieving average standards.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Provision for design and technology is good. Challenging teaching and effective mentoring motivate the students, who attain above average results.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision for art and design is good. The wide range of courses is taught well and the students' very positive attitudes ensure above average standards. Provision for theatre studies is good. Achievement is good and standards are average as a result of good teaching and the students' positive response.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision for physical education is good. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching, high expectations and very good relationships.
Business	Provision for business studies is good. Excellent procedures for tracking progress inform teachers' planning and support good achievement.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The students benefit from satisfactory advice, support and guidance. However, there is not sufficient consistency in the effectiveness of form tutors, partly because assessment information is not readily available to assist them in guiding students and setting targets for their improvement. There is now a formal structure for tutors in Year 12 and a timetabled period in which they provide valuable and well-received careers and higher education guidance. Induction¹ arrangements for students, including those who join from other schools are thorough and enable a good start to be made in Year 12.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategic planning now includes improving sixth form provision and broadening the range of courses and opportunities available to meet the needs of a wider range of potential students. Subject leadership does not focus sufficiently on monitoring the work of staff, evaluating performance and setting sharp targets to measure performance.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are largely happy with the school, although individuals have reservations about certain aspects such as the consistency of the support and guidance they receive - a matter that the school is starting to tackle. They enjoy their life in the sixth form and appreciate the range of courses available and the respect shown to them by their teachers. Most report favourably about their preparation for higher education.

¹ Induction refers to the arrangements for receiving new pupils and students, briefing them on routines, and helping them settle into school life.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is unsatisfactory overall and in Years 8 to 11. Many students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, standards have fallen substantially over the last few years. However, this decline has now been halted and there is evidence that standards are slowly starting to rise.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have fallen sharply since 2000; they were well below the national average in 2003.
- Large numbers of students made poor progress up to GCSE in 2003 and did not achieve the standards expected of them.
- Boys' results in Year 9 test results and at GCSE are lower than girls' and by a greater margin than nationally.
- Students achieve poorly in music and standards are well below average.
- The school caters well for groups of students who need additional help and support to enable them to achieve.

Commentary

1. Test and examination results have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection, and in the case of GCSE have been falling rapidly in recent years. Large numbers of students have not achieved the results at GCSE of which they were capable given their levels of attainment on entry to the school. Staff have also had little success in improving boys' attainment since the last inspection, when this matter was a key issue to be tackled. The new headteacher and the governing body have identified that both of these matters are in need of urgent attention. Challenging targets for improvement have been established and action instigated to improve achievement and raise standards. Although only in the early stages of implementation, these are already showing signs of success.
2. There has been a small improvement in overall Year 9 test results over the last few years, but at a slower rate than nationally. Overall results and those in the individual core subjects of English, mathematics and science were average in 2003. They were well above average when compared with similar schools (those where the students had similar Year 6 test results). Girls have gained better results than boys over the period from 1999 to 2003, the difference being greater than nationally. This was particularly marked in 2003. The latest results represent broadly satisfactory progress for most students from their Year 6 tests. The school's targets were not achieved in 2003 and have been lowered slightly for 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.7 (32.4)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	35.7 (35.2)	35.4 (34.7)

Science	32.9 (32.3)	33.6 (33.3)
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There were 251 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Not only have GCSE results fallen in recent years, but they also represented poor progress for most students from their earlier Year 9 test results. The proportion of students entered for GCSE was well below average in 2003 in most subjects and a high proportion of the students failed to gain a single GCSE. Poor attendance seriously affected the progress made by many students, particularly in their completion of coursework requirements. Boys' results were lower than girls' in 2003; boys did particularly badly at the higher levels. Only in French, drama and religious education were results in 2003 significantly better than the national average. By contrast, results were significantly below average in art, science, economics, geography, German, mathematics and English (language and literature). The GCSE targets were substantially missed in 2003, and have been set at a significantly higher level in 2004. Students will have done well if these targets are met.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	35 (41)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	76 (81)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	91 (91)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	28.0 (34.7)	30.6 (34.7)

There were 296 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Students in Years 8 to 11 are not consistently achieving as well as they should. Several factors account for this. Attendance is very low overall and many students have high levels of absence. Teaching in the main school is unsatisfactory overall. Many staff have low expectations of the students' work, behaviour, participation in lessons and the homework that they are to undertake. Long-term staff absence through illness and difficulties in recruitment has exacerbated shortages in subjects such as English, mathematics and music. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not entirely relevant to the needs and aspirations of all students, resulting in disaffection and poor attitudes to learning of a significant number.
- Standards are average overall in Years 8 and 9, but are below average in Years 10 and 11. This pattern is similar in both English and mathematics. However, standards in both science and information and communication technology (ICT) are below average throughout the school. The subject that has suffered most in recent years is music. Long-term staff absence through illness, difficulties in recruiting suitable replacements and the poor quality of the teaching are leading to significant underachievement and well below average standards.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well in the Student Achievement Centre. They make good progress in life skills and speaking and listening, and they develop the confidence to relate effectively with other students and adults. Students with special educational needs who are supported in the main stream of school achieve as well as expected and in line with other students. Four of the students with English as an

additional language receive additional support in the Student Achievement Centre once a week. In the lessons observed, the specialist teacher gave them focused support, using adapted materials. The quality of this specialist support is good with planned opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing. These help the students to achieve well in acquiring English. During the week of the inspection, there were no students from Traveller backgrounds present as they were authorised absent for travelling. The school is in the early stages of identifying gifted and talented students and making co-ordinated provision for them. Work has been undertaken in individual subjects, but has had limited overall effect on the achievement of these students.

7. Within the general picture of underachievement, many students do well, have a successful time at the school and gain good examination results that enable them to continue down their chosen route whether this is into higher education, training or employment. For example, students achieve well in geography and standards in both design and technology and religious education are above average by Year 11. There is also strong evidence to show that the corner has been turned and both achievement and standards are now improving. This is largely due to the focus placed by the new headteacher on improving teaching, learning and the students' attitudes and behaviour.

Sixth form

8. Overall examination performance at AS Level, A Level and VCE has been in line with the national average for the last three years. Results also represent broadly satisfactory progress from the students' earlier GCSE results. As with other examination results, female students did better than males, but only by roughly the same difference as nationally. There has not been any great consistency in the performance of individual subjects over the last two years other than chemistry and music being consistently lower than average and religious education, design and technology and communication studies being consistently better than average. Results have fluctuated in other subjects; they fell substantially in history, physics, economics and mathematics in 2003 and improved considerably in sociology, business studies, English (literature) and physical education. Intermediate and advanced vocational results were slightly above the national average in 2003; results were above average in art and travel and tourism in 2003 and below average in health and social care (as they were in 2002).

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	89.6 (86.2)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	33.1 (28.2)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per student	240.8 (240.0)	252.1 (254.5)

There were 260 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

9. The students' achievement is better in the sixth form than in the main school, but is still only satisfactory overall. There are fluctuations between subjects. Above average standards are currently evident in English, mathematics, art and design, geography, design and technology, religious education and physical education but just below average standards in chemistry. Staff have not analysed data in sufficient detail to show whether students who join the sixth form from other schools do better or worse than those staying on from The Hewett.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory in the main school. The number of fixed period exclusions last year was well above average for a school of this size, but has fallen this year. Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Attendance is very poor and students' punctuality is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for managing behaviour, bullying and harassment are effective in most cases, although a significant minority of students misbehave in a few classes.
- Attendance is very low when compared with the national average; many students arrive very late for school.
- The number of fixed period exclusions is high.

Commentary

10. The school has made a determined attempt to improve students' behaviour in and around the school since the start of the current academic year. The school has issued a revised behaviour policy and set up a Student Achievement Centre, which provides good support for students at risk of exclusion. This allows the school to continue with the education of the majority of the students while addressing the additional support needs of the remainder. Students confirm that behaviour has improved as a result. Community wardens, serving the area around the school, comment that reports of misbehaviour and vandalism have fallen considerably over the current school year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	12.1	School data	4.1
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

11. Attendance levels have fallen significantly, since the last inspection. The school has revised the way in which it classifies absence because of shortcomings in the previous system. Data for 2002 to 2003 shows absence levels of double the national average. Analysis of this data has allowed staff to begin to identify the causes and the school has issued a revised attendance policy. The implementation of this varies across the school. This has resulted in poor attendance and even poorer timekeeping, both arriving at school and at lessons, continuing to be a problem. The school is aware of these problems and has taken steps to tackle them. Recent attendance figures show an improvement. However, it has neither the technology in place nor the staff to deal with attendance problems comprehensively.

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
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White – British	1283	214	1
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	39	7	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	14	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	12	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	12	2	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	8	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	102	46	0

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

12. The previous inspection found that students behave very well during the school day. This positive picture has worsened over the intervening six years and their behaviour is now only satisfactory. This has been accompanied by a decline in the standard of teaching. Although most of the students know how they should and should not behave, their conduct deteriorates when the work set does not match their abilities or interest. The level of exclusions was well above average last year for a school of this size. This reflected the deterioration in behaviour that occurred, including incidents involving groups of students. This situation has improved this year and the level of exclusions has fallen.
13. In spite of several strengths, the students' personal development is not promoted well in most subjects. It is touched on in some areas such as the morality of the treatment of Native Americans in the history of the USA, the morality of the one-child birth control policy in China, and social and moral aspects of child development. Where students are taught religious education, the subject makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural education through addressing questions about the existence of God, of suffering and death, through developing understanding of a range of religions, and through exploring moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia. The spirituality unit within the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is well planned and satisfactorily taught, but cannot make a large contribution because of the very limited teaching time. Assemblies positively contribute to spiritual and moral development through moments of quiet reflection and through the assembly content which includes a focus on moral issues such as those surrounding the tragic deaths of Chinese workers in Morecambe Bay, and on the successes and problems of members of the school community. However, these are only attended by students once each week. Multicultural understanding is developed in English. Furthermore, a wide range of visits to Europe, Russia, Cuba, Peru and China provide excellent cultural development opportunities.

Sixth form

14. Most sixth form students have a positive approach to learning and behave sensibly. They are keen to do well and involve themselves appropriately in the life of the school, although opportunities to take on significant responsibilities are limited. Their personal development is given similar attention as in the main school. One strength is the promotion of social, cultural and moral understanding for theatre studies students through the study of a wide range of playwrights and by the students performing in a community play in Norwich.
15. The monitoring of student attendance on a day-to-day basis is poor. Whilst student attendance is recorded for individual lessons, and this is used to identify students who do not attend regularly, there are no means of ascertaining who is in school at any given time of the day. Although figures held by the school indicate reasonable levels of attendance this was not the case during the inspection where average attendance at lessons was only 87 percent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. Teaching has some significant shortcomings and the curriculum does not meet the aspirations and needs of all students. Staff are successful in ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of the students.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. They are good in the sixth form, but much weaker in other years, especially Years 8 and 9. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. The use of assessment information and homework has too little impact on the students' learning and progress because they are inconsistently used.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form, but unsatisfactory throughout the rest of the school.
- Teaching in the Student Achievement Centre is very good because strategies are very well matched to meet the needs of individual students.
- There is insufficient use of assessment information to improve teaching and learning and to improve the students' achievement.
- Homework has too little impact on learning and progress because its quality and the rigour with which it is followed up is too inconsistent.
- There is widespread use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 234 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (0%)	32 (14%)	93 (40%)	83 (35%)	19 (8%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)

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.

16. The quality of teaching and learning has deteriorated significantly since the previous inspection. Too many lessons, especially in Years 8 and 9 are not taught well enough and in too few lessons is teaching good or very good. This, together with the passive and sometimes negative attitudes of students, is the main reason why students make insufficient progress and do not achieve as well as they should.
17. In the best lessons, teachers set high expectations of what the students will achieve and the effort and engagement required of them. This is built upon well developed relationships where students respect the knowledge and expertise of the teacher so that they respond well to the challenge being presented. Lessons are conducted at a lively pace, with many positive interactions between teacher and students. Consequently, students make good progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, too often teachers have low expectations of the students and provide them with insufficient challenge. The students' attitudes, and on some occasions their behaviour, becomes poor in response to this dull and undemanding teaching. Teachers then accept students lack of concentration too readily and demand too little participation from them. Learning is patchy, slow and lacks coherence and consistency. Inconsistent use is made of homework. The activities set do not always extend learning sufficiently, and opportunities are lost to ensure that work outside lessons contributes to the students' progress. The rigour with which teachers require the homework that is set to be completed on time and to a high standard is also inconsistent. The poor attendance pattern of some students contributes further to the lack of impact of homework on their learning.
18. Most teachers employ an appropriate range of methods in their lessons. The structures of the Key Stage 3 Strategy are increasingly put to good use by several and this is having a beneficial effect on the students' learning. Starter activities help to focus the students' minds on the learning ahead. The purpose of the lesson is explained and connections made with previous lessons. Resources are used imaginatively and there is much

effective use of ICT to support learning and to enable the students to present their work attractively. The best teaching returns to the lesson objectives at the end to help students evaluate their learning and progress.

19. There has been some improvement in assessment procedures since the previous inspection, but not enough to have a positive impact throughout the school. Students' work is marked and constructive feedback provided, although this is inconsistent in subjects such as mathematics. Nevertheless students are provided with too little detail of what they specifically need to do to improve their work; this remains a weakness in the work of too many teachers. The quality of the feedback provided improves in Years 10 and 11 as teachers focus more on examination specifications. Systems to monitor and track what the students know and can do are mainly in place and are used well in geography and religious education. They remain unsatisfactory in science and French and are not yet in place in English. The use of assessment information to focus and target teachers' lesson planning remains a significant weakness. Consequently, higher and lower-attaining students are not always presented with the appropriate level of challenge.
20. Teaching in the Student Achievement Centre is of very high quality. This is because the teachers accurately assess the needs of students to gain a thorough understanding of their individual needs. Consequently, lesson planning is very effective. Some students have complex learning and behavioural difficulties and teachers are also able to adjust and modify their approach quickly as these needs change and develop. Consequently, the students make better than expected progress as they thrive in the very supportive environment created by the teachers and assistants.

Sixth form

21. The positive features of teaching and learning evident in Years 8 to 11 are found much more in sixth form lessons, although there are missed opportunities to support learning further by employing a wider range of strategies in some subjects. Nevertheless, teaching is good overall and good or better in two-thirds of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a secure appreciation of course specifications. Teaching is focused on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills required of the subject, as well as ensuring that students understand and experience the assessment requirements. The students generally respond well to the greater responsibility and independence expected of them, although there are occasions when more dedication to their studies is required. Relationships are positive and constructive.
22. The quality and impact of marking and feedback improves further in the sixth form. Here, the norm is for it to be focused on meeting examination requirements and on improvement. All subject departments are tracking student progress and most are setting targets, although these are not always securely based on their prior attainment. An analysis of the performance of previous examination results is also carried out, and this leads to changes to the work covered or the approaches used. However, this task is not carried out with sufficient rigour in all subjects, so that key strengths are not identified and developed or all weaknesses removed. Business studies provides a model of effective practice.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall as is the range of enrichment opportunities for a school of this size. However, the plans already in place for the coming academic year will provide greater breadth and more relevant courses for students from Year 10 onwards. There are sufficient teachers, support staff and resources to ensure its delivery. The accommodation is adequate for the demands of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 is not appropriately designed to meet the needs of all students, causing disaffection among many students.
- Statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10, 11 and the sixth form are not met; there is also no daily act of collective worship.
- Provision for enrichment activities has deteriorated since the previous inspection and it is limited now.
- Good provision for students with special educational needs in the Student Achievement Centre helps them to make better progress than expected.
- The sixth form provides a wide range of courses at A and AS Levels.
- The library is a strength of the school, supporting the work of sixth form students in particular.

Commentary

23. The curriculum for Years 8 and 9 gives students a satisfactory range of experiences with the full range of National Curriculum subjects on offer. There are weaknesses in the music curriculum where planning, organisation and staff absences hinder students' learning and progress. The provision for ICT for Years 8 and 9 has improved since the previous inspection and it is taught as a core key skills course in Years 10 and 11. In Years 10 and 11 all students study a core curriculum and options. There are satisfactory arrangements for core PSHE and physical education but not for citizenship. The latter has been added on to the timetable and is taught as a mixture of specific lessons in a rotation with PSHE and careers and through identified topics within other subjects. This arrangement is fragmented and does not ensure the full entitlement of all students in Years 10 and 11. The school also offers a satisfactory range of vocational and work-related courses. In Years 10 and 11, an 'alternative' curriculum with inbuilt study time has been developed for students who are studying for a reduced number of GCSEs at lower levels. The statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form are not met, an issue in the previous inspection. There is no daily act of collective worship.
24. The school has identified that there are shortcomings with the current curriculum for Years 10 and 11, which is not suitable for students who are not inclined to academic study. This has caused disaffection and apathy among many students. The school is currently developing innovative curriculum patterns for Years 10 to 13. It aims to broaden the curriculum by introducing more work-based and work-related learning. The headteacher and the senior staff are working hard to find ways to offer a good range of subject choices, which include vocational courses for students who are not engaged by the academic subjects of the curriculum. The school is also investigating applied GCSE along with greater shared provision and collaboration with local colleges.
25. Provision for students with special educational needs is good. They have full access to the National Curriculum. The very good support mechanisms allow students with behavioural and learning difficulties to access the curriculum followed by their peers in

school. The arrangements to meet the needs of a very small number of students with English as an additional language are satisfactory. They are supported effectively by the local education authority's support service, but curriculum planning does not reflect their needs.

26. Enrichment opportunities outside lessons have declined since the previous inspection and now they are unsatisfactory. Given the size of the school, there is a limited range of clubs that cater for such interests as music, drama and sporting activities. There are some lunchtime activities for students and subjects such as geography, ICT and design and technology provide clubs for revision and enrichment at lunchtime and after school. A wide range of visits overseas contributes considerably to the personal development of those students who take part.
27. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Hardware for ICT has improved since the last inspection. Although the school is spacious with buildings spreading over a large area, some classrooms are small for group work with large classes. Furthermore, several departments such as design and technology and physical education are spread across the site making difficult the development of a sense of unity and common purpose. The advantage of the large area of sports fields is offset because physical education does not have a sports hall; this presents difficulties for indoor activities. The library is used well throughout the school day and gives access to computers for students. It has a good stock of books which are efficiently and attractively displayed. The school has suffered considerable staff turnover in the last two years. Currently, it is adequately staffed with a very few unqualified teachers. The main issue it faces is staff absence, which is satisfactorily dealt with.

Sixth form

28. The sixth form curriculum is satisfactory with appropriate pathways for most students. An induction programme for all sixth form courses, occurring at the end of Year 11, provides good preparation. A good range of courses is available at A Level, including general and vocational qualifications. Provision of Level 1 and 2 courses is more limited. If necessary, students can take GCSE examinations again in English and mathematics in the sixth form. The school enables students to take qualifications in the key skills of ICT, but not in literacy and numeracy. The absence of key skills in literacy often has an adverse effect on the learning of modern foreign languages. The PSHE programme provides satisfactory access to wider key skills as well as encouragement, support and preparation for higher education.
29. Students take part in a reasonable array of extra-curricular opportunities that enhance their personal development and prepare them well for life beyond school. However, as in the main school, these are somewhat limited in their range. They include theatre visits and concerts, a range of sports, first aid and other vocational training.
30. Subject staff are generally suitably qualified for the courses they teach. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The well resourced library is used well by many students as a centre for study and research.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure students' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school provides satisfactory support, advice and guidance and involves students satisfactorily in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school looks after its students well; health and safety and child protection procedures are comprehensive and effective.
- Induction procedures are well planned and thorough.
- The school actively seeks students' views and accommodates their suggestions and preferences whenever possible.

Commentary

31. The last report commented on the strengths in care, support and guidance. Many of these strengths remain. For example, arrangements for care and support are good. Health and safety procedures are thorough and well documented; risk assessment is pragmatic and used effectively. However, older students comment that academic guidance varies and that they are sometimes unsure of how to improve their work. Those leaving Year 11 feel well supported in their choice of career or further education.
32. The school offers good opportunities for incoming students to get to know the staff, the school and their prospective form group. This ensures that by the time they start, students have a good introduction to the life of the school. Those who join during the year are catered for well. A buddy system is in use and the school monitors how well students settle in. Problems are quickly picked up and dealt with.
33. The school conducts student surveys and students form working groups to organise and run events. Year councils have been responsible for improvements such as the installation of drinking fountains and new locks on lockers. The school council is a recent development with representatives drawn from the existing year councils, but has yet to make an impact on the school. Its members recognise this and are keen to ensure that they deliver an early success from the list of concerns they are in the process of prioritising.

Sixth form

34. Students enjoy being in the sixth form and they speak warmly of the personal and academic support that their teachers provide. They comment positively on the difference in the way they are taught and appreciate that teachers respect them and share their knowledge.
35. Students are confident that the school listens to their views and that they have a good relationship with senior school staff. The sixth form committee has been responsible for initiatives such as healthy eating, setting rules for the common room and raising money for charity and to support its operation.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are satisfactory as are links with other schools and colleges. Links with the community in the sixth form are good, and in the main school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school issues good information about the school and takes account of parents' views.
- Information to parents about students' progress is unclear.
- Transfer arrangements for students are comprehensive.
- The school has an effective strategy for developing links with industry.
- The school inspires students to explore a breadth of educational opportunities.

Commentary

36. The information that the school makes available to parents is comprehensive and regular; the school web site is well designed, colourful and invites exploration. The school conducts surveys of parents' views and reports on the results. Points raised by parents are incorporated into the school's strategic planning, ensuring that parents' priorities are represented. The school strives to keep parents informed where there is a problem with their child; it uses text messaging to contact parents quickly.
37. Within this positive picture there are some shortcomings. For example, school reports to parents lack detail. Information on subjects such as ICT and citizenship is missing and some student targets lack clarity. However, the format of the report is good as is the numeric grading used in each subject such as for student effort or behaviour. Homework diaries, if used, are poorly maintained. Their potential as an ongoing means of keeping parents and teachers in touch is not fully exploited. Monitoring of their use is inconsistent and parent comments may receive little or no feedback.
38. Good liaison with contributing middle schools and well-planned transfer arrangements ensure a smooth transition when students enter the school in Year 8. The induction team work closely with contributing middle schools, well in advance of the start of the school year, to build a detailed picture of those joining and any specific needs they may have. However, there is little planned liaison over curriculum matters to provide continuity for the students' learning as they move into the school.
39. The school works with a wide range of local employers. These provide work experience placements for Year 10 students and employment to leavers. The school is piloting an innovative relationship with a large local employer to provide closely defined work experience, which raises students' awareness of careers and the qualifications required. This helps to ensure that students make course choices in Year 10 that closely match their career aspirations. The school also raises its profile in the business community by holding events where employers and students can meet. These provide a showcase for all parties: students demonstrate their capabilities and find out about employers; the school shows off its facilities; school and employers' staff meet; and employers market themselves to the school and to prospective employees and explore opportunities for further collaboration.
40. Several students, selected by ballot, attended a taster day at Cambridge University as part of an initiative to strengthen links between the school and higher education. This gives an understanding of what life at university is like and inspires more able students to consider higher education as a viable option.

Sixth form

41. The recent changes to the sixth form pastoral curriculum in Year 12 has provided a focus for tutors to work more closely with tutees in monitoring their overall progress and equipping them with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills for moving on. Induction arrangements into the sixth form are very well managed. They include a two-day induction session and visiting Year 11 students in every feeder school. Existing sixth form students support induction preparation for the forthcoming intake by guiding prospective sixth form students around the school. School staff also teach sample lessons at feeder secondary schools for those unsure of their choice of sixth form subjects.
42. Although the school offers a broad range of sixth form subjects, it makes good use of facilities at linked colleges to support teaching where its own facilities fall short of what is needed. This ensures that it maintains a breadth of study opportunities for its students. Students who wish to pursue a more vocational route for further education integrate day-release opportunities at a local college with school studies. In addition, a nursery, adjacent to the school site, offers opportunities for those seeking experience in childcare and associated areas.
43. Links with higher and further education colleges and contributing secondary schools are in the process of being rebuilt. This follows a period of decline when numbers entering the sixth form from one other school fell to very low levels. The school is pursuing a policy of increasing communication with other schools and colleges. Joint staffing appointments and exchanges of teaching staff are raising the profile of the sixth form with the school's own students and prospective students at linked schools. As a result of these measures, applications to enter the sixth form have increased substantially for the forthcoming year.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher and good governance have arrested the decline in standards at the school. Other key staff provide satisfactory leadership overall, although there is considerable scope for the development of the role of subject leadership; management systems are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, senior staff and governors have arrested the decline in the school, set sharply focused plans for the future and established challenging targets for its success.
- Middle managers are not contributing sufficiently to improving teaching and learning and thereby raising standards.
- The school has been operating with a budget deficit, but plans for its elimination have recently been prepared by the headteacher and governing body.
- The leadership and management of the special educational needs department are very good, and this contributes significantly to the inclusive² nature of the school.

² Inclusion refers to the school's procedures for meeting the learning needs of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background.

Commentary

44. The governing body, having previously let slip their focus on school standards, are now clearly aware of their specific responsibilities in this area. While governors were aware of the decline in standards in the school, their mechanisms for dealing with them were not sufficiently robust or systematic to be effective. However, the governors are now clearly focused on restoring standards. They have reached advanced stages in planning to restructure staffing and management to tackle student underachievement and to meet the demands of the new curriculum structure. This restructuring also supports the priorities in the five-year strategic plan and aims to alleviate the budgetary pressures associated with falling roles. The governors' strategic plan gives a strong steer for the school's direction and sets challenging targets. Governors perform their roles well, but do not ensure that requirements are met for teaching religious education from Year 10 upwards, for collective worship and for reporting to parents on all National Curriculum subjects.
45. The headteacher, appointed in September 2003, has a clear vision for improvement, a sense of purpose and high aspirations which have been enthusiastically supported by senior managers and by the majority of the staff. A highly effective senior management team is in place, charged with implementing the strategic plan and tackling the key issues of improving achievement, teaching and learning, attendance, attitudes and behaviour. To assist with this, the school has been highly effective in accessing and using considerable local authority resources, such as the use of advisory support staff to tackle weaknesses in the leadership of middle management, teaching strategies and staffing.
46. The headteacher has a very clear strategy for designing a curriculum that is more relevant to the needs and aspirations of all students particularly from Year 10 onwards. The vast majority of staff have great faith in the headteacher's ability to carry through this initiative and other changes necessary to improve standards at the school. They have for the most part embraced those changes. However, a significant minority of staff have found the pace of change and proliferation of initiatives daunting and difficult to implement. There are significant weaknesses in middle management, particularly at head of department level. They have not previously assumed appropriate responsibilities for monitoring the performance of their departments and the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that standards are maintained. Monitoring the work of staff to identify weaknesses and to take action has not traditionally been a systematic approach taken by the school; good practice has not been shared or policies implemented consistently across the departments. However, the current plans for restructuring the subject areas and the refocusing of head of department's responsibilities are designed to tackle this. Restructuring plans include developing leadership roles for middle and senior managers so that they become more responsible and accountable for standards and the quality of education.
47. The headteacher has a clear commitment to inclusion and this lies at the heart of much of the future plans for the school. The recently established Student Achievement Centre is an excellent example of this. Students feel valued for their achievements and are able to express themselves in an environment where they feel safe and appreciated. The leadership and management of this department are very good. The co-ordinator exhibits drive, a sense of purpose and dynamism which brings together all staff to form a powerful body of support for students with special educational needs. The very good teaching and pastoral guidance provided for these students is very effectively supported by high quality assessment procedures which directly inform planning.

48. The school has been operating with a budget deficit for the last few years as it has suffered major reductions in its income because of falling roles. This has been exacerbated by considerable 'claw back' of funding from central and local government. These financial difficulties have been successfully tackled by the governing body by representation to the funding providers so that school finances now have a more stable future. However, some of the financial estimates are based on projections of increasing student numbers in the main school and staying-on rates into the sixth form which may not materialise, although the governing body and headteacher remain confident that they will.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	6,115,353	Balance from previous year	-309,752
Total expenditure	6,088,399	Balance carried forward to the next	-282,798
Expenditure per student	3,347		

Sixth form

49. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. There is a formal structure of management responsibilities with assistant heads of year leading a team of tutors, providing pastoral support for students where required and assisting with the administration of a range of sixth form activities, such as the highly successful induction days. However, the effectiveness of sixth form tutors is variable. Some monitor student progress closely, taking an appropriate overall view of their subject performance, whilst others do not. This is hindered by the fact that there is no easily accessible database of information on student progress across the complete range of courses they are studying.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

50. English and French were inspected in detail and lessons sampled in German and Spanish. Not all students in Years 10 and 11 take an examination in a modern language, with about 30 students per year for whom the experience of learning a language has been waived. The outcomes for GCSE candidates in **German** in 2003 were low in relation to national expectations and in relation to the other languages taught at the school. Outcomes in **Spanish** have tended to be better, but relate to a much smaller group of students who take the subject as a second foreign language from Year 9 onwards. There is good capacity for teaching Spanish and German. Teaching in all modern languages offered, and also in Latin, is good overall.

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are above average.
- Teaching and learning are improving because of innovative approaches to staffing and focused planning under the recently appointed head of department.
- Overall achievement is unsatisfactory and standards in Year 11 are below average.
- Inconsistent marking and the absence of tracking of students' progress and target-setting do not help them to know the next steps in their learning or how to achieve better.

Commentary

51. Results in the Year 9 national tests were in line with both the national average and the average of similar schools in 2003. They were above average in relation to the students' prior attainment. Results in 2003 declined at GCSE, with both English language and literature being well below average for all schools, similar schools and in relation to prior attainment.
52. Standards during the inspection were average in Year 9 and below average in Year 11. Opportunities for discussion and drama-related activities help students to develop good skills in speaking and listening. There are some very articulate and confident speakers, mainly girls, who contribute well in lessons. However, reading and writing are not built on these good speaking and listening skills effectively for many students, particularly for lower-attaining students, who are mainly boys. Students' overall achievement is unsatisfactory. There are many reasons for this underachievement. Curriculum planning and teaching are not well matched to the needs and ways of learning of different groups. The students in lower sets are often apathetic learners; poor attendance and staff absences have led to work not being completed. Inconsistent marking of work has also failed to help students with ways to improve their work. There are no systems and procedures for tracking students' progress and setting appropriate targets to help them.

53. The situation is improving. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was better than that suggested by the results of the most recent national tests. Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, and is satisfactory overall. Students are set according to their ability but the quality of teaching varies between sets. The teaching of higher-attaining students is good, which enables them to write lengthy, interesting and detailed pieces by the end of Year 9. Similarly, by the end of Year 11, the highest attaining students produce well-researched work, using accurate language and style. An example of such work is on *The Canterbury Tales*, where the students have analysed its portraits of ecclesiastical characters through an understanding of the expectations of 14th Century society. They can also explain why a writer chooses to use a particular technique and show the powerful effect that language can have. There is sufficient challenge for able students and their achievement is satisfactory.
54. The teaching of lower-attaining students often lacks stimulation and strategies to engage them. Although teachers are trying to target questions to ensure boys' participation, this practice is not consistent in all teaching. There are now opportunities for students who have been absent to catch up on work. The work of temporary staff is better planned so that teaching matches students' needs. Students are achieving better than before. Students with special educational needs who are supported in the mainstream lessons achieve in line with other students. A very small number of students with English as an additional language achieve well in English through specialist support when withdrawn from lessons. Their achievement is the same as the rest of the students.
55. The subject is soundly led and managed. The recently appointed head of the department has made good progress in identifying priorities for the department, some of which have been achieved within a short time. Progress towards tackling the issues identified in the last inspection is satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning and scrutiny of students' work has been introduced; there is the beginning of an assessment policy with a focus on raising boys' achievement. However, these initiatives have recently started and are yet to impact on standards and achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Currently, there is no policy for literacy. However, literacy skills are developed satisfactorily in a number of subjects such as history, geography, design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. There is a focus on the teaching of key words in design and technology and physical education. Geography teachers stress technical vocabulary and create opportunities for students to write imaginatively and at length. For example, the students have written an account for tourists of what it feels like to watch High Force waterfall. Not all subjects display key words prominently in classrooms or attempt to develop reading and writing skills.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching incorporates positive behaviour management, attention to different learning styles and appropriate challenge.

- Good quality leadership and management is displayed in the analysis of student performance and in the action taken to tackle the needs of those at risk of underperformance.
- There is scope to refine target-setting processes with the students.

Commentary

French, with sampling of German and Spanish

57. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and standards are in line with the national average. The results achieved by students in the GCSE examinations for French have been generally higher than the results obtained by the same students in their other subjects. The gap between the performance of boys and that of girls has been successfully reduced, and is about the same as is encountered nationally, but the members of the department are not complacent about this situation. They are aware that achievement is high where the levels of expectation are also high.
58. On entry to the school in Year 8, students take either French or German. There is insufficient information from the feeder middle schools about the competences which students have acquired over one or, in many cases, two years of modern language learning prior to entry. This difficulty is overcome by a process of continuous assessment from the first lesson onwards. However, several students get everything right, which suggests that for some the tasks may be too easy. Standards of written work seen in exercise books and in lessons are improving especially in Year 9. However, the beginning of a new topic often results in student performance reverting to single words or sentences, without the learners being encouraged to draw on previously acquired language for extended speaking or writing tasks.
59. The very good lessons seen involved an intrinsic interest for the topic under consideration, with real communication in the exchanges between students and teachers. Teachers also used the final part of a lesson to check what the students thought that they had learned. In the two lessons judged to be less than satisfactory, the teachers did not create the circumstances in which students could show their performance at its best.
60. There are six well-qualified teachers of French in the department, all with good subject knowledge. Some classes have more than one teacher, and in one case the second teacher is a specialist from another area of the curriculum, who is rather less well equipped to teach French. Firm attention to detail and energetic intervention by the acting head of department and her team is resulting in ongoing improvements to the quality of teaching. Teaching is good overall. Students with special educational needs, including problems with literacy and emotional and behavioural difficulties, continue to be well catered for.
61. The department's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Most language classrooms contain at least one or two computers. Through regular use of a computer suite the department is able to make a contribution to improving the use of ICT, whilst increasing the independence of students in accessing language learning materials through the Internet and in appropriate software.
62. Improvements have been painstakingly put in place by the previous head of department and the current acting head of department. Analyses of the strengths and weaknesses in

departmental and student performance are rigorous and honest, with considerable attention paid to seeking collective solutions to difficulties. These include greater rigour in the setting of homework, assessment for learning and an ongoing focus on how boys can best achieve at languages. These initiatives are now paying off in terms of improving student performance in languages, despite the difficulties which many students experience elsewhere in the curriculum. Target-setting has been introduced, but does not provide the students with a clear picture of how they can make progress through either the National Curriculum levels or the relevant examination syllabuses.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of ICT to support learning, particularly in Years 8 and 9.
- There are good relationships between members of staff who support each other well.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory and there is a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous and does not lead to appropriate action and there is no development plan that can be used as a working document to promote improvement.
- A limited range of teaching strategies fails to engage a significant proportion of students.

Commentary

63. Standards are in line with the national average in Years 8 and 9, but are below average in Years 10 and 11. Results in national tests in Year 9 were average in 2003 and have been increasing in line with the national trend. Results compare well with similar schools. Results at GCSE fell markedly from a position close to, but below, the national average in 2002 to well below average in 2003. There were few A* and A grade passes in 2003. Data on student performance suggests that results should be better in 2004. Girls outperform boys, the gap increasing with age. The gender gap is greater than the national position. There are no strategies in place to reduce the difference in performance of boys and girls.
64. Although some good or better lessons were seen, overall the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. The best lessons are well planned. The work represents a real challenge, and the lessons are taught with appropriate pace. In these lessons, students take an interest in what they are doing. Good use of questioning by teachers encourages the development of thinking skills. Where these elements are lacking, students become disengaged from the work, do not concentrate for long periods and became unacceptably noisy for effective learning to take place. Students' casual attitudes to learning and lack of effort mean that achievement overall is unsatisfactory. Where students are engaged in their lessons and exhibit positive attitudes, most noticeably in able groups in Years 10 and 11, achievement is good. However, poor attendance in lessons is also inhibiting achievement. Presentation in books is unsatisfactory, with work poorly set out, covers and many inside pages unacceptably decorated. The books do not provide a good resource for students' revision. Information and communication technology is used well to support their learning. The website developed by the head of department is a good aid to learning. There is satisfactory access to ICT and the interactive board in one room is well

used. Learning is further supported by staff giving freely of their time for after-school revision.

65. There is little evidence of the development of skills in the use of mathematics, nor is there a policy to develop literacy skills, although staff take care to ensure students understand technical words. Learning support assistants worked well with their class teacher colleagues, giving valuable support to students with special educational needs. Such students make the same progress as their peers. Students with English as an additional language get no specific support in class, but are dealt with sensitively by teachers and make the same progress as their peers as a result.
66. The department runs well on a day-to-day basis. Long periods of staff absence in the recent past were handled well by the department. However, unsatisfactory leadership and management of the department give no clear direction to improve performance. Improvement since the last inspection is also unsatisfactory. There is no working development plan to express this direction and against which to monitor progress. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department, particularly teaching and learning, is insufficiently developed to raise standards. A database of student performance is developing, but this is insufficiently detailed to identify trends.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Students' mathematical skills are sufficient to allow access to the various areas of the curriculum. However, it is unsatisfactory that there is no policy to develop mathematical skills across the curriculum. In some subjects, geography and science for example, good development takes place but the contribution of most curriculum areas is limited to practising skills by their use.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant proportion of students are not achieving as well as they should.
- There are inconsistencies in teaching; marking is erratic and students are not clear on how their work may be improved.
- Data is not used to identify and focus on areas of improvement.
- Recent changes are making a positive impact especially on the work of Year 8.

Commentary

68. Overall results of national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 just reached the national average, but the proportion reaching the nationally expected standard was below average. The work of the current Year 9 indicates that results in 2004 are likely to be similar, with the work of the lower-attaining students being at a much more superficial level and often being left incomplete. Students enter the school with levels in line with the national average. Their achievement is unsatisfactory overall.
69. In 2003 the proportion of students who obtained grades A* to C in the GCSE examination was significantly below the national average. The results at the end of Year 9 had been in line with the national average and so this represents unsatisfactory progress and students are not achieving the levels of which they are capable. There is a difference in the performance of girls and boys. Girls are working close to the national average and far more boys are underachieving. The percentage of A* to C grades has continued to decline since 2000 and despite the procedures put into place the current working levels of Year 11 students are similar to those in 2003.
70. Achievement is unsatisfactory due to a combination of factors. Most lessons seen were satisfactory but the work in books shows teaching and learning to be unsatisfactory over time in both Years 8 and 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Strengths in teaching are when lessons are lively and methods stimulate the students in active learning, with boys especially responding well to the practical elements. In weaker lessons, the work is not well targeted at the particular needs of the group, concentration falls and behaviour deteriorates. The students' books show a lack of continuity in the work, which is often disorganised and does not show how individual lessons link together. Work is left unmarked and comments are not followed up. There is great variation in the use of constructive comments that make it clear how the work can be raised to the next level. Homework does not contribute effectively to learning. The students' planners show an inconsistent pattern of work being set; the completion rate of several students is poor. All of these factors contribute to the underachievement of the students and this is compounded by the erratic attendance of a high number of students. The long-term absence of staff has also affected the achievement of a significant number of students.
71. The work of Year 8 students is better. Their work shows a greater continuity, the strategies to raise their attainment are effective. The achievement of students with special educational needs reflects that of other students in being unsatisfactory. The numerical aspects of the subject are included at appropriate points in lessons and

students use graphs to present data in relevant situations and there is appropriate use of ICT. Literacy aspects are not tackled by either a whole-school or departmental policy.

72. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Recent improvements are moving in the right direction although, with the exception of Year 8, the impact is not yet seen in students' work. The tracking system of students identifies some underperformance, but is not being used to set targets and guide students' learning. There is a vision to move the department forward but until recently most issues identified in the last inspection were ignored and levels of attainment have fallen, making improvement since the last inspection unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement overall is unsatisfactory because a significant minority of students do not attain the standards of which they are capable.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because there are too many unsatisfactory lessons, although most teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good.
- There is good use of ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum and much potential to extend this further.
- All students receive some focused teaching in ICT, but there are currently no opportunities to study it in depth in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

73. Discrete ICT lessons ensure that all students have access to opportunities to develop their understanding and key skills throughout Years 8 to 11. Although attainment is below the level expected nationally by the end of Years 9 and 11, most students make satisfactory progress from their level of prior learning and achieve at a satisfactory level. However, several classes have faced significant discontinuity in their learning as a result of changes of teachers. Coherence and continuity are also weakened for Year 9 students by the rotation of the subject with PSHE. Very few teachers have ICT as their main teaching subject and a relatively large number teach only a few lessons per week. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Too many lessons are not taught well enough. Therefore, too many students make insufficient progress and do not achieve at the level that they should; consequently, overall achievement is unsatisfactory.
74. In the more successful lessons, teachers have high expectations of the students; both in terms of their application and their outcomes. They use their good subject knowledge and expertise to challenge students and to provide them with effective individual support so that they all, including students with special educational needs, make secure progress. Difficulties that sometimes arise, such as technical problems or behaviour issues are dealt with well, so that learning is not impeded. Sometimes teachers have too low an expectation of what the students can achieve and the engagement and concentration that is required of them. On other occasions, problems that do arise are not managed well so that poor attitudes and behaviour restrict learning. The layout of ICT rooms makes managing students more difficult than it need be and when this is coupled with insufficient subject expertise; the technology is not used to best effect.

75. An appropriate framework is in place to support teachers in delivering their lessons so that a coherent and consistent experience is possible for all students. Many students demonstrate little interest in using ICT and considerable effort has been put into developing contexts that they will find interesting and stimulating. Sometimes this works well, such as when the context for a holiday project is a travel agent finding the ideal honeymoon location. At other times, such as developing knowledge and experiences of spreadsheets through football league tables, it does not. Developing ideas that inspire students is an important part of improving their attitudes and application and raising their achievement.
76. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has been possible within the subject and this has been coupled with targeted support for improvement. Systems are also developing for tracking and evaluating student progress. Plans are well advanced for a significant transformation of the curriculum offered, especially in Years 10 and 11. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the potential to secure further improvement within the subject is also satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Significant progress has been made since the previous inspection in providing additional access to ICT equipment for the students to use across the curriculum. Information and communication technology suites are heavily used and there is much effective use of ICT to support learning in subjects. The students' basic skills are developed sufficiently to enable this access. The National Curriculum and examination requirements of other subjects are met. Sometimes students use the skills that they have developed through their ICT lessons, as when using the Internet for research and word-processing in English. On other occasions they experience new uses, such as capturing and analysing data in science or using design software in design and technology.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have brought very effective changes in the curriculum.
- Results of boys at GCSE are well below the national average.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very good.
- Good teaching ensures that students are achieving well.

Commentary

78. The acting head of department leads an enthusiastic team which works closely, shares his clear vision and is taking positive action to raise students' attainment. Thorough evaluation of teaching and learning, and analysis of students' performance, identifies areas for improvement. For example, the standard of GCSE coursework of students

currently in Year 11, especially boys, is much higher than in previous years as a result of changes in the programme of fieldwork. Developments in Years 8 and 9 have resulted in a much wider range of learning activities, promoting students' thinking skills and involving boys much more in their work. The department has recently been awarded first prize in the Geographical Association's national competition for curriculum development.

79. Results at GCSE in 2003 were below the national average, although in line with students' results in their other subjects. The overall standard was affected by the low prior attainment of boys, who made up three-quarters of the entrants. The number of girls attaining the highest grades was well above the national average. Results in 2003 were higher than in 2002 for both boys and girls. Work seen during the inspection shows that the improvement is being maintained and that standards in Year 11, and in all other years, are in line with national expectations.
80. The achievement of students in all years is good with no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of students. They achieve well because of good teaching, firm control and well-devised and appropriately resourced schemes of work. All of these raise their interest and foster very positive attitudes so that behaviour is very good and students settle to work quickly. Students speak of the fun in learning, especially mentioning the interesting assessment tasks that form a regular part of the schemes of work.
81. Teaching and learning were at least good in all lessons seen; in Years 10 and 11 teaching was very good overall. Excellent starter activities focus students' attention; lively teaching and good pace help them to sustain concentration. Teachers plan a variety of activities within each lesson, which lead students on from stage to stage in their learning. Students contribute confidently during oral work and work well together. Displays of work are used imaginatively to aid learning. Marking of exercise books in Years 8 and 9 is thorough, although comments relate largely to effort and presentation; however, assessment tasks show students the criteria for achieving different National Curriculum levels. Portfolios of work for each unit indicate very good assessment practice. Students in Years 10 and 11 are supported by helpful marking and regularly available access to teachers outside lessons. Good use is made of a suite of computers in a geography room for coursework but access to ICT rooms for class teaching has limited the range of uses of ICT in Years 8 and 9.
82. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory, but there has been considerable improvement over the last two years; some aspects of the provision are now very good.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching staff demonstrate very good subject knowledge and care for the students, although they adopt limited teaching and learning styles.
- Relationships between staff and students are very positive.
- Use of ICT is planned carefully into schemes of work in Years 8 and 9, but this is not implemented consistently by all staff.

- Strong links are made with other areas of learning, which promote well the students' personal development.

Commentary

83. Teaching in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory and achievement is satisfactory. The students' attainment is in line with national expectations by Year 9. Students learn to use historical skills which enable them to understand and interpret events in history. The students make progress and advance their knowledge and understanding through stories, source work, evaluation and analysis. Good questioning techniques are used to encourage students to reflect on key issues and develop their thinking. The use of ICT is a strong feature and has been built into the schemes of work for Years 8 and 9, but is not regularly part of day-to-day learning in all lessons.
84. GCSE results improved considerably in 2003 and were slightly above the national average. Girls did better than boys, particularly at the highest grades. The majority of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good with some very good features. Currently, achievement is satisfactory and standards of work are in line with the national average. The schemes of work incorporate strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements and students are given opportunities to discuss sensitive and serious issues at relevant points in lessons. Students work well with each other, although opportunities to do so are limited.
85. One factor that holds back achievement is the limited variety of teaching strategies and techniques employed, particularly in Years 8 and 9. For example, few open-ended tasks are undertaken. Consequently, students only occasionally complete in-depth research into aspects of history that interest them or that would allow them to work at a pace appropriate for their abilities. This would have the added benefit of promoting independent learning. Teaching assistants support students with special educational needs in a few classes, but there is little evidence of staff adapting methods and materials to ensure that all students have full access to the curriculum. The department uses assessment to identify student progress and to set targets for the students. However, students are not sufficiently involved in this process and do not take responsibility for recognising, setting and agreeing targets for themselves with the teachers.
86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The team have worked well together and the schemes of work have been developed corporately and delivered effectively. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. However, leadership qualities are not sufficiently developed so that a culture of continuous improvement, self-review and peer support become embedded into the annual improvement cycle. Furthermore, there is scope to create a new vision for the subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The statutory requirement to teach religious education to all students in Years 10 and 11 is still not met.

- GCSE students attain well above average results because of very thorough teaching, good management and the high levels of interest and motivation of the students.
- Many students are intellectually stimulated through the focus on ultimate questions.
- Students achieve less well in Years 8 and 9 because teaching does not enable higher attaining students to consistently reach the expected higher levels of attainment, or lower attaining students to develop their understanding.

Commentary

87. Results in the full course GCSE in 2003 were well above the national average. Students have varied levels of knowledge and understanding on entry, progress to average levels by Year 9, and achieve above average standards by Year 11. There are no identifiable differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and good on the examination course in Years 10 and 11. Year 9 students can satisfactorily explore issues of forgiveness and suffering and are beginning to make informed responses in the light of their learning. In GCSE work, able students weigh up opinions and make judgements on a wide range of social issues including violence and war, contraception and embryology. They produce very detailed, well argued writing, informed by reference to religious belief. Students with special educational needs progress well at GCSE, but less well in Years 8 and 9 where staff have low expectations.
88. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 10 and 11 there are precise learning objectives, detailed coverage and very effective assessment based on regular and detailed written comments. Students are diligent and enthusiastic learners. Teaching of ultimate questions in Years 8 and 9 is thought-provoking, as in a case study of the implications of the Turin Shroud. However, lessons in Years 8 and 9 have less precise learning objectives and do not lead the most able to demonstrate consistently understanding at the higher levels of attainment. Teaching of lower-attaining students is sometimes unexciting, with too much copying or drawing tasks.
89. Leadership is unsatisfactory as statutory requirements are not met. Leadership of teaching is good, with effective monitoring of teaching and examination results, good teamwork and an awareness of boys' underachievement with actions in place to motivate them. Management of the GCSE course is very good with teachers and students knowing exactly what to do to reach the higher levels expected by the examination specification. There has been no recent staff development or external moderation opportunities in religious education, and the assessment of work in Years 8 and 9 does not correspond with non-statutory national exemplification. Expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus are only partially met for Years 8 and 9, so that students do not investigate the experience of real Christians locally, nationally and in other parts of the world. Nor do they study adequately Buddhists in the West, events and issues in today's world, or attitudes to wealth, and management of the world's resources.
90. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection as the school continues to fail to meet statutory requirements. Students continue to be well above national average at GCSE, but higher-attaining students in Year 9 still do not securely attain the expected higher levels of attainment.

TECHNOLOGY

91. Students have the opportunity to study a range of courses in this curriculum area, several of which lead to a qualification other than GCSE. Standards in GCSE **catering** are

satisfactory and achievement is good due to the good teaching that students receive. In the **engineering (vocational)** GCSE course students are achieving well in a well structured course where teaching is effective. In GCSE **child development**, which is well led, students' achievement is good because of the good quality of teaching that they receive. **Motor vehicle studies** is a well resourced subject that takes place in a safe working environment. Students enjoy this very practical experience and achieve well as a result of teaching that is informed and enthusiastic.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject expertise and an enthusiasm for the subject which results in responsive and motivated students who achieve well by the end of Year 11.
- Leadership of design and technology has weaknesses but management is satisfactory.
- Assessment is effective in Years 10 and 11, but there are inconsistencies in Years 8 and 9 where information is used less well.
- Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation and to the provision of resources, but some aspects are unsatisfactory and impede teaching and learning.

Commentary

92. Standards as judged by teacher assessment in 2003 were in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. The proportion of students who obtained A*-C passes at GCSE was above the national average, but standards vary significantly in different areas. In graphic products students' results were well above the national average, in food technology they were in line, but in electronic products they were well below average. Standards improved to the national average in resistant materials and textiles technology. Achievement is good overall by the end of Year 11 and girls achieve better than the boys.
93. In the lessons observed, in Years 8 and 9, teaching and learning was satisfactory and standards were in line with national expectations with students achieving better in their making than in their designing. Assessment practice is inconsistent because there is no shared understanding of design and technology capability and there is no internal moderation of standards. This leads, on occasions, to learning activities that do not match the individual needs of all students. Assessments do not always provide students with short-term goals related to National Curriculum levels, so students are not certain of the standard of their work and how to improve it.
94. The quality of work seen in Years 10 and 11 indicates that students are more sophisticated in their designing and making; achievement is good. Teaching and learning are sometimes good but overall are satisfactory. Assessment is used well in the most effective lessons. The teachers' expert subject knowledge, skills and enthusiasm engage, support and challenge students to do well. There is good teamwork, time is used effectively and all teachers prepare students well for their examinations.
95. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The accommodation has improved and students now work in a safe environment; however, certain weaknesses remain. Enhanced ICT facilities support students' learning well, particularly in computer-

aided drawing and design. However, there are significant weaknesses in the provision of resources to support computer-aided manufacture in all aspects of the subject. Opportunities for learning in textiles are limited by the lack of specialist facilities for wet textiles work.

96. The department managers have raised standards in their areas of responsibility but the weaknesses in leadership identified at the last inspection remain. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning remains weak. The scheme of work now ensures that statutory requirements are met in Years 8 and 9, but the subject remains fragmented so that students do not understand how the core skills of design and technology link different areas together.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

97. The inspection focused in detail on art and design and music. Two drama lessons in Years 10 and 11 were also observed. Standards in **drama** are well above the national average by the end of Year 11. Teaching is good, with activities that are both challenging and rewarding which enable students to achieve well. Teachers' expert subject knowledge and high expectations of all students often inspires them to try new ideas and techniques, and gives them the confidence to experiment for themselves. Students can improvise role-play to create characters and to explore situations and concepts. They also know how voice and body language and use of space contribute to effective performances. A particular strength is the way students co-operate with and support each other; they appreciate and evaluate their own work and that of others. Teaching was very good in a Year 11 lesson where the students responded readily to the teacher's direction, and were also able to make their own decisions and to use the freedom of the drama studio in a creative way. The class was working on Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* and showed very good knowledge and understanding of the plot and political content of the play.

Art and design

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

- Lesson planning in Years 10 and 11 does not sufficiently take into account the differing needs of students.
- Specialist teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Good quality advice is given individually to students in lessons.
- Students in large groups in Year 9 that are shared by different teachers do not achieve well.
- Computers are used but not enough to develop ideas creatively.

Commentary

98. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall, for students at all levels of attainment. Students arrive in Year 8 having had a very varied experience of art and most are working below average. Slow progress is made in the acquisition of basic art skills and knowledge and understanding about the work of artists. The quality of this is variable across the department because teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory, and at the end of Year 9 most students are working at below average levels. This is similar to the 2003 teacher assessments and continues a downward trend over recent years. Schemes of work have

improved to ensure that learning builds on what has gone before, but timetabling difficulties mean that groups in Year 9 have increased in size and are shared between two teachers. This has resulted in confusion and unsatisfactory achievement when communication and planning for these groups is inadequate.

99. Students who choose to study art at GCSE begin their course with very varied technical skills, knowledge and understanding. The standard of their work is below average. Overall GCSE results were well below the national average in 2003, although the percentage of A* and A grades was near average. Although girls generally gained the higher grades and boys the lower grades, all students did not make the progress expected of them and gained better grades in the other subjects they took.
100. Teaching approaches vary. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Students achieve better when teachers demonstrate practical techniques and allow opportunities for experimentation whilst providing the necessary support before encouraging them to work individually. Students' achievement is unsatisfactory where planning tends to focus on tasks rather than learning and does not take sufficiently into account the differing needs of students. They are encouraged to approach their work individually, to be responsible for their learning and to use the teacher as a facilitator, asking for help and guidance when they feel it necessary. As a result, higher-attaining students who are more confident and independent enjoy the freedom to pursue themes. They feel confident to ask for help when they need it; as a result, some achieve very well. Lower-attaining students feel less able to ask for advice and guidance; they often do not know the right questions to ask and may not ask for help as often as they need it. In extreme cases this leads to feelings of frustration and isolation. This has affected motivation and has resulted in students not achieving as well as expected or as well as they do in other subjects. Planning fails to provide adequate challenge for higher-attaining students and sufficient support for those who find art difficult, whether they have special educational needs or not.
101. Marking and feedback in lessons give constructive advice to students about how to improve their work but does not inform them about the level at which they are working, nor does it explain the relationship of their own work to levels in the National Curriculum. Computers are used but not sufficiently to develop work creatively.
102. The subject leader delegates responsibilities for co-ordinating different key stages and courses to various members of the department. This works well in most cases but not in the case of the co-ordination of GCSE courses. Inadequate opportunity to monitor these responsibilities and the quality of teaching has led to varied effectiveness and resulted in underachievement, especially in Years 10 and 11. Reviewing the work of the department has not identified appropriate actions to raise standards or achievement, especially of boys. Although there has been support given to redevelop the curriculum in Years 8 and 9, timetable changes and increased group sizes have made these less effective and senior managers have not monitored the work of the department sufficiently to support these developments. The quality of leadership and management of the department is unsatisfactory as is improvement since the last inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are poor.
- Teaching and learning have major weaknesses, leading to low standards and poor achievement.
- There are poor procedures and weak practice in planning, marking, homework and assessment.
- A small group of students in every year group have developed good to excellent skills in instrumental performance through private or peripatetic tuition.
- There is a lack of extra-curricular activities that build on students' interests and musical skills.

Commentary

103. There has been a gradual deterioration in provision and in leadership and management since the last inspection. The situation has now reached crisis point, with no evidence of direction given to the department and no vision for its improvement. Staffing in the music department has been a concern in the last two years. The department has made poor progress since the last inspection.
104. Most of the students in Year 9 were observed working at about Level 3 of the National Curriculum; this is well below the standard expected. Their progress has been poor across the whole range of ability, leading to poor achievement. There are small cohorts of students taking GCSE. Results have fallen over the last few years to below or well below national expectations. GCSE results in 2003 were well below the national average. An analysis of these results indicates that students, including the more able, are generally underachieving in music compared to other subjects. Students having musical training from private or peripatetic staff generally attain higher standards than their peers. However, their achievement is limited by a lack of appropriate challenge and direction from their class teachers.
105. Teaching in Years 8 and 9 is poor. The constant lack of challenge and the teaching of skills and techniques mean that the tasks set are irrelevant to almost all of the students. Students are learning very little in these lessons. Consequently, their attitudes are poor, and the teachers spend more time managing poor behaviour than managing learning in the lessons. Planning does not take into account the wide disaffection of the classes nor the ever-widening gap between those who have musical skills fostered outside the classroom and those that do not. There is no effective planning to cater for students with special educational needs. Procedures for formative assessment are evident in some students' work, and there is some evidence of student self-assessment. There is very little marking done, nor do the students or the teachers set regular, meaningful targets.
106. Teaching at GCSE is generally satisfactory, although relying on an individual or small tutorial structure, and individual teachers' specific subject knowledge, skills and interests. This is possible through generous staffing and small student numbers. The students have chosen to study music, and are generally well motivated. Planning is better than in Years 8 and 9, but is still not tailored to individual students' needs. Assessment procedures are not evident.
107. There is a range of instrumental tuition offered on rotation during school time. There is a small amount of evidence of structured extra-curricular activity, including provision for

drop-in sessions for instrumental groups and students wishing to access the ICT equipment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are examples of good and very good teaching.
- High expectations of attitudes and behaviour are assisting learning.
- Lessons are well planned and structured.
- The mechanisms for sharing good practice are insufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

108. Attainment of Year 9 students in games and gymnastics is close to national expectations and represent satisfactory progress from entry into the school. Year 9 students are able to apply basic skills acquired to complement work on spatial awareness as in a hockey lesson on ways of beating an opponent. These standards were also evident in inter-form competition. Standards in boys' physical education core lessons by Year 11 are above the national average; in basketball they are well above average. Students were able to show very good control and fluidity in their footwork in one basketball lesson seen. They performed with a high level of skill at pace and in a competitive situation. By contrast, girls' standards were below average in core physical education lessons as they showed little enthusiasm in their work; achievement was less than might be expected. Standards in the GCSE course for both boys and girls are above average. Achievement is good, particularly where theory is linked closely to practice. Students demonstrate good understanding of joint movements and their practical application in sporting activity, as they assessed each others specific movements in the gymnasium. Where boys were taught alongside girls both made similar rates of improvement in practical and theory.

109. Overall teaching and learning are good. When there are high expectations of performance, attitudes and behaviour, teaching is good and students achieve well. Where these elements are not present as in some girls' core physical education lessons, achievement is unsatisfactory and attitudes and behaviour are below the standards seen elsewhere. Relationships between students and teachers are good, and any behavioural issues are dealt with sensitively and appropriately. Students, including those with special educational needs, respond to the high levels of challenge set and lessons have a pace and purpose well directed by structured lesson planning. There is good assessment of students' performance during lessons and the high level of coaching ability available presents students with incisive and well-timed points for improvement, resulting in effective learning.

110. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are good schemes of work in place for Years 8 and 9 but these have not yet been extended to Years 10 and 11. Structured and effective lesson plans are used consistently throughout the department. Performance management processes are in place but there is little evidence that the monitoring procedures are informing and directing professional development. Improvement since the

last inspection is satisfactory. Leadership has begun to tackle the problems of the separate identities of boys' and girls' physical education highlighted in the last report. However, whilst there are joint activities in areas such as the GCSE course, there is still insufficient sharing of the expertise available within the department. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory. There are extensive playing fields and hard surface areas for all games and a swimming pool which is impressive and well used. The two gymnasiums are an important facility as the school lacks a modern sports hall; however, they are outdated in design and their geographical separation does not help to forge links between girls' and boys' physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

111. The school has chosen to teach personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, careers and spirituality in a rotation once each week in each year group. A slightly different model has been adopted in each year group. For example, the **spirituality** element is only taught in Year 10 and then only for a brief period of time. This is totally inadequate and offers very little to the students' personal development. The only aspect for which this rotation works reasonably is **careers**, although there is currently no one with responsibility for oversight of the programme. The **PSHE** programme is just adequate, but **citizenship** suffers badly by not being treated sufficiently as a subject in its own right. The rotation of classes between teachers does not enable secure relationships to be established and does not give a sufficiently high profile for each subject in the eyes of staff and students alike. The school has recognised many of these weaknesses and is seeking to improve provision through a curriculum review. This is urgently needed.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All aspects are covered by discrete teaching and input from other subjects but not to sufficient depth.
- The school cannot guarantee that all students in Years 10 and 11 receive their full National Curriculum entitlement under current arrangements.
- Students' attainment is not rigorously assessed and has not been reported on to parents except in Year 8.
- The curriculum review is wisely identifying how the subject's profile can be raised and provision improved.

Commentary

112. The school's development of its approach to teaching citizenship is some way behind where it should be as the subject has been a statutory part of the National Curriculum for almost two years. This is recognised by senior staff. Improving provision is part of the current curriculum review that is underway for implementation from the start of the next academic year. Teaching within the rotation with PSHE and careers, along with some lessons in other subjects, just about covers requirements in Years 8 and 9. However, this cannot guarantee that all students in Years 10 and 11 have their full entitlement to all aspects of the National Curriculum as they may not have opted to study a particular subject where input is crucial. Consequently, achievement is unsatisfactory and students

do not meet expected standards across all three strands of the National Curriculum at any stage in the school.

113. Students do not achieve as well as they should for a variety of reasons. Teaching time is insufficient to cover topics in sufficient depth. This results in individual lessons trying to deal with too much so that learning becomes fragmented and no real evaluation made of how much has been learnt. A significant proportion of teaching is confused in its aims and methods and results in little progress, learning or understanding. Students do not place a high value on their learning in this subject. Their attendance is poor and many do not engage with the material or the requirements of the lesson. Punctuality was also poor in a Year 11 lesson that took place during the first period of the day, further disrupting learning. The rotation from one teacher to another does not enable the secure relationships to be established that enable quite sensitive issues to be explored fruitfully. The discrete teaching within the rotation is not scheduled to fit in with the cross-curricular input from other subjects. While there are some valuable examples in geography and modern foreign languages these are in isolation and do not provide coherent coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. Finally, the students do not have sufficient opportunity to develop the skills of participation and responsible action, although the development of the school council is a step in the right direction.
114. Teaching of the individual lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory, but varied from good to poor. However, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall because many of the factors already described lead to an inconsistent and incoherent approach. The best lessons were interesting, employed a variety of activities including productive pair-work and effective individual discussions. However, even here a small but significant numbers of students, mostly boys, were allowed to opt out of aspects such as written work, thus negating the potential of the lesson to develop their literacy skills. The poor lesson was badly constructed with unclear aims, low expectations, far too much teacher talk, with poor questioning of the students to elicit understanding and far too much lesson content. Little specific account is taken of providing support either for students with special educational needs or those who might have particular talents.
115. There is much to do to improve provision. Subject leadership has been unsatisfactory. Assessment is currently not taking place either on a lesson-by-lesson basis or over time, and reporting requirements are only just starting to be met. However, leadership has changed hands and the subject is currently being overseen by a senior member of staff who is leading the curriculum review skilfully. The aims for the future of the subject are clear, but there is a need to ensure that it has a much higher profile in the minds of staff and students. The plan to develop a team of teachers who are committed to the subject rather than just taking those who might be available should help to secure these aims.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	34	67.6	80.1	23.5	23.7	25.3	29.9
Biology	42	54.8	65.2	4.8	11.1	15.0	20.6
Business studies	17	76.5	76.4	17.6	16.3	25.9	26.2
Chemistry	19	57.9	72.7	15.8	13.9	19.5	24.1
Classical studies	6	100	87.4	33.3	34.3	38.3	35.2
Communication studies	29	89.7	86.4	27.6	23.8	34.8	32.0
Drama	4	100	86.5	50.0	19.6	35.0	30.6
Economics	3	66.7	73.6	0	20.1	16.7	26.4
English language	1	100	82.9	0	17.5	40.0	28.7
English literature	26	88.5	85.9	30.8	19.1	35.0	30.2
French	9	88.9	78.2	0.0	18.9	26.7	27.6
Design and technology	21	71.4	74.9	14.3	15.1	25.7	25.3
General studies	18	94.4	73.9	33.3	17.8	36.1	25.7
Geography	18	77.8	74.3	11.1	19.8	22.8	26.5
German	13	53.8	81.5	7.7	19.3	18.5	28.9
History	11	63.6	80.7	18.2	19.5	20.9	28.6
Information technology	1	100	67.0	0.0	10.9	20.0	21.4
Mathematics	43	30.2	61.9	2.3	17.1	9.5	22.1
Music	15	53.3	86.5	6.7	21.4	15.3	30.7
Physics	18	77.8	68.6	16.7	14.4	25.6	22.7
Religious studies	21	76.2	80.2	14.3	22.6	24.8	29.8
Sociology	17	58.8	71.8	23.5	18.4	24.1	25.4
Spanish	2	100	78.5	50.0	17.7	40.0	27.3
Sports studies	10	80.0	73.2	10.0	11.4	25.0	23.1
Vocational studies	6	50.0	62.8	0.0	12.3	13.3	20.8

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	44	97.7	98.6	54.5	50.2	87.3	87.5
Art and design VCE	6	100	92.1	33.3	39.0	83.3	70.2
Biology	34	94.1	96.4	29.4	39.2	68.8	78.6

Business studies	29	96.6	98.7	37.9	36.8	80.7	80.1
Chemistry	14	92.9	97.6	28.6	49.0	75.7	84.9
Classical studies	17	94.1	99.5	47.1	55.9	77.6	90.9
Communication studies	68	100	99.4	51.5	37.8	91.2	82.1
Drama	14	100	99.5	21.4	40.1	75.7	83.6
Economics	23	100	98.9	13.0	52.0	66.1	88.3
English language	1	100	99.4	100	36.3	100.0	80.9
English literature	58	100	99.5	44.8	46.5	86.6	86.5
French	12	100	98.8	33.3	51.5	76.7	87.6
Design and technology	26	100	97.8	50.0	35.0	83.1	77.9
Engineering VCE	16	75.0	n/a	0.0	n/a	56.3	n/a
Geography	33	97.0	98.7	54.5	44.5	89.7	84.0
German	4	100	98.4	75.0	47.9	95.0	84.8
Health and social care VCE	13	76.9	93.2	0.0	22.3	40.0	63.5
History	11	90.9	99.0	36.4	44.6	69.1	84.6
Mathematics	38	97.4	96.7	31.6	55.6	77.4	88.8
Music	11	100	98.8	9.1	38.9	67.3	81.1
Physics	19	100	96.7	15.8	44.6	70.5	81.7
Religious studies	30	100	98.8	56.7	46.7	88.7	85.6
Sociology	18	94.4	98.2	50.0	44.3	78.9	83.6
Spanish	4	100	98.3	100	50.2	105.0	86.9
Sports studies	23	100	98.0	60.9	30.9	87.8	75.2
Travel and tourism VCE	14	100	90.0	50.0	19.5	85.7	62.2
Vocational studies	15	100	91.4	46.7	25.8	84.0	66.5

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

116. English and French were inspected in detail. Evidence was also gathered in German and Spanish. A Level results in both subjects exceeded the national average in 2003 but for only four entries in each. By contrast, German AS Level results were below average. There is a similar pattern in both German and Spanish classes in Year 12, despite the fact that only the most capable linguists at Hewett School have the opportunity to study this language. For Spanish, supportive experiences include a two week exchange with a school in Spain, access to flamenco music and a performance in Spanish at a local puppet theatre.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results have been close to or above the national average for several years with the exception of 2002, when standards dropped.
- Students enjoy the course and most work hard in response to effective teaching; good numbers continue into the second A Level year.
- Staff changes have affected continuity in teaching and in departmental management.
- The department is now benefiting from determined new leadership and a team of teachers who are ready to evaluate their work and develop good practice.

Commentary

117. Results in the 2003 A Level examinations matched the national figure, and work seen in lessons is also at this standard. Achievement is good with the students doing well in relation to the examination requirements and their various starting points. In class, most students are articulate and are ready to voice and hear opinions and ideas. There is scope for more opportunity to do this and to provide more challenging demands so that they can develop their understanding of the texts through better use of argument and presentation. A good example of students presenting their findings to the class was seen in a Year 13 lesson on *The Tempest*.
118. Students' folders from both year groups contain thoughtful analytical essays which show a pattern of serious study over the two-year course. Although there is some inconsistency, most of the assessment and marking reflects good teaching with considered evaluations, constructive comments and suggestions for improvement. There is not enough written work in the folders of a small number of students. Lower-attaining students in particular need to write more frequently and to make use of the dialogue which good marking establishes between teacher and student.
119. The teaching seen was good overall, with lessons varying from satisfactory to very good. Strengths are the teachers' good subject knowledge and the friendly working relationships they have with students. In a very good lesson on Chaucer, the teacher's skill and enthusiasm provoked lively discussion and inquiry, and much enjoyment. A range of imaginative references giving *The Pardoner's Tale* some contemporary relevance included Delboy and a clip from a Pasolini film. Students were keenly involved throughout, their questions and comments often directed to one another and not simply a response to the teacher's questions. In this lesson the students sat in a semi-circle instead of rows facing the front, and the seminar structure encouraged them to make the change from earlier styles of learning to the independence required in sixth form work. Where teaching was no more than satisfactory, this quality of active involvement was missing, and there was sometimes a rather casual approach to lesson planning. There was also a tendency for the teacher to over-direct and sometimes to overburden students with notes, handouts and introductory material before they had explored a text themselves.
120. Cohesion and confidence are developing in the department after a turbulent period of staff change and uncertainty. The new head of department has made a good start, seeing teamwork as a priority, and moving towards better joint planning and more use of data analysis by individual teachers to track students' progress. English studies benefit from a good school library and a supportive librarian. As the department settles, there is scope for the team to become more involved in the school's extra-curricular programme and to consider more theatre trips and outside visits or visitors. Despite recent difficulties, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teachers' willingness to discuss and evaluate their work is an encouraging indication of a department ready to innovate and improve further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

121. The majority of students coming into the sixth form from within the school to begin a variety of A Level courses did not attain high levels in GCSE English examinations in recent years. Sixth form results and records show that, overall, they make considerable progress in literacy in their sixth form courses. In 2003, attainment in a number of subjects which

demand good levels of language competence was at and often above the national average. Students did well in law, psychology, geography, history, religious studies and film studies. They improved their writing skills in English and results in the literature examination showed that most had achieved well. The school library plays an important part in the development of the higher level reading habits which are vital at this stage. It provides very good support for sixth form study across the curriculum and there are good resources for A Level English and psychology.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is particularly stimulating for able, motivated students.
- The best lessons involve extending the students' cultural knowledge, increasing their powers of thought and empathy, as well as developing their language skills.
- Progress, on the part of a minority of less successful students, is held back by a lack of longer-term purposes for their studies.

Commentary

122. There is a wide range in the quality of written work done by students of French in Year 12. The most capable write accurately and idiomatically. They are able to structure a convincing argument in both speech and writing. They make only rare grammatical errors when using complex expressions. The least capable students in the same year group sometimes have difficulty in understanding what they read and hear, especially when the texts are dealing with areas of specialist knowledge with which they are unfamiliar even in their first languages. One or two of them lack fluency in arguing a sophisticated stance in English, and this holds back progress in the new language they are learning.

123. By Year 13, the linguistic abilities of the classes in all three languages are more consistent and are in line with the national average. Where appropriate support is provided by way of prompts, and where students understand the contexts through reference to their own experience, their ability to communicate grows rapidly. Examples of such prompts include the case studies of refugees, with which one group of students was required to empathise, by presenting their dilemmas on reaching France to an imaginary interviewer. Another example consisted of a series of commonly held beliefs about migrant workers which students were invited to link with a range of consequences, using a selection of causal expressions.

124. Students have benefited enormously from the good teaching and the high levels of linguistic competence of the staff, and their commitment to provide extending experiences to their students.

125. Leadership and management are good. The acting head of French and the language teaching staff as a team have a strong strategic sense as to how their collective work could be further improved. They would like to see the introduction of at least one vocational qualification for languages in the sixth form. They have noted the potential value to their A Level students of systems of assessment whose criteria are openly shared

with the learners and of greater independence in the learning process itself. Teamwork has contributed to satisfactory improvement in the provision since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Positive relationships ensure that those who enter the school at Year 12 are fully integrated into lessons.
- Good use of ICT supports learning.
- Students' good attitudes help to raise achievement.
- Good teaching and learning have yet to be reflected in improving examination results.

Commentary

126. AS Level results fell from below average in 2002 to well below average in 2003. A Level results, above average in 2002, were below average in 2003, with female students outperforming their male counterparts. Long periods of staff absence last year seriously hindered examination preparation. Data held in the school, together with a better staffing situation this year, indicate that results may well improve in 2004. The standard of work in both Year 12 and 13 is above average. Good quantities of well presented work have been marked appropriately. Students make good progress as indicated by the topics covered, such as from basic algebra to the higher use of vectors, and with progressively more challenging examples in the set exercises. This standard has not yet been converted into examination results.

127. Students work hard and cheerfully. They are interested in their work and are sufficiently mature to adopt the approach which ensures good achievement. A suitable opportunity for students to improve their GCSE grades is provided. The small group of regular attendees appreciate the provision and work well to make the most of the opportunity.

128. Teaching in both years is good. Lessons are taught with good pace and appropriate challenge. Students have confidence in staff who have good subject knowledge. Relationships between staff and students are very good, enabling lessons to proceed in a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere. The good attitudes of the students ensure good learning. Teachers are aware of students' particular needs and take care to meet them. For example, a student with English as a second language appreciated the sensitive care taken to ensure she understood the nuances of the technical terms.

129. Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that students receive good advice about their choice of course and have secured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The progress of students is monitored appropriately. Trends identified are acted upon in the interests of the students. The member of staff responsible for the subject has a clear idea of the direction to go and works closely with the small team of teachers to move the subject forward. There is good use of ICT to support teaching and learning. The department's own website, developed by the head of department, is well matched to the needs of the students. Accommodation and resources are good, with very good access to ICT facilities. In addition, teachers give freely of their time to ensure a good provision of revision classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

130. Overall, the mathematical skills of the students are sufficient for them to have access to their courses of study. Development of these skills is satisfactory. While there is no school policy to develop mathematical skills across the curriculum there is good practice in a number of curriculum areas where the skills are developed well to meet the needs of the particular subject. For example, psychology students pursue a course on statistical methods. Other areas make good use of students' skills, thereby developing them further. Geography uses statistical methods and develops them further; physics and chemistry develop algebraic skills. In physics, students whose mathematics is insufficiently strong are given extra help by staff to ensure access to the subject.

SCIENCE

131. Biology, chemistry and physics were inspected in depth. One lesson of **human biology** was also seen which was satisfactory with some good features. A variety of methods stimulated interest but students were hesitant in answering questions. Current students are working at a level below the national average but at a level comparable to their previous levels of attainment.

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Aspects of good teaching give good support to the students.
- Students are not always encouraged to give full oral answers to enhance their examination techniques.
- Data is not used to identify and target areas for improvement.
- Good management is ensuring consistency across the department.

Commentary

132. Results in the 2003 A Level examination were above the national average, with students obtaining grades close to those predicted by their previous levels of attainment. The standard of work seen in lessons of the current Years 12 and 13 students shows a wide variation, but overall is close to average. There is no consistent pattern in the achievement of female and male students. The entry level of the students varies from year to year and the current students show satisfactory achievement.
133. Teaching is satisfactory with a number of good features. The good subject knowledge of teachers, evident in their lesson planning and in the answers to students' questions, enables students to understand difficult concepts. The organisational skills of students are developed so that their folders can be easily used to refer back to the work covered. Students use a range of learning skills, such as highlighting, annotating and sub-titling in their notes. The frequent use of past papers and examination type questions allows students to apply their knowledge and consolidate their learning. Teachers have excellent relationships with students who respond very well to the challenges given and are motivated to read around the subject. Questions are often linked to examination requirements; however, short and one-word answers are often accepted, with the teachers correcting or developing the answer. This results in lessons becoming teacher dominated and opportunities to develop the students' deductive skills are missed. The students are very positive about the course and appreciate the support they receive, but would like more time to allow a greater emphasis on the practical aspects.
134. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. There is a clear vision to move the subject forward with a number of strategies being put into place to raise attainment levels; however, data is not used to focus on areas of improvement. Management is good. There is good liaison between staff resulting in consistency of methods used for the benefit of the students. No specific reference was made to biology in the last report, but adaptation to the new syllabus and the maintenance of standards represent satisfactory improvement.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below those reached nationally, but most students are achieving at appropriate levels.
- All teaching is secure and much is good.
- The assessment and monitoring of students' work and progress is satisfactory and could be developed into an effective system for raising standards.
- The subject leader has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, but there is less certainty about precisely what to do to bring about improvement.

Commentary

135. A Level results have been below the national average for the past few years, with female students performing better than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, students have made satisfactory progress from their previous results at GCSE and they have done almost as well in chemistry as in their other subjects. Year 12 and 13 students have a wide spread of attainment with overall standards just below national averages, but their achievement is satisfactory. However, a small number of students are underachieving. Some male students in Year 13 are not working with the effort and commitment necessary to guarantee success, and some Year 12 girls have yet to become fully confident in applying what they know to new contexts. The students' language and mathematical skills are sufficiently well-developed to meet the demands of the course.
136. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with a good proportion of lessons being taught well. In these good lessons, students are required to think, to apply what they know to new contexts and to explain their observations and ideas. They generally respond well and enjoy the challenge presented. Sometimes lessons are taught with much humour and the laughter and sense of fun generated provides the students with memorable learning occasions. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the examination requirements, so that learning is focused and coherent. Regular opportunities are provided for the students to develop their practical skills, so they generally set about their experimental work with confidence and enthusiasm. There is some use of ICT to support learning, but more could be done to incorporate broader learning strategies, such as those being developed through the Key Stage 3 Strategy.
137. Feedback in class is usually constructive so that students know what they need to work on to improve. Tests are regularly used to assess their understanding and the marks converted to grades so that their progress can be monitored and compared with their target minimum grade. There is scope to ensure that this process is implemented consistently and rigorously by all teachers so that the targets set are challenging and based upon the students' prior attainment, corrections are made and understood by the students and weaknesses eliminated.
138. An analysis of achievement data has been undertaken and a systemic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the department to inform strategic planning is developing. The subject leader is aware of the areas that need to be improved. There are clear systems in place to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the course. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, as is the potential to secure further improvement within the subject. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

Physics

Provision in physics is **satisfactory**.

Key strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are secure; all lessons have good aspects or are good overall, but broadening the range of strategies used would raise achievement further.
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and examination requirements so teaching is focused and accurate.
- Good attention is paid to developing the students' practical skills, so that they carry out practical tasks well.

139. A Level results have been at or above the national average for the last few years, but fell in 2003 to be below average. There is a wide spread of attainment in the current Year 12 and 13, but overall standards are in line with national averages. Recent results have been in line with those expected from the students' prior results at GCSE. Students make secure progress through Years 12 and 13 and their achievement is satisfactory. Their general skills, including literacy and numeracy, support and enable their learning. A small number of students have less well developed mathematical skills, but teachers are careful to target additional support when necessary to ensure that this does not adversely affect their understanding. Practical skills are developed well and there is a good framework for ensuring that students are well prepared for the practical examinations.

140. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some lessons being taught well. Teachers have high expectations of the students and they respond well to the challenge that this provides. Teachers provide a coherent and structured framework for learning, building upon their own subject expertise and knowledge of examination requirements. Their exposition is clear and accurate and demonstrations are effectively used to illustrate key points. Questions are frequently used well to draw out what the students know and understand and to encourage them to apply their ideas to new contexts. Learning would sometimes be enhanced by encouraging more such responses and providing more opportunities for them to discuss ideas in pairs and small groups. There is some good use of ICT to support learning, but again more could be done to develop this aspect.

141. Homework and previous examination questions are used to assess students' progress and they receive focused feedback so that they can improve. Support for students could be improved further by getting them to use their expected grades more to review and evaluate their own progress throughout the course. There is effective communication between the teaching team and this ensures a consistent approach to learning and progress. The subject leader reviews teaching, learning and examination results. This has identified relative weaknesses and resulted in targeted action for improvement. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the potential to secure further improvement within the subject is also satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. No aspects of ICT were inspected in detail; however, one Year 13 **computer studies** lesson was sampled. This course meets the needs and aspirations of the students well. In the lesson seen the students were enthusiastically working on their coursework, discussing ideas and demonstrating key aspects to each other. The teacher provided a good level of expert advice and guidance, as well as questioning the students' knowledge, understanding and application to the task. Relationships are very good and underpinned

the sense of endeavour and purposefulness evident in the lessons. Most students were working at the level expected, with some demonstrating very high levels of skill in some aspects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

143. Appropriate and effective use of ICT to support learning continues into sixth form studies in many subjects. For example, particularly good use is made of commercial-quality software in art and design and design and technology; the use of ICT lies at the heart of much work in music technology. Good use is made of equipment for data capture and analysis in science subjects. Students also extend their research through the Internet and word-process important pieces of work, such as coursework. However, there remains little use of ICT to support learning in some areas, such as sociology and psychology. Students are also offered the opportunity to obtain the Level 3 key skills qualification.

HUMANITIES

144. Geography, psychology, religious studies and sociology were inspected in detail. Students also study **history** of which two lessons were observed. A Level results fell in 2003 from well above to well below average. AS Level results also fell from above to below average. Teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. The standard of work in both Year 12 and Year 13 is now in line with the national average.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A Level results have been above average for two out of the last three years.
- Teaching is consistently good or better, ensuring that students achieve well.
- Students have a very positive attitude towards the subject.
- Fieldwork provision is good and standards of coursework are very good.
- The use of ICT by teachers and students is underdeveloped.

Commentary

145. Geography is a popular option, with standards at A Level above the national average and in line with the national average at AS Level. The department has a successful re-sit policy and most students improve their grade between Years 12 and 13. The achievement of males and females is similar. Half of last year's Year 13 is pursuing geography, or a related qualification, at university, evidence of their positive attitude towards the subject. Current standards are above the national average.

146. Lessons are well planned with appropriate learning objectives and a variety of suitably resourced activities to meet the range of ability. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm develop understanding and motivate the students. Good links between modules are made, such as the use of correlation coefficients to analyse data in both population studies and biogeography. Students' files are well organised and their notes are a good basis for revision. There is a sufficient amount of assessed work for class teachers to be able to monitor progress and

work is thoroughly marked, with detailed comments for improvement. The learning of some students is limited because staff do not involve them sufficiently in class discussions.

147. All students are able to attend the local fieldwork trip to Winterton in Year 12 and the residential visit to Malham in Year 13. Very good use is made of the data gathered. Relating this first-hand experience to the taught modules is a main reason for good achievement. Students' coursework is almost invariably their highest mark. Coursework is successful because it builds on fieldwork and because the department invests a great deal of time in individual supervision.
148. The department collaborates to provide a relevant and coherent curriculum and is very well led and managed. Module marks are analysed very carefully and appropriate action is taken. For example, assessment has been changed and new case studies have been selected. The department seeks out appropriate professional development and incorporates new ideas into its teaching and planning. There is a clear vision for the further development of sixth form geography, which includes the greater use of ICT in both class work and coursework. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, particularly in relation to meeting the demands of the A Level specification.

Psychology

The quality of provision in psychology is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good teaching, standards are improving and students achieve well.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of what they teach.
- Students work very effectively in groups in developing their ideas.
- Good management of the department has created a clear sense of common purpose and direction.
- Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to extend students' understanding through more effective questioning.

Commentary

149. Students join the course in Year 12 with overall average levels of attainment in their GCSE examinations. Psychology is a new subject for all of them. They are slow to adjust to AS Level study but settle in gradually and gained average results in the 2003 examinations, with a good proportion of students attaining grades A or B. Students in the current Year 12 achieve well, building rapidly on their earlier attainment. Female students generally do better than male students. Most students continue their studies into Year 13 when progress speeds up, with an increasing number reaching higher grades and the gap between the attainment of males and females narrowing. Standards in work reflect those of examinations in Year 12, whilst the Year 13 students' work is of a higher standard than that reflected in the examinations. Work in both years indicates good achievement for all students. Most students stay to the end of their course and a significant number intend to study psychology at college or university.
150. Teaching is good overall with a significant proportion that is very good. In the best lessons, students are encouraged to express their views and justify them to their peers. As a result, there are many examples of lively discussion and the critical analysis of the

psychological theories encountered. Students are prepared well for examinations and get a good grounding in research and statistical methods to support their investigations. Teachers are good at supporting students who experience difficulties with their studies. In less successful lessons, questioning is not always used well to deepen students' understanding. This encourages students sometimes to settle for a simplistic understanding of psychological theories. Teachers know their students well and track their progress carefully.

151. The department is well led and managed. The head of department has established a clear sense of direction and common purpose. A strength is the range of specialist expertise in teaching psychology. Resources are good overall. There is a good number of outside speakers. The very good range of books and other materials in the library is used well to support independent study. Students make good use of the Internet for independent enquiry. Standards have improved over the years as a result of monitoring the progress of individual students and the quality of the care and guidance available to all.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Teaching is good; teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare students well for examinations.
- Students show strong commitment to learning and high levels of interest.

Commentary

152. Achievement in religious education is very good. A Level results in 2003 were well above average although AS Level results were below average. Standards of current Year 12 and 13 students are well above average. The most able can apply the views of a range of scholars to the issues of miracles and life after death. They show good understanding of Aristotle's teaching on cause, and give thoughtful consideration to contemporary issues of sexuality including applying ethical theories to homosexuality. Lower-attaining students showed general understanding of the differences of the views of scholars and could make broad responses to ideas of Natural Law within ethics.

153. Students achieve work of a high standard because teaching is often challenging and always thorough. This very good teaching is rooted in good subject knowledge, apt resources and in the very good written guidance for students on how they can improve. Students are enthusiastic, well informed, and work well together to deepen their understanding by clarifying, through discussion, the meaning of sentences and phrases. They make good use of the Internet to extend their knowledge. In a lesson on absolutist and relativist approaches to genetic engineering in Year 12, teleological approaches were clearly explained; the students made valid contributions and the teacher used these responses well to deepen understanding. In a lesson on Freud's attitude to religion, students were provided with a very good summary as background and a key text to analyse. Students developed understanding first through exploring the meaning of the text

in groups and then by sharing their ideas in the class with the teacher providing skilful questioning and additional explanation. A Year 13 lesson on omniscience was very effective because of careful planning. Questions were prepared in advance to help students identify the philosophical differences in the terms everlasting and eternal, and students were then challenged by questioning about the concept of a timeless God. Clear explanation of the verification principle then enabled students to generate a range of propositional statements.

154. The department is very well led and managed and the high standards recorded at the last inspection have generally been sustained. The planning of teaching and learning is very good with very precise learning objectives for each lesson communicated to the students. Examination results are carefully analysed and the findings acted upon to strengthen teaching where weaknesses have been detected. Examiners' meetings are attended regularly and expectations fed back effectively to teachers and students.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good level of relevant expertise in the department and teaching is good overall.
- Students are helped well to prepare for examinations.
- There is a measure of underachievement amongst some lower-attaining students.
- Teachers are good at relating the topics studied to the lives and interests of the students.
- Developments in the department are not informed well enough by rigorous assessment.

Commentary

155. Students, most of whom are new to sociology, join the course with overall average attainment in their GCSE examinations. However, a significant number continue their studies from Year 11. Standards in A Level examinations were well below average in 2002 and below average in 2003. Female students do significantly better than males. AS Level results followed a similar pattern. The improvement in examination results is reflected in the students' current work where standards are average for Year 12 and Year 13. Overall achievement across these two years is satisfactory. Though teachers work hard to include all students to the full extent of their competence, there is a measure of underachievement amongst lower-attaining students. Some of these students are held back by weaknesses in writing.

156. Teaching is good overall. In the best lessons, the teacher ensures that all the students are at ease with key ideas and the technical language of sociology. This is the result of asking open questions which allow students to express their views, test them and elaborate on them. However, in the less successful lessons questioning does not always engage the lower-attaining students, with the consequence that some underachieve. There is a good emphasis on helpful note-taking. Though teachers know their students well, assessment is not always used sharply enough to identify the needs of the lower-attaining students. Students show a real interest in the subject as teachers relate what they teach to issues students encounter in their lives.

157. The department is well managed and satisfactorily led. The head of department, who is new to the post, has done much to raise the profile of sociology and improve the quality of teaching.
158. The subject has had staffing difficulties that have affected students' achievement. The students were often taught by temporary, unqualified teachers. The department is now recovering. As a result of the commitment of staff, sociology is now on a more secure footing. Teachers have the will and capacity to bring about further improvement.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in all sixth form courses is a strength of the department.
- Relationships between staff and students are very good.
- The support, advice and guidance given to individual students is very good.
- Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation and resources for learning but some aspects remain unsatisfactory and impede teaching and learning.

Commentary

159. Students respond very well to the good teaching they receive across all of the design and technology subjects in the sixth form and achievement is good. Results were above the national average at A Level in 2003 and in line with the national average at AS Level. The expertise of teachers with commercial and industrial backgrounds and the extensive examining experience of several staff create a very good working atmosphere that makes learning realistic and stimulating in terms of designing for real human need. Teaching is good and expectations are high. Most students are able to make very good use of the available ICT facilities and commercial quality software to model and test their ideas. However, specialist resources to support computer aided manufacture (CAM) are relatively poor and this limits achievement at the highest level across the sixth form.
160. Standards were above average in the A Level work seen in lessons and in the samples of work that were analysed during the inspection. Students also achieve well in the engineering courses and are confident in the use of machinery, electronics and make good use of computer-aided learning. Teaching is informed, enthusiastic and very stimulating across all subjects; this builds on well from the students' experiences at GCSE. Effective mentoring, which is challenging and rigorous, is a strong feature across the whole sixth form. Mature discussion with individuals about their work is common, providing the stimulus for good design development and the production of good quality practical outcomes.
161. The numbers of students studying at A Level and on vocational courses is rising. Students enjoy taking the opportunity to be analytical and critical about their designs and the work of others through teacher-led group reviews of the design and make process. Design portfolios and other evidence shows that students are tackling their assignments well with great attention to detail; they make very good use of the support materials

provided by teachers and by their own research. They enjoy the greater independence and wider opportunity offered in the sixth form.

162. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the quality and range of the curriculum, particularly the vocational courses that are now offered. Students achieve well on all courses because teaching is good and expectations are high. Each subject is led and managed well and there is a clear focus on raising standards and improving the students' life chances. The curriculum is enriched in many ways through initiatives such as the Engineering Education Scheme, which bring the students into contact with professional engineers in the workplace, as well as providing opportunities to meet and study with other students on residential courses held in a university.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

163. Art and design and theatre studies were inspected in depth. Lessons were also observed in film studies, music technology, performance studies and photography.
164. Teaching of the **music technology** course is generally satisfactory. Learning benefits from individual and small group tuition, which enables the teachers to use their skills to the best advantage. A Level music and music technology results were below average in 2003. Learning also benefits from the range of ICT equipment available for the students' use.
165. A popular and successful A Level in **film studies** is now part of the programme in the sixth form. Results at AS and A Level in 2003 were above the national average. Film studies also has a very high entry figure, only English literature and psychology attracting more students. The appeal of this subject was evident in the glowing account students gave of the course when commenting on their sixth form choices. It was also exemplified in the very good lesson observed. The teacher's expertise, the knowledge of film techniques shown by the students and the high level of mature discussion were impressive.
166. The drama department offers two A Level options, and several students have chosen to take both. **Performance studies** was not a popular course in 2003, when only six students took the examination, none achieving a grade above C. Currently the course is attracting more students. Of the 28 who joined last year, 16 have stayed on to take the A Level in 2004. During the inspection week, one of their examination performances took place in a medieval hall in Norwich, very suitably since they had created an intriguing piece of theatre based on events in the city at the time of the plague. This was much enjoyed by an audience which included families and friends. The students in Year 12 are also preparing an examination performance. Both groups are working well and clearly appreciating the course.
167. By the end of Year 13 students in **photography** are working at above average levels and most achieve well in relation to the grades they achieved at AS Level. Students are well motivated and their good attitudes have a positive effect on their learning. They respond well to teaching which gives good quality individual attention and enables them to develop personal responses to themes. Higher-attaining students discuss the work of major photographers and the influence that this has had on their own work, for example David Bailey on portraiture and Ansel Adams on landscape photography.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is used well to inform students how to improve their work.
- Students are well motivated and work well independently.
- Trips to galleries both here and abroad have a positive effect on the quality of students' work.

Commentary

168. There has been a rising trend in A Level results since the last inspection and in 2002 and 2003 results rose to be above average. Results at AS Level were below the national average in 2002 and 2003. Most students taking AS and A Level did not achieve as well as expected and did better in other subjects they took. Results for the VCE course have been consistently above the national average since the last inspection and students achieved well in relation to other subjects they took.

169. From work seen during the inspection, students on VCE courses are working at a level above average. They achieve well due to a consistently good quality of teaching. They are offered opportunities to work in a wide variety of two and three-dimensional media and journals are used well to record, document and develop ideas. Higher-attaining students produce sensitive drawings, etchings and sculptures, exciting paintings and fashion designs with flair. They discuss their aims and intentions knowledgeably and acknowledge that they have been influenced and inspired by work of well-known artists.

170. Visits to major local exhibitions, national galleries and an extended visit to Rome, Venice and Florence have had a good influence on the quality of students' work, inspiring and motivating them to be truly creative. Many students leave the school to pursue successfully further and higher education in art.

Drama and theatre studies

Provision in drama and theatre studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A well-established drama department has a long record of examination success and has made a good contribution to the school's extra-curricular programme.
- Teachers are keen and dedicated, giving generously of their time.
- Examination standards and recruitment figures have declined recently, with a sharp drop in staying on rates this year, after the first sixth form year of study.
- Subject popularity and results no longer compare favourably with other A Level subjects.
- The school has excellent accommodation for performances, but the drama working spaces used are less satisfactory.

Commentary

171. Results in the A Level examination have varied in recent years. The 2003 results represented a sharp drop from the previous year when they were well above average. The number of A and B grades attained was about half the national figure. The current A Level group consists of only eight students, half the group having decided not to continue into the second year of the course. Standards of work seen were average in both practical and written work, although they are higher in Year 12. Teaching is good overall. Achievement overall is good, with many of the students able to build on their previous work in GCSE drama. Male students do less well than their female counterparts.
172. In the week of the inspection there was an emphasis on rehearsal preparation in Year 13, but the work lacked the vitality and confidence to be expected at this stage of the course. In their work on Stanislavski, Year 12 students were more positive in their approach, following the teacher's instructions carefully as they worked through the exercises. The lesson alternated movement and theory. Students sat in the theatre rows for dictation and note taking, moving back to the front area for practical work. Neither area was entirely suitable, and the restless movement between the two meant that neither theory nor practice had sufficient focus. The lesson lacked an initial physical and vocal warm-up to help students move with more assurance and energy. However, the rapport between teacher and class produced a good feeling of shared effort and the students were clearly interested in what they were learning. The written work which forms part of the course has been tackled conscientiously by most students. Some good notes, analyses and essays were seen in students' files, with informative and helpful marking by the two teachers who, as examiners, are very familiar with examination requirements.
173. Departmental leadership is experienced and enthusiastic and has secured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. With several rehearsal schedules in operation, however, effective management requires a great deal of time and energy from a part-time teacher and the demands during the week of inspection and rehearsals were very heavy. A departmental handbook contains useful records of examination results and the many extra-curricular drama activities which the department has provided. It does not contain a development plan. The drama department has undergone major changes in staffing and in the range of courses it offers in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. This is a time for looking forward and for evaluation of how best its reduced specialist staff can be deployed to meet the needs of a changing sixth form.
174. Plays and musical shows, in the school, outside it and also abroad, have given the school a fine and deserved reputation for theatre performances. They contribute a good deal to students' personal and cultural development, particularly when they involve inter-departmental liaison and work in the community.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

175. The school offers a very successful **travel and tourism** course as part of the vocational provision in the sixth form. The knowledgeable teachers have a very good understanding of assessment requirements and have prepared a well structured course to ensure that all students achieve well. In the one lesson observed, a satisfactory Year 13 lesson reviewing assignments, all students had produced draft work of at least pass standard, although there was no real challenge and not much use of targeted questions to reinforce understanding of the key concepts involved in the work.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students sitting the sports studies A Level achieved very well in 2003.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, especially when lessons are stimulating and students' understanding consistently checked.
- Students have a positive attitude to the subject and work productively in lessons.
- Systems for the sharing of good practice are insufficiently developed.
- Whilst facilities for practical work are very good, there is no dedicated classroom for the teaching of theory lessons.

Commentary

176. All students who sat the sports studies A Level in 2003 passed, with the majority gaining an A or B grade. Current students cover the full range of ability. All answer well in class when challenged with the most able using and defining basic sports study terminology well. Several students are performing at a very high level of personal skills in their chosen sport, such as in football and in badminton, and are able to demonstrate quite sophisticated skills of analysis and evaluation. Achievement is good and standards are above the national average.
177. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and teach very well prepared lessons authoritatively. Targeted questions are used effectively to stimulate learning. However, some lessons are not sufficiently focused both to stimulate students and as a means of checking understanding. Students are assisted in their learning by the provision of relevant and stimulating materials, past papers and course information. Students' work is thoroughly marked although feedback is not always consistent in terms of praise for good work, mark schemes and what students need to do to improve. Students' positive attitude to the subject and the very good student-teacher relations ensure that lessons have a pleasant and productive working environment.
178. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department is beginning to provide a more consistent and coherent approach to teaching the subject across all areas, although the systems for the sharing of good practice are underdeveloped. Teaching is effectively monitored and is used to identify relevant training opportunities for staff. The importance of physical activity for sixth form students is emphasised with non-examination students being provided with timetabled activities and a range of extra-curricular activities and school teams, which have achieved success both locally and nationally. External facilities for the subject are good but internal facilities are old and cramped and for examination students there is no dedicated classroom for the teaching of theory lessons. The planned development of a sports hall for the school will help to resolve the accommodation issues as well as helping to provide a more consistent approach to sports provision at the school for males and females. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

BUSINESS

179. Business studies was inspected in detail and a lesson of accounting also observed. The very good Year 12 **accounting** lesson observed was taught with pace and authority by the very well prepared teacher. Students' understanding of the key concepts involved in

constructing manufacturing accounts was constantly checked by the teacher by the use of targeted questions which ensured all members of the class were fully involved in the lesson. Students achieve well on this course and enjoy the lessons, working productively as individuals and in groups.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department has excellent systems for recording and tracking student progress.
- A Level results in 2003 show students achieving well.
- Teacher-student relations are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good with well motivated students working productively in and out of lessons; they are competent and confident users of ICT.
- Lessons are held in a range of classrooms and this does not always create an appropriate learning environment for students.

Commentary

180. The department has an excellent system for recording and monitoring student progress across the different cohorts studying the business courses. This is used to inform lesson planning, assessment requirements and, in sharing this information with students, acts as a motivator for them. With very good student-teacher relations and good teaching, students achieve well in the subject. A Level results in 2003 were above the national average. This represents a considerable improvement on the year before. Current standards are not quite at this level and are in line with the national average.
181. Courses are well planned and tracked and as a consequence students are very well aware of what they need to do to achieve their target grades, which in many instances, are exceeded by students. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, authoritative delivery and generally very good use of targeted questions. As a consequence, students are well motivated and work productively in lessons. This was seen in good Year 13 lessons covering the difficult concepts of elasticity of demand and business strategy. Students generally are able to use and apply a range of concepts covering the major business areas including marketing, finance, business objectives and ethics, and human resources. There is scope for further improvements to teaching by having more explicit learning objectives, more student-centred activities and allowing students the opportunity to develop their responses fully when questioned.
182. Leadership and management of the department are good, with clear and continuing evaluation of departmental performance. However, the stated targets in the department's development plan, which is appropriately in line with the school's key developmental areas, could be more rigorous. Accommodation is satisfactory with just one dedicated business room containing several computers. However, many lessons are held in classrooms scattered across the site, which does not generate an appropriate learning environment. There are several industry links and visits, which are used to reinforce students' understanding of key business topics although these have been reduced in recent years. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	5
How inclusive the school is		4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	5
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	5
Overall standards achieved		5
Students' achievement	4	5
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		4
Attendance	5	7
Attitudes	3	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4	4
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
The quality of education provided by the school		5
The quality of teaching	3	5
How well students learn	3	5
The quality of assessment	4	5
How well the curriculum meets students needs	4	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		5
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for students	4	4
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	3	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	4
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	4	4
The effectiveness of management	4	4

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

