

# INSPECTION REPORT

## DANETRE SCHOOL

Daventry

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122065

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Brooks

Lead inspector: Selwyn Ward

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 273103

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: 11 – 16  
Gender of students: Mixed  
Number on roll: 1069

School address: Hawke Road  
Southbrook Estate  
Daventry  
Northamptonshire  
Postcode: NN11 4LJ

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr John Bull

Date of previous inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Danetre is an average size school in Daventry that caters for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. In addition, a small number of students join the school from Northampton College for part of their sixth form studies. The school is popular and numbers have increased steadily in the years since the last inspection. All but a very small number of students are of white British heritage. There are no students at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Taken overall, students' socio-economic backgrounds are below average. Although the number known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, many otherwise socially and economically disadvantaged families are ineligible for free school meals because they qualify instead for other benefits, including tax credits and income support. Pupils' ability on entry to the school has been rising. The current Year 7 were of broadly average attainment when they joined the school but students in previous years have been below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above average, and an above average number have statements of special educational needs. The range of special educational needs covered is broad, and includes several students with complex needs as well as a number with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has just been awarded specialist status as an engineering college from the start of the 2005-06 academic year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9271	Selwyn Ward	Lead inspector	
19653	Libby Dickson	Lay inspector	
29742	Patricia Fyans	Team inspector	Mathematics
33368	Val Greatrex	Team inspector	Design technology; vocational (engineering); design technology (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
24453	Gordon Jackson	Team inspector	Science
32231	Adrian Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; vocational (business)
23307	Neil McDonough	Team inspector	Physical education
2496	Tony O'Sullivan	Team inspector	French; citizenship
10817	George Rayner	Team inspector	Geography; history
35060	Keith Robinson	Team inspector	Religious education
11258	Ivor Rushforth	Team inspector	Art
30297	Gary Spruce	Team inspector	Music; music (6 <sup>th</sup> Form)
18072	Joan Stephens	Team inspector	
29364	Chris Tapley	Team inspector	Special educational needs
34521	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	English

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Danetre is a good school** where students of all abilities achieve well. The headteacher, governors and leadership team have been successful in driving forward improvements in standards, teaching and in the personal development of students that have raised the popularity of the school. Danetre provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, achieve well
- A very effective partnership has been developed with other local institutions that boosts the opportunities available to the students and enables the school to offer a particularly broad range of subjects to students in Years 10 and 11
- Danetre makes good provision for students' personal development and, as a result, the vast majority of students behave well, get on well with one another and are keen to learn
- Students do not have enough access to information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects
- Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan their lessons and to give students good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work
- Some teachers do not manage behaviour well enough
- In Years 7 to 9, students do not learn enough about religious education and are not making enough progress in music

**Improvement since the last inspection has been good.** Standards and the quality of education provided have improved considerably. The school has successfully tackled almost all of the issues raised in the last inspection, although requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not fully met.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
	D	D	C	A

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

**Students achieve well.** Standards seen in most subjects are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 9 and 11. This represents good progress and achievement in relation to students' starting point, which, in the past, has been below average. Standards in physical education are above average, as are those in design technology and engineering in Year 11. Standards in business studies in Year 11 are well above average. It is only in ICT that standards are below national expectations. This is the result of underachievement in previous years that is now being successfully tackled, so that students are now making good progress in ICT lessons.

**Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Students get on very well with one another and the vast majority behave well and are keen to learn, although there is some disruptive behaviour in the small minority of lessons where teachers do not manage their classes well enough. Students respond very well to the opportunities they are given to take on responsibility. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good.** Students benefit from a very broad range of curriculum choices; particularly in Years 10 and 11, where the very strong partnership arrangements with other local institutions enable the school to offer many varied vocational and work-related courses as well as GCSEs that are well matched to students' needs, interests and capabilities. Accommodation and resources are good, although students do not currently have enough access to ICT to support their learning in other subjects. Opportunities for enrichment, particularly through clubs and other out-of-school activities, are very good, and the rate of participation is high. Arrangements for the care and welfare of students are good and they are given very good guidance and support.

**Teaching and learning are good.** Lessons are well planned, making good use of assessment information so that students are helped to build on what they have learnt previously. Students are kept interested and well motivated by the varied, well-paced activities in lessons. Learning support staff are effective in supporting students with special educational needs. Although most teachers organise their classes and manage behaviour well, poor behaviour management is the key weakness of teaching in a small minority of lessons.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear vision for driving forward further improvement in a school whose local reputation and popularity have grown with its increased success in academic achievement and students' personal development. Staff with leadership responsibilities do an effective job and the school is well managed. As a result, the school has a clear and accurate view of how well it is doing and of the areas that could be developed and improved. Governors are effective because they know the school well and provide a healthy challenge to the headteacher and staff that supports the continued drive for improvement.

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and students express positive views of the school. Students indicated that there were incidents of bullying but confirmed that the school deals with these quickly and effectively. The information provided to parents is very good, particularly through school reports.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Ensure that behaviour management is effective in all lessons
- Extend opportunities for students to use ICT in other subjects
- Provide more time for religious education in Years 7 to 9
- Raise levels of achievement in music in Years 7 to 9

## SIXTH FORM

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Danetre School does not have a sixth form but inspectors reported on the teaching and learning in design technology and music, which are the two subjects taught at the school for students who attend Northampton College. In addition, inspectors sampled the mathematics lessons that are taught at the College by staff from the school.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students benefit from a high proportion of good and very good teaching in the subjects taught by the school's teachers
- Students are enthusiastic and enjoy their work

### 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.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Mathematics	Not inspected in the sixth form, but the lesson seen was <b>very good</b> .
Science	Not inspected in the sixth form.
ICT	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Humanities	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Very good in design technology</b> . Students achieve very well because lessons are very well planned and taught. Students are enthusiastic and have a mature approach to the design process.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Good in music</b> . Students have a positive attitude to learning and they achieve well.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Business	Not inspected in the sixth form.
Health and social care	Not inspected in the sixth form.
General education	Not inspected in the sixth form.

*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'.*

### STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very positive about the sixth form subjects taught and the support they receive.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are average in Years 9 and 11. Given that these students' attainment on entry to the school was generally below average, this represents good achievement and good improvement since the last inspection.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students of all abilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs, achieve well
- By the end of Year 11, students do particularly well in physical education, design technology and the vocational subjects of engineering and business studies, attaining standards that are above and well above the national average
- Although students are now making good progress in lessons, underachievement in previous years means that standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average

#### Commentary

1. The table below shows the average point scores attained by students in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. Each point in this table is roughly equivalent to one term's progress, so the table shows that, for example, in 2003, students at Danetre were, on average, more than two terms behind students nationally in English. Results in 2004 were much better. Although precise national comparisons were not available at the time of the inspection, results in English were broadly average. Results in mathematics and science were below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.0 (30.9)	N/a (33.4)
mathematics	34.5 (34.0)	N/a (35.4)
science	31.7 (32.3)	N/a (33.6)

*There were 191 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Work seen shows a continuing improving trend. Standards are now average in English, mathematics and science. Given that pupils' attainment when they join the school has, until recently, been below average, students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. This is the result of good teaching based on the effective use of assessment, matching what is taught to a good understanding of what students need to learn in order to improve. Standards are similarly average by the end of Year 9 in other subjects, with the exception of physical education, where standards are above average, and ICT, where standards are below national expectations.
3. Results in the GCSE and other examinations at the end of Year 11 also improved in 2004. They were average in English, mathematics, science, design technology, geography, history, French and religious education. Results were above average in engineering and well above average in business studies and in the physical education examination course. In art, music and ICT, results were below average. The table below shows how results of students at the school compare with those nationally. When compared with schools with students starting their GCSE and vocational courses with similar standards in their Year 9 tests, these results are above average. Achievement is good.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	44 (42)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (94)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student	40.3 (36.6)	41.4 (40.6)
Capped average point score per student	33.9 (31.7)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 178 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. From work seen, standards are now average in almost all subjects. In design technology, engineering and the non-examination course physical education, standards are above average. They are well above average in business studies and in GCSE physical education. Only in ICT are standards below those expected nationally. Throughout the school this is because there has been underachievement in previous years, although students are now making good progress in lessons in ICT.
5. The school works very hard to cater for students of all abilities. Its good provision for students with special educational needs and those who might otherwise be at risk of disaffection, enables these students to achieve well. In Year 7, students with reading difficulties benefit from a programme that allows for one-to-one help from volunteers and the effective use of *Success Maker™*, an interactive educational software program. Results from *Success Maker™* are validated by the use of standardised, accredited tests which confirm the good rate of progress being achieved.
6. More able students also achieve well. The school is careful to identify its gifted and talented students and set them appropriately challenging work so that they attain higher levels in their Year 9 tests and the higher grades at GCSE. Some students are given the opportunity to take GCSE examinations early. For example, those on the physical education GCSE course are taking their examination at the end of Year 10.
7. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection and the underachievement then reported in several subjects, particularly in Years 7 to 9, has been successfully tackled through improved teaching and learning. Last year, boys in Year 11 generally did better than girls, which was similar to the position at the time of the last inspection, but inspectors' sampling of assessment records for individual boys and girls identified that their progress and achievement were similar.

### **Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Students' attitudes, values and behaviour are good. Most arrive punctually for school and their attendance is satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths**

- Students enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to their work, which contributes to their achievement
- Most students behave well in lessons and around the school
- Bullying is dealt with effectively

- The relationships between staff and students and among students themselves are good, and these are underpinned by the school's positive ethos which values each individual
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now average

### Commentary

8. The vast majority of students in all year groups have positive attitudes to school and appreciate the safe and secure environment it provides. Most take part enthusiastically in lessons and in the many extracurricular activities provided for them. They are confident and friendly with visitors and keen to talk about school life and their work. They express positive views on almost all aspects of school life.
9. The school has high expectations for student behaviour and in general these are met. In most lessons, behaviour is good, because students are well motivated and their interest is held by confident and stimulating teaching. In a small number of lessons, however, there is unsatisfactory behaviour when the teacher fails to inspire or control the class. In such cases, some students are quick to take advantage and begin chatting and distracting others. A small number of students have a poor work ethic and come to lessons without basic equipment. They can find it difficult to settle and concentrate, which can disrupt the learning of others. Around the school, students behave well, and lunchtimes and breaktimes are pleasant occasions where they mix well together.

#### *Ethnic background of students*

#### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1040	85	1
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	1	0
Chinese	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

10. In the questionnaire completed before the inspection, many parents and students raised concerns about the number of incidents of bullying. Nevertheless, they praised the way the school deals with these incidents. Students express confidence that, as soon as the school is aware of any bullying, including name-calling, immediate and effective action is taken. Short periods of exclusion have been used to deal with specific instances of inappropriate behaviour, such as fighting at breaktimes. Following exclusion, a senior member of staff interviews students and their parents on their return. The school is particularly successful at retaining students in school to help them achieve their full potential, with innovative provision, for example, through the school's Faculty for Personal Development that helps settle students who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion.

11. Teachers set a good example to students and expect them to behave with consideration to others. As a result, relationships are good throughout the school, and students are well mannered and confident in their dealings both with fellow students and members of staff.
12. Students' attendance has steadily improved over the past few years and is now broadly in line with the national average. The school makes effective use of data to monitor and improve the attendance of individuals, working closely with the education welfare officer. While most students arrive at school on time, some lack urgency in going to lessons, and there are occasions when their lateness goes unchallenged by teachers.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.8	School data	0.8
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

13. The school promotes students' personal development well. There are good opportunities to explore ethical issues in history, geography and English. Students are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves by supporting a large number of different charities, which they embrace with enthusiasm. Students have numerous opportunities to develop their social skills through paired and group work in lessons as well as the many and varied extracurricular activities and educational trips on offer. Their capacity to work well together is a reflection of the effectiveness of these opportunities. The house system fosters a strong sense of community which helps students to mix with others from all year groups. Students are encouraged to use initiative and take responsibility. The school council, called *Student Voice*, gives students the opportunity to take an active and practical interest in the running of the school and contribute ways to improve it. Members of the council take their role seriously and discuss issues in a mature and tolerant manner. In a *Student Voice* meeting held during the inspection, students successfully negotiated with the manager of the local bus company to reinstate a service between the school and neighbouring villages.
14. Spiritual development is a weaker aspect of students' development. As was the case at the last inspection, there is no daily act of collective worship for all students, although thrice-weekly assemblies provide worthwhile opportunities for considering moral and social issues. In the week of the inspection, the theme was *freedom*. The assembly theme is discussed and reflected on in some of the registration periods at the beginning of the day, but practice across the school is inconsistent.
15. Cultural development is good. The school offers a range of cultural activities, including musical performances and sporting activities, and a large number of students take part. Opportunities to learn about other European cultures occur through the study of languages, visits and exchanges. Year 9 students can try a taster course in Japanese. These all provide students with new experiences and help them develop a wider view of the world. However, celebration of the United Kingdom's ethnic diversity, though satisfactory, is more limited.
16. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Provision for students' personal development is better than was reported in the last inspection, and students' attitudes and behaviour, previously satisfactory, are now good. Attendance has also improved.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is very good. Students benefit from very good guidance and welfare support, and the school has developed very effective partnerships with other schools, the local community and parents.

## **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are well planned so that students can build on what they have learnt previously
- A good mix of varied activities in lessons helps keep students interested and involved
- A small number of teachers do not manage behaviour well enough
- Learning support staff are used effectively to help students with special educational needs
- Marking is thorough and gives students helpful guidance on what they need to do to improve their work

## Commentary

17. The table below shows the distribution of teaching grades for the 137 lessons seen. It represents a picture of improved teaching since the last inspection that has resulted in the improvements in the progress and achievement of students, which are now good.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 137 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (2%)	28 (20%)	53 (39%)	43 (31%)	7 (5%)	2 (1%)	1 (<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. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.*

18. The consistently good quality of assessment contributes to the good teaching because teachers make particularly effective use of the information they have about how well students are learning to plan their lessons. As a result, most lessons are matched well to students' capabilities, enabling students to build steadily on what they have learnt previously. Teachers also take the opportunity within lessons to assess how well students are learning and, in some of the most effective lessons, they adjust their plans to take account of the students' responses.
19. Good use is made throughout the school of the guidance in the *Key Stage 3 Strategy*, with lessons starting with a clear explanation of the learning objectives and with a brief discussion at the end of the lesson of what the students think they have learnt. In some lessons, however, teachers merely set out tasks to be carried out, and in others the "learning objectives" were far too broad.
20. Students' interest is maintained through teachers' use of varied activities within lessons. Where these are most successful, each activity is given a strict time limit so that students are expected to get through a lot of work in the time available. In some lessons, however, students made less progress than they might otherwise have done because teachers spent too much of the lesson talking to the class, so that some students' attention began to drift.
21. Teachers have good, and often very good, knowledge of the subjects they teach. Subject specialists teach almost all subjects and students respond well to teachers' obvious authority and expertise. Teachers frequently have high expectations of their students. Relationships between staff and students are good, and the vast majority of teachers manage their classes well so that the students behave well. A small minority of teachers lack this key skill, however. In almost all of the lessons that were less than satisfactory, it was as a result of weaknesses in the teacher's management of behaviour. Little was learnt in lessons where teachers competed for attention by shouting at the students, and the ethos in these lessons was starkly at odds with that of the rest of the school.
22. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs throughout the school is good. Subject specialists are developing effective strategies to address the needs of students' specific needs, such as grouping students by aptitude and ability, creating small classes with a more favourable student: teacher ratio, and developing materials designed to meet the specific needs of individuals. Where students are taught by specialist teachers in small focused groups, the students benefit from creative and effective teaching which demonstrates an understanding of the complex needs of the children. Where there are learning support staff in lessons, they are used well. They work in close and effective partnership with class teachers and they show initiative – for example, in routinely helping students who return from instrumental music lessons and who have missed part of the teacher's introduction.
23. Marking is good. It is thorough and gives good guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their work. In accordance with school policy, work is not graded. In some subjects, particularly those that make use of frequent testing, students have a good idea of the levels they are working at. In others, however, not all students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. Although they are set targets, these do not all readily equate to nationally expected levels or examination criteria.

## The curriculum

The curriculum provision is very good. This is also reflected in the opportunities offered for enrichment, including extracurricular activities that significantly enhance students' learning and personal development. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The innovative, broad and balanced curriculum meets all students' needs and enriches their learning
- There is a diverse range of lunchtime and after-school activities that are well supported by students
- Students do not have enough opportunity to use ICT in other subjects
- Insufficient time is available for teaching religious education in Years 7 to 9

### Commentary

24. The curriculum is much improved since the last inspection. It provides students with a very good range of opportunities that is very well matched to their needs. Since the last inspection the range of courses offered to students in Years 10 to 11 has been increased and now provides very good vocational based options with a large range of courses run in partnership with the local further education college. The requirements of the *National Curriculum* are met, though the total time available in Years 7 to 9 for the teaching of religious education (known in the school as *ethics and philosophy*) is significantly less than expected in the locally-agreed syllabus. This is largely the result of the way in which religious education is grouped together with history and geography in Year 7. Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught to all students, although this has resulted in there being fewer opportunities for other subjects to access the computer suites for whole-class teaching.
25. The curriculum is particularly strong in meeting the need of students in Years 10 and 11. In conjunction with other local institutions, as part of the Daventry Learning Partnership, a very broad range of subjects is offered to these students including full and short course GCSEs. Also included are a wide range of vocational based "applied" courses which benefit those students for whom the traditional subject provision is too narrow and academically based. Other innovative developments include the work-related programme and the "Cool Project" for part-time students which ensures that the learning needs of all students are met. The proportion of students taking a modern foreign language at GCSE is twice the national average.
26. The programme for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, and is currently being reviewed and further developed. It fully meets the requirements for drugs, sex and relationships education, with topics revisited as students progress through the school. Form tutors deliver the programme, with relevant sessions being taught by visiting specialists. Because many of the tutors have not received appropriate training in the delivery of the subject, the quality of the teaching is inconsistent, varying from very good to unsatisfactory. Monitoring of the quality of provision has been insufficient to ensure that all students benefit from the high quality of teaching that just some are now getting.
27. Curriculum provision for students with special educational needs, including those who have been identified as gifted and talented, is good, particularly for students in Years 10 and 11 where the range of options on offer to all students is much broader than usually found in schools of this size. Strong links are being developed with the business community by both the special educational needs department and the Student Support Services Team. The provision of lifts capable of taking wheelchairs means that there is full access to all departments for physically disabled students. On all floors, there is appropriate equipment for helping physically disabled people down staircases in the event of an emergency.

Although the school works hard, and successfully, to fully include students with special educational needs, sometimes the withdrawal of students from lessons for extra support is not managed as well as it could be. For example, where students are withdrawn from lessons to use *Success Maker™*, they sometimes miss important parts of the main lesson, which they are then expected to catch up on. Here more creative timetabling and communication is needed to maximise the potential of this effective teaching aid.

28. Enrichment activities are very good. These include joint curriculum events such as: *Maths Challenge*; *Industry days* and close links with activities organised by the local universities at Northampton and Warwick, including the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth at Warwick University. Teachers give freely of their time, running a wide variety of clubs for students at lunchtimes and after school. The school provides booster and revision classes for students at various times of the year to prepare students for coursework and examinations. Students successfully use on-line revision programs, with access for these provided by the well-stocked library. Participation in sport is very good, with a wide range of opportunities for both boys and girls to participate in school and house teams and in general recreational activities. Professional coaches are also used to raise overall levels of skill. An outdoor pursuits centre, run by the army, is often used for the benefit of less well-motivated students. Numerous trips are organised, with most being oversubscribed. All Year 7 students have an overnight stay at an activity centre to foster co-operation and team work, while all students in Years 9 and 10 spend a day at a local hotel/conference centre on activities associated with thinking and problem-solving skills. The arts are well supported with theatre trips, visits to art galleries and trips to the opera.
29. The match of teaching staff to the requirements of the curriculum is generally good. Teachers are experienced and well qualified to teach their subjects. Technicians and support staff are used effectively and enhance the work of the teachers. The provision of resources across the school is good, apart from some shortages being indicated within science and insufficient music reference books in an otherwise well-stocked and attractive library. Improvements have been made to the range and availability of ICT equipment in recent years, although the ratio of computers to students is still slightly below the recommended figure. The quality of the accommodation is excellent in parts, especially in those areas of the school where new buildings have been added. However, in the four-storey block, certain areas are showing their age and the fabric is not always conducive to the creation of pleasant learning environments, despite the best efforts of the teachers in producing attractive wall displays. It is very good for technology, history and geography, but less so for mathematics, English and in some science laboratories.

### **Care, guidance and support**

There are good arrangements for ensuring the welfare and safety of students. The school provides very good advice and guidance, based on the close monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Students have very good opportunities to become involved in the school and its development.

### **Main strengths**

- The school is a caring environment where students feel safe and respected as individuals
- The house system gives students very good support and guidance, and provides them with a strong sense of belonging
- Students' opinions are regularly sought and valued, and their views acted upon
- Well-established arrangements for the move from primary to secondary school help new pupils to quickly feel at home
- The innovative Faculty for Personal Development helps to include those students who might otherwise miss out on their education



## Commentary

30. Students say they are well known to staff and report that many teachers go out of their way to support them academically and personally. In the words of one Year 8 student: *"it's like a community that works together and doesn't push anyone away"*. Students are looked after well. This strength has been maintained since the last inspection. The pastoral system is strong and well organised. Students make it clear that they value the house structure and the close relationships they develop with staff and fellow house members. They are confident that, if they have a concern over their work or personal relationships, there is an adult to whom they can turn for support. The head of house and form tutor have pivotal roles for most students, and additional support is provided for those that need it through the Student Support Services Team and the Faculty of Personal Development. Those students experiencing more serious problems, which may be affecting their attendance, behaviour and overall progress, receive very good support from the school. In addition, the *Connexions* service works well with small groups of these students, as well as providing valuable career guidance to students in Years 10 and 11.
31. The arrangements for child protection and for students in public care are good, and requirements are met. There are clearly understood Internet access policies. Risk assessments are carried out and routine checks for health and safety are thorough throughout the school.
32. The house system is used effectively to track every student's academic progress, as well as their personal development. Heads of house monitor students' progress in all subjects and any who are at risk of underachieving are helped through target-setting or mentoring. Staff use appropriate strategies, not only to raise the academic standards of weaker students but also to help average and more able students who might otherwise be inclined to lack motivation. Students are given very good information and guidance on the progress they have made and what they need to do next.
33. The school's very good arrangements for induction are effective in helping students settle when they start in Year 7. Experienced staff visit primary schools to exchange information and meet prospective students. The Year 6 students are invited to attend sessions at Danetre, including an induction day and summer school, before they join in September. They undertake written tasks which provide relevant information to enable the school to make decisions about the level of support individuals are likely to need. The transition to secondary education is rounded off during a residential visit early in the academic year for Year 7. This encourages students to get to know staff and one another better and is much enjoyed and appreciated by students. As a result of these well-planned arrangements, students are confident and familiar with their new surroundings. The same high quality of support is maintained through to students' choices of GCSE options in Year 9, and decisions about further education at the end of Year 11.
34. For students with special educational needs, appropriate individual education plans are in place and are reviewed regularly. Individual education plans are made available to all of the subject departments who make use of them in planning. Not all individual education plans however, include clearly identified targets for the students to achieve.
35. The Faculty for Personal Development is an innovative facility which addresses the needs of students who are in danger of exclusion from the school. The Faculty is housed in purpose-built accommodation which is on site but separated from the rest of the school. The proactive intervention provided in the form of a multi-agency approach headed by an experienced and skilled team of professionals enables many of these children to successfully address their problems. The Faculty then supports them in their reintegration into mainstream classes. This innovative provision contributes to the high degree of inclusiveness of the school, where even those who have difficulty settling in class are helped to learn and achieve.
36. The school council, *Student Voice*, provides a highly effective forum where students' views are listened to and acted upon. They express themselves thoughtfully and are confident that their ideas are seriously considered. They report that the school has already taken up some of their suggestions, for example over their concerns about the state of the toilets and the quality of canteen food.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

## Main strengths

- The school provides a very good range of high quality information for parents
- Very wide and varied community links contribute to students' achievement and help to raise standards
- Very good links with the primary schools from which most students transfer, ensure that students settle quickly
- The school has developed strong and effective partnerships with the neighbouring secondary school and the local further education college

## Commentary

37. The school is held in high regard in the local community, with increasing numbers of parents choosing to send their children to it. Parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting before the inspection expressed satisfaction with the work of the school. They feel their children like school, make good progress and are expected to work hard and achieve their best. The arrangements for settling students into Year 7 are particularly appreciated. A number have concerns about the behaviour of students, which disrupts some lessons.
38. The school works effectively with parents and does all it can to keep them well informed and to encourage them to be involved. The well-written prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide clear and helpful information. A termly newsletter, the *Community Bulletin*, also helps to keep parents and members of the local community informed about future events while celebrating school successes.
39. All students have planners in which to record homework, and parents are expected to sign these every week. The reports on student progress are of very good quality. They give very clear information to parents on how well their child is doing. A particularly helpful feature is the section that identifies the steps the student needs to take to improve and how parents can help.
40. Most parents attend meetings with staff to discuss their children's progress, and most are willing to work with the school if things go wrong. Tutors and heads of houses are readily available, as are subject teachers, if parents have queries or concerns. Staff will often initiate contact with parents to inform them of improvements in work or behaviour, and to let them know about their children's achievements.
41. Complaints are dealt with quickly and fairly and there is good dialogue between home and school. The parent governors provide good support and the parent teacher association, *Friends of Danetre School*, is well supported and shows strong commitment by organising various events that raise significant funds for the school, including £8,000 towards the school's specialist status bid.
42. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained and continued to develop its very good links with the local community. Its work is characterised by a clear understanding of the needs of the local town and surrounding villages and a genuine belief that the school can play a leading part in the life of the community. Students take part in local and national events, including a large number of sporting and musical activities and competitions. Representatives from the world of work are invited into careers guidance lessons and numerous local businesses help by mentoring some students and by providing work experience placements for those in Year 10. Local organisations and clubs regularly use the school premises, with the Daventry Music School holding classes there every Saturday. The school provides extensive opportunities for students to become involved in charitable projects that put them in contact with the local community and the world at large.
43. The well-established and very effective links with other schools and colleges ensure that students progress well through each stage of their education. Staff give regular support to primary school colleagues particularly in science, mathematics, technology and music, and the school is held in high regard by staff in local primary schools. This work helps bring about a two-way benefit. Students enter the school with increased levels of attainment, and then continue to make good progress throughout their time at Danetre. Improvement in provision for 14 – 19 year olds is at the heart of the school's quest to raise standards further. In close collaboration with the neighbouring secondary school and the local college of further education, it has established the Daventry Learning Partnership. This forward-looking initiative has considerably boosted the opportunities

available to students, and enables the school to offer a particularly broad range of academic, work-related and vocational courses for students in Years 10 and 11.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by a strong leadership team. The school is well managed. Governance is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership in a school where all are made to feel valued and are helped to achieve their best
- Leadership of senior and middle managers is good
- Governors support the school well
- The monitoring of teaching and learning and evaluation of performance are good, although they have not yet ensured that all teaching is effective

### Commentary

44. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and an outstandingly clear vision for its development as a key provider for the local community. Her leadership has very effectively focused the school on improving teaching and learning. The impact is evident in the improved achievement of students and the strong relationships in the school, with their positive impact on the environment for learning. The standing of the school in the local community is high and its popularity has grown significantly since the last inspection.
45. The headteacher's vision is well supported by other staff with key responsibilities. Senior roles are very clearly defined, with a distinction made between longer-term strategic leadership and day-to-day management that enhances the effectiveness with which these are carried out. Senior staff provide good role models. Commitment to the direction in which the school is moving is shared. Other staff are appreciative of the leaders' commitment to an "open door" approach that ensures that communication is effective at all levels. An innovative approach to developing the curriculum has had a strong impact upon the range and quality of what the school offers, especially in Years 10 and 11. A very strong commitment to meeting the needs of all students is expressed, for example, in the quality the Faculty of Personal Development, which makes the school accessible to students with a range of needs, who might otherwise be excluded. The school is strongly committed to working with the town's other educational establishments to improve what is provided for sixth form students. This has already had an impact, and the current bid for specialist college status is an important part of the school's commitment towards continued improvement.
46. The overall quality of leadership at middle levels is good, with some very good features. The heads of house provide very good pastoral leadership to tutors and academic support and guidance to students. Subject leadership is good overall, and very good in mathematics, English, science, business education and special educational needs. It is currently unsatisfactory in religious education, but the school is aware of the situation and has very recently taken steps that have significantly strengthened the department's capacity to improve.
47. Special educational needs is very well led, with the school pursuing a range of imaginative initiatives to meet students' different needs. Management is good, with effective documentation and written advice designed to support others in the school. Learning support assistants are well briefed and employed effectively in the classroom. They are given the opportunity and direction to take up appropriate professional development that benefits both the school and them as individuals. Working relationships between the department, outside agencies, parents, local schools and colleges, including special schools, are good.
48. The governors provide strong support and play a very significant role in shaping the school's vision and direction. This is seen, for example, in the key role taken in initiating and pursuing the bid for specialist status as an engineering college. Although very proud of the school, governors have a good understanding of its strengths and areas that could be improved. They exercise their critical friend function well by requiring the headteacher and others responsible for shaping policy to justify their goals and plans fully before agreeing to them. Although there is collective worship three days each week, Governors do not ensure that the school meets the current legal requirement to provide a *daily* act of collective worship.

49. The school has a well-planned programme of subject reviews to ensure that there is regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of performance. It is effectively directed towards supporting the drive to improve assessment procedures so that they play a full part in helping students to achieve well. Subject leaders support the school's evaluation of its performance well by conducting their own monitoring of lessons and marking. Although systems for ensuring that the information derived from monitoring is used to bring about improvement are generally good, they have not yet led to a situation where all teaching is effective. Well-organised liaison and regular evaluation ensure that the school continues to play an effective role in its partnership with other establishments to provide a good range of sixth form choices for young people in the town.
50. The school succeeds well in attracting capable, well-qualified staff at all levels. New staff benefit from a well-organised programme of induction. The school is moving forward well in introducing measures to meet current requirements for workplace reform by, for example, ensuring that teachers have a specified minimum amount of non-teaching time. It strongly encourages support staff to be fully involved in planning and development through, for example, a system in which learning support assistants work closely with subject departments in a particular specialism. Staff annually review their job descriptions with their line managers. Although training is effectively focused on meeting its priorities, the school also willingly supports staff in pursuing their own needs and interests whenever possible. In pursuing a policy of *distributed leadership*, the school's current plans are due to involve subject leaders in having an enhanced role in planning the professional development of the staff for whom they have managerial responsibility.
51. Financial management is efficient, with the last audit identifying only minor points for improvement. Danetre is effective in applying the principles of best value when evaluating its performance and in purchasing goods and services.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,831,981	Balance from previous year	198,530
Total expenditure	3,636,560	Balance carried forward to the next	393,951
Expenditure per student	3,402		

52. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained strengths in leadership and improved its procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Unsatisfactory subject leadership in English and geography has been fully rectified. Although it is currently unsatisfactory in religious education, the school has taken steps to make the capacity for future improvement good in this subject. The school now meets its statutory responsibility for teaching religious education, though not fully for collective worship. Improvement in leadership and management has been good overall.

**OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

**Work-related learning**

Provision for work-related learning is very good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well due to a wide curriculum choice in Years 10 and 11
- Students develop relevant practical skills, and about three quarters opt for vocational courses in Years 10 and 11
- Careers provision is very well planned and managed
- The leadership of the school has a clear vision for high quality preparation for adult life
- Whilst staff across the school are committed to work-related learning they do not always appreciate how work-related learning can contribute to their own subject

## Commentary

53. All students in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take vocational options as a result of the extended range of provision made possible by the partnership with the local further education college. The management of this partnership is very well developed to ensure very good quality assurance arrangements. College staff visit the school to participate in parents' evenings and to meet colleagues. Senior staff from the school visit the college to observe the quality of teaching, and the school trains college staff in aspects of behaviour management so that they are well prepared to teach students in Years 10 and 11. The different tiers of management work well together and excellent communication is facilitated by a jointly appointed administrator so that registers and comments are faxed to school at the end of each day. Students achieve well over time and develop mature attitudes to their work. Results are above average. Students show very good attitudes to their work and behave very well in college lessons. Many students have clear career aspirations that account for their choice of subject. For example, students on the applied GCSE health and social care course were looking forward to careers as nurses, teachers and doctors. In some subjects, students are very clear as to how they are doing and what they need to do to improve but this is not the case in others. Within the school, work-related learning features strongly in the provision for older students with special educational or other identified needs, such as those attending the Faculty of Personal Development and those receiving help from the Student Services Support Team.
54. Careers provision is very good and the school has been awarded *Career Mark* since 2001. Careers work takes place in personal, social and health education lessons in each year group and with a clear and detailed scheme of work for each unit. For example, Year 7 students visit the college to see the range of provision that will be open to them from Year 10 to adult life. Alongside this is a students' book and staff guidance with individual lesson plans which are detailed and have clear learning objectives. At the end of Year 9, students are required to reflect on their achievements in order to write a personal statement to introduce themselves to their Year 10 tutor and also to ensure that they think carefully about each subject before selecting their Year 10 options. In a Year 9 lesson observed, students were introduced to a *Connexions* computer program that covered a wide range of personal development issues, including financial literacy and the world of work. Students were very enthusiastic and keen to use the program at home. The school has developed materials around the program that *Connexions* are planning to use with other schools. Staff have been trained so that careers materials that were once delivered by external providers are now taught by teachers.
55. Work experience is undertaken by all students in Year 10, and local businesses are very supportive. There is good preparation and debriefing, and school staff visit students to quality assure the placement. Links with local businesses go much deeper, however, and links with businesses and the local community generally are very good. Small businesses in the area have made substantial pledges to the fund needed to support Danetre's bid for specialist status as an engineering college. Senior staff have a wide range of business contacts through the *Rotary Club* and *Round Table* organisations.
56. An audit has been carried out to show how subjects contribute to work-related learning. Many subjects make a contribution and students' entitlement is monitored and ensured. However, staff in other subjects are not always clear about how aspects of work-related learning, such as work experience, can enhance students' experience of the broader curriculum. The senior leadership of the school sees work-related learning as intrinsic to its ethos and seeks to communicate this to all.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English and French were inspected in full and are reported below. German, Spanish and Japanese were sampled.

Students in Years 7 to 9 study French, German or Spanish. They are also offered a short “taster” course in Japanese. Students in Years 10 and 11 are completing a two-year GCSE course in Spanish. In a Year 8 **German** lesson, students responded very well to rigorous teaching of key grammar. They used all their language skills in combination and made very good progress. In a Year 8 **Spanish** lesson, good planning and teaching, involving ICT, enabled students to develop their knowledge of daily routine, they worked enthusiastically and made good progress. In a Year 11 lesson, students in their second year of Spanish made sound progress on the theme of their home town. In a Year 9 **Japanese** lesson, students were introduced to simple greetings, numbers and basic script and their interest and enthusiasm helped them make good progress.

#### English

Provision in English is good.

	Years 7, 8 & 9	Years 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since last inspection	Very good	

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management of the department are beginning to have an impact on raising standards
- Good teaching is well planned and structured with a variety of activities
- Results in Year 9 improved significantly in 2004
- Students do not have enough opportunities to use computers

#### Commentary

##### Examination results

57. Results in Year 9 tests in 2004 were in line with the national average and above average when compared with the prior attainment of these students at Year 6. GCSE results in English language in 2004 were in line with the national average, and well above average when compared with similar schools. GCSE results in English literature in 2004 were below the national average.

##### Standards and achievement

58. Overall, achievement is good. Students in Years 9 and 11 joined the school with standards that were below average. Their work shows that their standards in English language are now average. The standard of work seen in English literature in Years 10 and 11 is also average. In 2004, the progress made by Year 9 students in external tests, and by Year 11 students in GCSE English was good. Most students gain two GCSEs in English. Students with special educational needs are all entered for English and gain a GCSE or Certificate of Achievement. Lower-attaining students have the opportunity to study media studies as their second English course.

59. Students in all years and of all abilities are keen to read and enjoy reading aloud or to themselves. Most students respond well to opportunities for discussion and are keen to answer targeted questions. Some students are less ready to listen to the contributions and opinions of others. Writing skills at all levels are improving in response to the department's planned development. Students in all years are developing effective skills in using quotations from texts to support their comments on the text they are studying. Students with special educational needs are well supported in lessons, both by teaching assistants and by the resources and strategies that their teachers make available. Their achievement is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

60. Teaching and learning are good across all years. All teachers plan lessons well and structure them with a range of activities that maintain students' interest in their work. The newly-developed schemes of work provide effective support for teachers in their planning. In the best lessons, the activities are well timed and paced, and students are quickly engaged in their learning as a result. The resources to support these activities are of a good quality and meet the needs of the different capabilities of students in the groups. A collection of advertisements used with a group of Year 11 lower-attaining boys were up-to-date and of an appealing subject matter that led to a very positive response from the students. Learning objectives are shared with students in all lessons, but these rarely include information on how their work will be assessed. A variety of strategies are being used successfully across all years to support the development of writing but there is currently less emphasis on writing for a particular purpose and audience. Students are not given enough opportunities for to use ICT in the redrafting or presentation of their work.
61. Assessment in the department is good overall. Work in students' assessment folders is thoroughly marked and provides good feedback about their *National Curriculum* levels or examination grades and what they need to do to improve. There is, however, some inconsistency in the quality of some of the marking in Years 7 to 9. Students set targets for the term with their teachers. Assessment for learning is starting to be integrated into classroom practice, and is having a positive effect where strategies are used, as in a Year 8 lesson where students were writing to persuade on the dangers of smoking. They understood more about their own writing from an exercise where they examined someone else's work for the features of persuasive writing.
62. Attitudes to learning from most students are very positive. They enjoy their lessons and work productively. Working relationships between teachers and students are good.

### **Leadership and management**

63. Leadership of the department is very good, with a clear vision of what needs to happen to maintain the rise in standards. Effective schemes of work are being put in place which have taken into account national initiatives, and are having a positive effect on raising standards. Very good resources are available that are well matched to students' different learning needs. They are well organised within the departmental area. Planning has identified appropriate priorities for the department, and is linked closely to the school's development plan. The planning demonstrates an awareness of the department's strengths and areas for development.
64. Management of the department is also very good. Staff development is prioritised and there are very good opportunities for staff to share experiences. Newly-qualified and new teachers receive very good support. Examination data is carefully analysed and the analysis is used effectively to support the raising of standards. Monitoring of teaching and learning happens regularly and includes lesson observation, but currently has less emphasis on monitoring the consistency of marking of students' work in exercise books. Resources for the subject are good, but opportunities for the use of ICT in lessons are restricted by the lack of computers in the English suite and limited access to computer rooms. There are good links between the school's library and the department.
65. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Results in national tests for Year 9 have improved from well below average in the last inspection to average in 2004. The progress of Year 9 students was found to be unsatisfactory in the previous inspection and it is now good. The quality of teaching and leadership and management of the department have both improved significantly since the previous inspection.



## Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Provision for teaching language and literacy across the curriculum is good, and students have satisfactory competence in literacy. Raising standards of literacy has been well led by the leadership team. It has been made a priority for all staff in the school's training programme, including a full day when members of the English department worked with all teachers on developing writing skills in their subjects. Literacy is incorporated into schemes of work and is highlighted on the school's standard lesson plan and monitored by the school's leadership team as part of its regular review.
67. A useful folder of materials to support the development of literacy skills in all subjects has been prepared in the school by the school's learning group, and this is about to be shared with all departments. There is a good focus on key words and specialist vocabulary in design technology, art, geography, history and science. Both geography and history provide opportunities for extended writing and the English department provides additional support in developing materials to help students' writing in a range of subjects. There are fewer opportunities for writing at length in religious education. Citizenship, English, geography and history provide good opportunities for discussion. Good use of challenging questioning was seen in a geography lesson on earthquakes and volcanoes which resulted in more reflective verbal responses from students.
68. There is good additional support for students joining the school with low levels of literacy in the form of a summer school and additional literacy lessons in Year 7. These students receive good support in developing their skills from the special educational needs department.

## French

Provision in French is good.

	Years 7, 8 & 9	Years 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with national averages with an examination entry rate of double the national figure
- The teaching is good and students learn well and make good progress
- The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of students of all abilities
- There are good opportunities to learn about French culture, supported by a good programme of visits to France
- ICT is used well to support learning, but there is not enough access to ICT facilities

## Commentary

### Examination results

69. Standards at the end of Year 9, as assessed by teachers, are below the average reported nationally. However, boys do better than the national average. Evidence of the inspection and work seen is that students in the current Year 9 are achieving in line with the national average.

70. GCSE results in 2004 were in line with the national average, though boys did much better than girls. A much higher proportion of students sat the examination than is found nationally. This reflects the broad trend of recent years, though results fell in 2003 because of staffing problems which have since been resolved. Attainment in the current Year 11 is broadly average, though teachers' predictions of students' GCSE performance suggest that standards will rise.

## Standards and achievement

71. Students achieve well. They make good progress in all their language skills and use them effectively in combination. Students in a Year 7 class spoke well about their interests, Year 8 and 9 students achieved well and very well using ICT on town and holiday topics. A lower-ability Year 9 class achieved well and made good progress comparing amenities in local towns. Students with special educational needs made good progress, especially when well supported. Students in Years 10 and 11 achieved well with GCSE work.

## Teaching and learning

72. Teaching is good overall, with the best examples being observed in Years 7 to 9. Teachers use French well and ensure students are clear as to lesson and activity objectives. Lessons are well planned and structured, with good examples of ICT use seen. Teachers have high expectations of more able students and provide good support and encouragement for the less able. The language skills are taught in a balanced way and in a Year 10 class, for example, students were given clear strategies for developing their listening and reading skills. In response to the good teaching, students learn well, applying techniques, consolidating their knowledge and showing independence, originality and initiative. Marking and assessment are good: students receive clear guidance as to their progress and how to improve.

## Leadership and management

73. Good leadership shows vision for the subject and, through hard work and commitment, provides a good role-model. Management is good. The department is a cohesive team, with key roles effectively delegated. There is good evidence of monitoring, and development plan targets are appropriate. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all students. Schemes of work are good. There is a good, well-supported programme of visits to France and a generally good emphasis on teaching culture as an integral part of language. The department has access to good ICT equipment and uses it well, but pressure on the facilities limits its value.
74. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved, teaching, notably in Years 7 to 9, has improved significantly and previously-reported inconsistencies have been removed. Improvement is therefore good and the department has the capacity to maintain this.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Year 7, 8 & 9	Year 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving well because they have positive attitudes to their work and work hard in consistently well-planned lessons
- Teachers use assessment well to help students of all abilities make good progress
- Leadership and management is forward looking and clearly focused on raising standards

- There are not enough opportunities to use ICT or develop skills through mathematical investigations

## **Commentary**

### **Examination Results**

75. Results in Year 9 tests were below the national average, but above the average of similar schools. The percentage of students achieving higher levels was at the national average and also above the average of similar schools. GCSE results in 2004 were broadly average, but above those of similar schools. Boys did better than girls, particularly at achieving higher grades.

### **Standards and achievement**

76. Standards seen in lessons were at the national average, with more able students demonstrating that they were above average. In a Year 9 higher ability set, students worked hard on using scale factors to enlarge shapes. By the end of the lesson, they were able to use fractional and negative scale factors. During lessons, students of all abilities recall facts well and are able to explain orally how they get their answers. Investigational skills are less well developed. They answer questions with enthusiasm and are encouraged to use mental mathematics.

### **Teaching and learning**

77. Relationships in classrooms are very good, creating an open and pleasant learning atmosphere. Teachers use their subject expertise very well to explain mathematical ideas. In a lower-attaining group in Year 10, students were encouraged to explain their ideas visually and orally as they identified properties of triangles. Teachers use targeted questions well to ensure all are involved. They also use data well to track performance over time so that students know their working level and how to improve. Teachers expect good standards of behaviour and insist on it patiently where necessary. In good or better lessons, a range of challenging activities ensures a crisp pace. Lessons are very well planned so that students have a balance of teacher input and individual learning. In a very well-prepared lesson on expanding brackets, a stimulating *PowerPoint*<sup>™</sup> presentation followed by group work enabled all students to increase their understanding at their own rate. The guidance from national strategies is used well to structure lessons so that new learning is clearly explained and quickly connected to previous experience.
78. When lessons are less than good, there is too much teacher talk during which students get restless because the pace slows down. In Years 10 and 11, some teaching is mechanical, involving learning and applying rules rather than understanding the ideas behind them. On occasion, learning was better than teaching because students are keen to learn.

### **Leadership and management**

79. Leadership has a very clear vision focused on raising standards. Very good provision of training directed at monitoring teaching and learning has enabled the department to move forward as a team. Enrichment activities include an express course to enable GCSE entry in Year 10. Well-resourced schemes of work now exist, but students do not have enough access to ICT.
80. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. After a period of instability and readjustment, the department has done well to improve standards and maintain them at earlier levels. Teachers now use individual education plans effectively to focus the work of teaching assistants. The department is now in a strong position to improve further.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

81. Students' mathematical skills are developed well in subjects including geography, where students construct and use charts and graphs competently. Year 11 geography students confidently use percentages and a range of statistical techniques in analysis of the diversity of agriculture. In history, students make good use of statistics on death rates when studying changes in society.

Competent interpretation of data enhances history students' understanding of changing patterns of cattle population in the prairies. In design technology, students measure accurately, and construct and use scale drawings effectively. In some subjects, including ICT, English and religious education, opportunities have not been created to encourage students to demonstrate or develop their numeracy. A recently developed toolkit, to be placed in all classrooms, gives practical guidance to teachers of other subjects on preferred mathematical methods. Overall, students' mathematical competence across the curriculum is satisfactory.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Year 7, 8 & 9	Year 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

  

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the last inspection	Very good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management have led to marked improvements
- The good teaching leads to students learning and achieving well in lessons
- Students' progress is monitored well and good use is made of assessment information
- The aspirations of some students are too low

### Commentary

#### Examination results

82. Results at the end of Year 9, in 2004, were below the national average, which repeats the situation of previous years. Although results dipped slightly, this was also the national pattern. The trend in results since the last inspection broadly matches that nationally. In the past three years, boys' results have decreased, whereas those for girls have risen and they now out-perform the boys in these Year 9 tests. The overall performance of students in GCSE examinations continues to rise. Results in 2004 matched the national average. Results for the boys were very impressive as they made huge gains compared to previous years. In the past three years, the proportion of students gaining A\* to C results has risen appreciably. Results from the new GCSE applied science course were also encouraging, especially for girls.

#### Standards and achievement

83. In the lessons seen, students in Years 7 to 9 showed a broad understanding of various scientific principles. These included flotation, neutralization of acids and, from the top set in Year 9, an impressive understanding of the functions of the blood. By Year 11, more able students show an understanding of the properties of nuclear radiation and relate this to changes in atomic structure, while students in a lower set produced a presentation on the disposal and recycling of plastic. In an applied science group, students undertook the role of science technicians and confidently performed flame tests to identify elements. Across all year groups, standards seen, both in lessons and from notebooks, indicate that students are making good progress and achieving well. In relation to their below average standards on entry to the school, Year 9 test results indicate satisfactory achievement with good overall achievement at GCSE. Students with special educational needs also make good progress because of the work of support staff and the teachers' understanding of the students' capabilities. Setting arrangements help to ensure that the more able students are suitably challenged.

#### Teaching and learning

84. Teachers have established a very good rapport with the students, which contributes to a good learning ethos and good behaviour. Due to the thoroughly developed lesson plans and skills of the teachers, a significant number of lessons were at least of a good standard with one being excellent. As a result, students gained good understanding of the facts and

principles taught. Questioning is used appropriately to check students' understanding and, in the better lessons, to make students think and predict. Teachers have high expectations, though differences exist in the degree of rigour and challenge offered to students. The better lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with a good variety of activity to engage and sustain students' interest and enthusiasm. Students commented on the successful use of humour to create a sense of fun in the learning process and they appreciated opportunities to be involved in the teaching process. Teachers use starter sessions to focus on the learning objective and gain assessment information from students' responses, particularly in the plenary sessions reviewing progress at the end of the lesson. Teachers are now starting to include ICT displays in lessons and this enhances the teaching and learning. However, access to whole-class use of ICT facilities is restricted due to a lack of resources. Work is marked regularly but does not always give students the information they need on how to improve. Although all students are aware of their examination targets, a number prefer to work towards those that are more easily attainable and fail to set themselves high enough goals.

### Leadership and management

85. Under the guidance of the current leadership, substantial improvements have occurred, relating to the organisation of the department, curriculum offered, development of clear schemes of work and teaching styles appropriate to these new courses. Attempts are being made to identify where science teaching can contribute to other curricular areas. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and on improving the quality of teaching and learning through the sharing of good practice and general support. This is reflected in improving achievement and standards. There is good use of data for monitoring the progress of students and to identify current and potential student targets. Good procedures are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching both within the department and in comparisons with other subjects. The work of the science technicians is valued and they contribute to the success of the department. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, with higher standards, in particular, at GCSE.

### INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 7, 8 & 9	Year 10 & 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching for most students and much improved planning and assessment are raising achievement for all
- Students do not have enough access to ICT in other subjects
- Students do not have enough access to computers to support learning in other subjects
- Very effective leadership is bringing about rapid improvement

### Commentary

### Examination Results



86. Results in 2004 in applied GCSE were in line with the national average but there were vast variations between teaching groups around that average. Results in the short course GCSE were lower.

### **Standards and achievement**

87. Standards seen during the inspection were below average, both in terms of the level at which students were working and especially in the breadth of their ICT skills. Students in Year 8 and 9 have not benefited from the national strategy for teaching until the current academic year. In Years 10 and 11, students have not yet experienced databases. By contrast, students in Year 7 have had a good ICT experience. There has been a history of substantial underachievement which is now being turned around. There have been rapid improvements during the current academic year but while Year 7 students achieve well in relation to their abilities, other year groups are still recovering from the previous unsatisfactory provision when essential ICT skills were not taught.

### **Teaching and learning**

88. Teaching seen during the inspection was good, overall. In Years 7 to 9, students now benefit from the adoption of the national strategy and this enables all teachers to deliver well-structured lessons that lead to students learning about ICT in a systematic way and covering the requirements of the *National Curriculum*. In Years 10 and 11, students following the applied ICT course are well motivated. Teachers have good classroom control and very good relationships result in a positive learning environment. However, many Year 11 students following the short course have been demotivated by inappropriate teaching in the past. The marking and assessment of students' work is very good with students receiving clear guidance on how they are doing and what they need to do to do better.

### **Leadership and management**

89. The leadership of ICT is now very good. There is a very clear vision for the subject and its development shared between the school and departmental leadership. There has been rapid improvement during the current academic year and students are now covering the *National Curriculum* requirements. Leadership is driving forward change and rapidly raising standards through the professional development of teachers. The management has been less successful as there has been insufficient time for the effect of innovations to be seen. The department is not yet fully staffed with qualified subject specialists. The infrastructure is much improved, but the ratio of students to computers is a little below the national average for secondary schools. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The requirements of the *National Curriculum* are covered and all students receive specialised ICT lessons throughout the school. However, standards have not yet risen enough, although the provision is now in place for standards to rise rapidly.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

90. Most subjects make some use of ICT to support teaching and learning and there are examples of it being used well. For example, design technology is well equipped and the teaching of graphics is computerised. Year 9 students were observed using ICT to produce clear instructions. In music, ICT is used well in Years 10 and 11, especially to raise the standards of rock and pop musicians. Students use professional standard software to notate and create compositions. However, many subject departments reported that their access to computers was limited because there were insufficient rooms in which to teach whole classes. Until recently, infrastructure problems have made learning with computers unreliable, but this situation is now resolved and there is good technical support. There is substantially more use of ICT in lessons by teachers than by students and students do not have enough opportunities to use ICT outside of specialist lessons in order to raise their ICT competence and to raise standards still further across subjects.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well because lessons are well planned
- The response of students contributes well to their achievement in most lessons, but is poor in a small number
- Good leadership has succeeded in rectifying the aspects that were unsatisfactory at the last inspection

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

91. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were average in 2004. GCSE results were also average, with a near-average proportion of students gaining A\*-C and all succeeding in securing at least G. Although the proportion of boys gaining A\*-C grades was significantly higher than that of girls, the evidence does not show undue variation in their achievement. Boys and girls achieved as well in geography as in their other subjects.

### **Standards and achievement**

92. Most students entered the school with below average standards in geography. By Year 9, the great majority achieve well in improving to reach average standards. Most have average levels of knowledge of geographical processes and understand how these are linked. They can explain, for example, how weather patterns and flooding are affected by global warming. Good achievement continues in Years 10 and 11, as almost all maintain their improved standards. All know why coastlines in places such as Holderness are under threat. Most can competently analyse statistics about coastal erosion to estimate how serious this is and understand that measures to combat the threat can have disadvantages as well as advantages. The work of boys and girls indicates no undue variation and those with special educational needs usually achieve as well as other students.

### **Teaching and learning**

93. Most lessons are well planned. They build well on previous learning, and keep up a good pace, so that time is used effectively. However, plans do not always include enough activities to ensure that all students are able to work at appropriate levels. Sometimes, this results in more able students achieving less well in lessons than they could. In most lessons, relationships are conducive to learning because teachers make their expectations clear and students respond positively. Teachers often question students in a challenging manner, that effectively boosts achievement by requiring thought, explanation and justification of ideas. In GCSE lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge and understanding well to give guidance on how students can succeed in meeting examination criteria. Teaching focuses well on improving literacy skills. In most lessons, for example, teachers ensure students understand the key geographical terms related to the topics studied. Although marking is generally helpful, improvement targets often focus on how well work is presented and do not relate enough to *National Curriculum* and GCSE criteria. A small number of lessons are of a significantly lower quality than the general level. In these lessons, work is unchallenging so that students are not engaged and become unco-operative and the teaching strategies to overcome this are ineffective.

### **Leadership and management**

94. There is a strong commitment to improving the performance of the subject and the contribution of the humanities faculty to the forward development of the school. Day-to-day management is efficient and departmental documentation is well organised. The humanities faculty and the school's senior managers provide regular, generally effective monitoring of teaching. An effective ICT action plan has ensured that the use of computers in geography, which was a key issue in the last inspection, is now satisfactory and continuing to improve.

Because of the way in which the faculty and department have been led, improvement since the last inspection has been good generally and very good in some important respects, so that teaching, learning and achievement, which were unsatisfactory at the last inspection, are now good.

## History

Provision in history is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well generally and the more able succeeded well in gaining A\* grades at GCSE in 2004
- Well-planned lessons and enthusiastic teaching succeed in motivating students
- The motivation and achievement of less able students is sometimes affected by work that is too difficult for them
- History makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy

### Commentary

#### Examination results

95. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were a little above average in 2004. The 2004 GCSE results were average overall, but with a lower than average proportion gaining A\*-C. However, more able students did well in achieving a slightly higher proportion of A\* grades than in most schools. Students' results in history are similar to those in their other subjects.

#### Standards and achievement

96. Most students entered the school with below average standards in history. By Year 9, most achieve well, and their standards are average. Students have expected levels of knowledge about the nineteenth century. Most understand the reasons for industrial and social changes and can interpret sources such as census returns. Students who take the GCSE course continue to achieve well in maintaining standards at the improved level. In work on the American West, students show sound understanding when explaining why, for example, cattle drives took place and how cowboys overcame the problems that they encountered. The achievement of those with special educational needs generally matches that of other students.

#### Teaching and learning

97. Lessons are well structured because they are well planned and teachers make learning objectives clear, so students understand what they have to achieve. Teachers provide good role models by being enthusiastic about the subject and succeed well in making activities interesting. Students usually respond well to this, enjoy the subject and try hard during discussions and individual work. On a few occasions, when work that is too difficult is given to less able students, this has a negative impact upon their attitudes, so that they become reluctant to work. When learning support assistants are present, they have a positive impact upon the achievement of students with special educational needs. History lessons usually provide good opportunities for students to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy. This happens when, for example, classes work together to create good introductions to essays, or interpret graphs to show how cattle ranching grew in the American West during the mid-nineteenth century. In lessons in which non-specialists teach, the depth of learning is sometimes not as good as in lessons taught by historians. This results in the level of understanding being lower, when, for example, students do not make links between different features of the Roman Empire.

## Leadership and management

98. The current arrangements have been in operation for one full term. However, because the subject operates within a well-run humanities faculty, in which there is effective communication, there is good continuity in leadership and stable, well-organised management. There is a good vision for the continued development of the subject. The humanities faculty and the school's senior managers provide regular, effective monitoring of teaching. Because strengths from the last inspection have been maintained, in achievement, opportunities for field visits and the contribution made to literacy and social, moral and cultural development, improvement has been good. There remains however, a need to improve the provision of resources and work set for less able students.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

	Year 7, 8 & 9	Year 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results in the short course GCSE examination are improving and a good number of students' achieved the highest grades A and A\*
- Not enough religious education is taught in Years 7 to 9
- Marking is thorough and informative
- Students' attitudes are good as are relationships between teachers and students

## Commentary

### Examination results

99. Results in 2004 in the short course GCSE examination are broadly similar to those achieved nationally. All the students in Year 11 are entered for this examination and more students achieved the higher grades of A\* and A in religious education than other subjects in the school. Almost every student achieved a grade A\*-G and there was little difference between the achievements of boys and girls.

### Standards and achievement

100. Although students' experience of religious education is varied on entry, by the end of Year 9 the standards are average. Students have a sound knowledge and understanding of three main religions – Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism. Their knowledge of aspects of Christianity is, however, less secure due to the inadequate amount of teaching time available for religious education in Years 7 to 9, and most particularly in Year 7, which limits both the curriculum and the achievement of students. Achievement is better in Years 10 and 11 because of the provision of an adequate amount of teaching time and a more structured course. Students in a Year 10 lesson were encouraged to discuss Christian responses to issues such as racism and were able to make the links to the parable of the *Good Samaritan*.

### Teaching and learning

101. Concerns were expressed in the last inspection that the teaching did not adequately develop students' skills of research and enquiry. These concerns are still valid. Lessons are well planned and the learning objectives are shared with students, which encourages

productive learning. However, the lesson endings do not always ensure that learning has taken place. The most effective teaching was characterised by a good pace of work and activities, which engaged students throughout the lesson and ensured the inclusion of students of all abilities. In these lessons, students' attitudes were good as were the relationships with the teacher. In the weaker lessons, students' behaviour was less good and a more limited range of learning activities was employed. Much of the teaching is by non-specialist teachers, so teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes limited. Very little use is made of religious artefacts or the local community as a means of expanding students' experiences and demonstrating the relevance of religion in today's society. Marking is very thorough and helpfully informative. However, students are not always clear as to the level they are currently working at and what they have to do to achieve a higher grade.

### Leadership and management

102. The faculty has a good programme of monitoring with a clear focus on raising students' achievement. However, both the leadership and management of religious education are unsatisfactory. The schemes of work do not fully cover the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, nor do they provide sufficient guidance for non-specialist teachers. There is little information about the different resources available or the different strategies for learning which can be used to encourage interest. The use of individual student performance data by teachers is not yet being used enough to drive improvements in attainment. Religious education has generally had a low profile within the school for a number of years. The school has recognised these issues and a new subject co-ordinator has been appointed with a clear understanding of the challenges facing him.
103. Despite the weaknesses, the progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 has been improved and the results in the GCSE examinations are steadily improving. However, there remains insufficient teaching time in Years 7 to 9 and a need to expand the range of teaching styles.

### TECHNOLOGY

All students follow courses in resistant materials, graphics, electronics, systems and control and food technology throughout Years 7 to 9. At GCSE, courses are offered in textiles, food, graphics and resistant materials.

#### Design technology

Provision in design technology is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership shows a clear vision for the development of the subject
- Enthusiastic teachers motivate students to achieve well
- The assessment and monitoring of students' work is good across all years and good use is made of data for target-setting and monitoring students' attainment and progress
- In some lessons, lack of rigour and challenge hinders progress

#### Commentary

### **Examination results**

104. Standards on entry to the school are below average but, by the end of Year 9, standards are average, which shows good achievement over Years 7 to 9. Teachers' assessments confirm this. GCSE results were below the national average in 2004. At GCSE, more boys than girls are attaining A\*-C grades, and boys are above the national average in A\* and A grades.



### **Standards and achievement**

105. Standards of work seen were average or above in all years. Students are encouraged to make quality products and all students gain a good breadth of experience using a wide range of practical skills and materials. However, not enough emphasis is placed on designing and drawing skills and the use of small size paper for GCSE design folders inhibits design and flair. The wide use of ICT is embedded in coursework for presentation and graphical design. Achievement is good in all years because teaching is good and students' attitudes and behaviour are good. By the end of Year 9, all students have a good understanding of a range of different materials and handle them well.

### **Teaching and learning**

106. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Most of the teachers are specialists in design technology and a programme of training is in place for the new teachers. The most effective lessons are well planned with challenging work. Teachers are enthusiastic and their expectations are high. Lessons that are less effective often lack rigour and challenge, and consequently students do not feel the urgency to strive for higher grades. Where exemplar materials are used, students have a clear understanding of what needs to be done. Teachers are very enthusiastic about their subject and have a good relationship with students that contribute to their enjoyment of the subject. Students with learning difficulties are supported well in lessons and also make good progress.

### **Leadership and management**

107. Leadership and management of the department are good. Schemes of work cover all *National Curriculum* programmes of study and projects set give students the opportunity to make imaginative and creative products of quality. Assessment is thorough and used throughout the department to keep students and their parents aware of how well they are achieving, as well as providing constructive information on actions for improvement. This is having a good effect on raising standards. The work of the department is monitored well and a programme of support for teachers in the department includes a behaviour management system, lesson observations and support for new teachers.
108. The accommodation for design technology is very good and teaching rooms are well maintained and well organised. The department has its own library area with comfortable seating to encourage students to use the resources available for research and information. The resources for teaching and learning are good. Although students make good use of ICT in their coursework, with good access to the department's two ICT suites, interactive whiteboard and digital camera, they do not have enough opportunity to use ICT for computer aided design. The department has a strict health and safety programme, with regular inspections of machinery, to ensure a safe working environment for students and teachers. The part-time technician is well used and appreciated by the department. Although there has been some fluctuation in standards, improvement since the last inspection has been good. All issues raised in the last inspection have been resolved, including new food technology rooms and the introduction of courses in electronics and systems and control.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Art and design and music were inspected in full and are reported below. Drama was sampled.

One Year 10 **drama** lesson was seen during the inspection in which the teaching and learning were satisfactory. There was a wide range of abilities within the group and the standard of work was below average. Students were at an early stage of learning about theatrical devices. They responded well to a brainstorm session which was enthusiastically led by the teacher, and quickly learned the new technique 'conscience alley' when presented by the teacher. Some of the class found it difficult to work productively in their self-selected groups during the development of their own pieces unless helped directly by the teacher but, with this support, they worked well. Students with special educational needs were able to participate fully in the lesson when directly supported by the teacher. A good range of extracurricular opportunities enhances students' experiences of the subject.

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is satisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

  

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students apply themselves well and achieve well as a result
- The careful monitoring of students' progress in Year 10 and 11 by teachers, together with clear guidance, is ensuring that they are increasingly able to meet the demands of the GCSE courses and achieving improved examination results
- Students in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough opportunities to develop their creative skills in art and design using ICT, despite improved access to computers since the last inspection
- The use of convector radiators in ceramics creates a health and safety risk through the inappropriate circulation of clay dust in the atmosphere

### Commentary

#### Examination results

109. Students elect to study a GCSE unendorsed course or a vocational course in applied art and design. In 2004, the overall GCSE A\*-C examination results were below the national average. The results in applied art and design were slightly above the national average and the trend over recent years is of improvement. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with those reported nationally and have steadily improved over recent years.

#### Standards and achievement

110. Standards on entry to the school at Year 7 in art and design are below average. Due to a careful emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in Year 7, students quickly improve their practical skills and learn to experiment with visual qualities in the subject. Over the Years 7 to 9, students enjoy a varied curriculum that extends their practical skills in a variety of media, together with their ability to research and develop ideas using sketchbooks. They also learn about notable artists and different cultures. By the end of Year 9, all students achieve well and make good progress in improving the standard of drawing and ceramic work, although girls attain higher standards than the boys. Students have inadequate opportunities to use ICT in their practical work. Standards achieved in three-dimensional work, and, in particular, in ceramics, are often good.
111. In Years 10 and 11, students make good progress in improving their knowledge and understanding of art and achieve well. Generally girls attain higher standards than the boys as they respond well to the process of documenting their research and ideas development. Able students have good drawing skills and record their visual research into art history attractively. Standards in ceramics and sculpture in both courses are above average. Applied art students respond well to a variety of set briefs and produce some imaginative craft and design work in ceramics and textiles. Students use ICT appropriately for research, using the Internet, but the software available inhibits creative work.

## Teaching and learning

112. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to provide activities that engage and motivate students. Lessons are generally well planned and organised to meet the needs of all students, but some do not always sufficiently challenge the most able. Teachers' practical demonstrations and use of visual resources are effective. Behaviour is managed consistently well and students develop good attitudes to learning. Teachers give good individual support for all students. Displays in the art rooms and around the school contribute well to the raising of expectations and promote students' social and cultural development. Assessment is used well to give individual feedback to students but day-to-day marking of work does not always outline what students need to do to improve. In Years 10 and 11, effective, regular monitoring and good written feedback ensures that students meet the needs of the GCSE examinations. Students show positive attitudes, work hard and develop increasing confidence as independent learners as they progress through the school.

## Leadership and management

113. In the long-term absence of the curriculum co-ordinator, sound arrangements have been made to support the development of inexperienced staff and, as a result, the standard of teaching and subject provision has continued to improve. There is a satisfactory improvement plan based upon a clear analysis of needs. Staff work well together and the part-time technician is deployed effectively. The curriculum is broadly based and, in Years 10 and 11, offers students good opportunities to follow a course meeting their needs and aspirations. Issues raised in the last inspection have been tackled satisfactorily. The accommodation is well maintained and spacious, but the convection heating in the ceramics room creates a potential health and safety hazard by recycling clay dust into the atmosphere.

## Music

Provision in music is unsatisfactory.

	Year 7, 8 & 9	Year 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Good
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Improvement since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good and motivates students to achieve well
- Provision of instrumental tuition is good and the quality of the string teaching is excellent
- The department supports a range of extracurricular instrumental and vocal groups which perform to a high standard

## Commentary

### Examination results

114. In the GCSE examinations in 2004, 50 per cent of students gained A\*-C and 89 per cent attained A\*-G. These results are below the national average and represent a decline since the last

inspection. However, the grades achieved by students in music were comparable to those they achieved in other subjects.

### Standards and achievement

115. Recordings of students' work from 2004 teacher assessments indicate that, by the end of Year 9, students achieve standards in line with the national average. These recordings include imaginative and well-structured compositions and singing which is characterised by pleasant tone and good diction. Overall, however, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. This is due to unsatisfactory teaching that does not give students enough opportunities to demonstrate the standards they are capable of achieving. In the minority of lessons where teaching is good, students are motivated to work hard and achievement is good.
116. Standards observed in Years 10 and 11 were average. Students have a satisfactory understanding of the elements of music and the characteristics of a range of musical styles. Good teaching results in good achievement in practical music-making. Students perform complex rhythms whilst maintaining a steady pulse and use music technology well to produce their own compositions. Those who are competent instrumentalists create effective performances and improvisations.

### Teaching and learning

117. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 ranges from poor to good and is unsatisfactory overall. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by a poor awareness of what students are likely to know and understand at this age and students being asked to undertake tasks for which they have not been adequately prepared. When teaching is good, students achieve well. In one Year 8 lesson where teaching was good, students played complex drum patterns with confidence. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are good. Teaching is dynamic and motivates students to do well. In one Year 10 lesson, students worked on a complex piece of contemporary classical music. Supported by creative teaching, almost all students were able to perform this piece with style and confidence. Students' attitudes in Years 10 and 11 are consistently good.

### Leadership and management

118. Leadership is underpinned by a clear vision of the role of the music department in the school and an inclusive approach which values equally all musical styles. Leadership provides a good role model for staff and students. There are, however, some weaknesses in management. At present, the department scheme of work is not linked to the *National Curriculum* and it is therefore not clear how it meets statutory requirements. Consequently, the scheme of work does not provide sufficient support and guidance for other members of staff in the department.
119. The department supports a wide range of extracurricular groups that perform to a high standard. The standards achieved by the string groups are exceptionally high and reflect great credit on the leadership of the department and the string tutor. However, the decline in the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 means that progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is very good.

	Years 7, 8 & 9	Years 10 & 11
Standards	Good	Good
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

	GCSE Years 10 & 11
Standards	Very good
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Improvement since last inspection	Good
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**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching results in well above average standards at GCSE and above average standards in the non-examination physical education course
- Most students demonstrate good attitudes to learning and this has a positive impact on their achievement
- Some of the girls in Year 9 do not have a positive attitude to the subject

## **Commentary**

### **Examination Results**

120. In Year 11, GCSE results in 2004 were well above the national average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were also well above average.

### **Standards and achievement**

121. Throughout the school overall attainment is above average, but with the increasing numbers now taking GCSE and reaching well above average standards, attainment is rising. Standards mostly are similar for girls and boys, except for some girls in Year 9 whose standards are lower as a result of their negative attitude to practical physical education activities. In Year 10 and 11 GCSE classes, students are working at well above average standards both in practical and theory lessons.
122. On entry students are average, but during Years 7 to 9 they reach above average standards, and so this represents good achievement. In a Year 7 boys' rugby lesson, the boys passed the ball accurately and adapted the pass distance to take account of the windy conditions. Year 8 girls interpret map symbols whilst on the move during orienteering. In football, Year 9 boys use an overlapping run into space to good effect to receive a pass from a fellow player. Year 7 girls perform gymnastic sequences using a range of apparatus. All students handle equipment safely and understand the need to undertake suitable warm-up and cool-down activities. Year 10 and 11 students work well in groups carrying out exercises to music or in a circuit with precision and control. Students without their kit are usefully involved in lessons by evaluating the performance of the others.
123. In GCSE lessons, achievement is very good as a result of the exceptionally high expectations of the teachers. Students work independently and in groups to analyse performance and have a very good knowledge of motivation techniques. In a Year 10 fast-track group, achievement is excellent because the students are working at an A grade equivalent a year early.

### **Teaching and learning**

124. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and plan lessons so that students learn effectively. High expectations are a feature of the best lessons, and the use of continuous assessment fully involves students in their learning. Teachers have a good understanding of *National Curriculum* assessment criteria and these are relayed to the students so they know the levels at which they are working.
125. In GCSE lessons, teachers move the class at a good pace and maintain very high expectations throughout. This results in students responding to the challenges and improving their performance. Books are regularly marked and all students are given personal targets. Teachers regularly discuss progress with students to keep them on track.

### **Leadership and management**

126. The strong leadership is firmly focused on developing the curriculum so that all students have a wide choice of activities. There have been good improvements since the last report, in that GCSE is now well above average. The issue about non-participants has been tackled and, although there are still some students who arrive without kit, there are activities that ensure all are involved in relevant work.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

Business Studies and engineering were inspected in full and are reported below. The applied courses in science and ICT were sampled and are reported on within the relevant subject sections above. Courses in construction, health and social care, leisure and tourism, hairdressing, beauty therapy and public services were sampled.

127. Several of the vocational courses available to students at the school are taught at the local further education college and, although lessons were visited, no judgements were made on teaching and learning. The attitudes to learning in all the courses visited were very positive and all students were engaged in productive effort. Arrangements for the management of the partnership have been reported under the work-related learning section of this report.
128. **Construction** is a vocational course covering materials, technical drawing and bricklaying. In 2004, half the students completing the course gained a distinction at GNVQ foundation level. In the lesson observed, students learned how to use scale rules and how to plan a scale drawing of a suspended timber ground floor.
129. In the **health and social care** applied GCSE, a wide range of students were working on a case study on the development of the individual in young adulthood. Students had chosen the subject for genuine career reasons and have high aspirations to go into, for example, medicine, nursing and teaching. The course is proving helpful in preparing students for relevant work experience placements. Standards are average overall. Extra support sessions are made available by college staff visiting the school. In the Year 11 **leisure and tourism** applied GCSE lesson sampled, standards were above average. Students prepared presentations on customer service explaining how staff should treat and react to customers. Students were enthusiastic and worked really well in groups. They integrate sophisticated business concepts into their work, such as marketing theory involving the product life cycle and pricing strategy. Extra support sessions are available at school, where contacts with parents and school staff are very good.
130. A lesson was visited where Year 10 students were working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level one in **hairdressing**. All students worked very productively practising hairdressing skills on model heads and wigs and developing their skills. Another Year 10 lesson was visited where students were working towards an NVQ level one in **beauty therapy**. Students were studying the image of a therapist and making relevant comments in a very productive and vocationally relevant learning environment. Students looked at styles and colours of uniforms and identified what they associate with the images.
131. In the Year 10 B/Tec first certificate course in **public services**, students were designing a form so that they can carry out risk assessments around the college as part of their unit on welfare at work. Students were working in a highly productive learning environment and there was a very good focus on assessment.

### Business studies

Provision in business studies is very good.

	Years 10 & 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths

- Students are guided very well through effective assessment which contributes to their very good achievement
- Very good relationships and very good attitudes lead to very productive lessons

### Commentary

### Examination results

132. In 2004, results in the applied GCSE were above the national average. Whilst the statistics indicate that boys did much better than girls, only five girls took the course and in reality

there was little difference in their performance. The gender imbalance has been addressed in the current groups.

### **Standards and achievement**

133. Standards are now well above expectations for students at this stage. For example, in an investigation into a manufacturer of windows, a student correctly identified the type of business ownership as a sole trader and discussed the implications of this. She showed detailed knowledge and understanding of public limited companies and compared and contrasted effectively. The use of footnotes was detailed as were her records of interviews. There was a very clear understanding of how businesses measure their success. Students achieve high marks by successfully applying the theories learned to business case studies and have well-developed skills of analysis and evaluation.

### **Teaching and learning**

134. All teaching is carried out by a well-qualified specialist and lessons are planned very well. There is a very strong emphasis on assessment. For example, one Year 10 lesson began with very effective focus on an example of a student's coursework, using a data projector. Students each had the mark scheme and all engaged in allocating the appropriate mark to the work. The teacher's examining experience was used to walk the students through how marks are awarded and very good learning resulted from the exercise. Effective classroom management and very good relationships maintained a productive environment in all lessons observed and students' attitude to the subject is very positive. In one lesson, the teacher gathered together three students who had missed the previous lesson to brief them on what they had missed while the rest of the class happily worked independently. Usually students were well supported through their independent work by the monitoring, questioning and challenging of the class teacher. Work is marked very well with specific targets and students are clear about what they need to do to improve.

### **Leadership and management**

135. There is a clear vision for the subject and its role in providing a curriculum relevant to the world of work. It makes a valuable contribution to the school's rising standards. Through a lot of hard work, staff have created a course that is well managed through the writing of effective schemes of work which were not in place before the arrival of the current leadership. However, being a single person department, its management is not entirely clear and the responsibility for all aspects of the subject rests on one individual. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Engineering**

Provision in engineering is very good.

	Years 10 & 11
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Not applicable (not inspected last time)

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students learn and achieve very well as a result of the very good teaching
- The leadership of the subject sets high expectations



- Students are enthusiastic about the subject and, because they enjoy their lessons, they work hard
- Strong links with local businesses support the subject and have boosted the school's bid for specialist status as an engineering college

### **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

136. Students take the applied double award GCSE. During the last three years, students have consistently achieved well above the national average. Well-planned lessons and a high level of student motivation through teachers' enthusiasm are the basis of this successful subject.

## Standards and achievement

137. Standards of work seen were good, both at Year 10 and 11. Year 10 students construct a technical drawing on the computer in orthographic projection using set dimensions. Year 11 students work very effectively as a team, keeping to time limits to produce a model for point-of-sale purposes using specified dimensions. Students understand about batch production, plan flowcharts and meet deadlines.

## Teaching and learning

138. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teachers involved in this course are very experienced and knowledgeable and enthuse and excite the students to work hard and produce good results. The projects are challenging and the lessons move at a brisk pace. Methods of teaching are well suited to this group of boys, who relate well to their teachers. Students with special education needs are well supported in these smaller groups and those who are gifted and talented are stretched to achieve the higher grades. Links with industry are a notable strength of this course, and many local and international engineering companies have supported the bid for the school to gain specialist status as an engineering college, both financially and by taking students for work experience placement and apprenticeships.

## Leadership and management

139. Very good leadership and management underpin this very good area of the design technology department. High aspirations keep the quality of students' work at a high standard and much emphasis is put on the quality of products produced. Accommodation and resources are very good and good use is made of the ICT facilities available in the department.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is good.

	Years 7, 8 & 9	Years 10 & 11
Standards	Average	Not assessed
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since last inspection	Not applicable (not inspected last time)	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students respond well to the subject and achieve well
- The course is well planned and structured
- Inconsistencies in teaching have a negative effect on students' progress
- The subject is having a positive impact on students' general development and the ethos of the school

### Commentary

### Examination results

140. Three quarters of Year 9 students met the expected standard in teachers' assessments in 2004. This is broadly in line with other subjects. Year 10 and 11 students have not started a GCSE course, but the *Edexcel* examination syllabus provides a basis for their work.

### **Standards and achievement**

141. Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well working on topics such as consumer rights and being a good citizen. Overall, achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Year 7 students tackle the topic of global citizenship with interest and enthusiasm. The written work of students in Years 8 and 9 shows good achievement, including good analysis of media and their influence, investigation of local newspapers and issues and a study of how Parliament works.

### **Teaching and learning**

142. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The best teaching features well-planned and structured lessons, good use of questioning to focus and direct students' thinking and a lively, interactive environment in which students learn effectively. The minority of unsatisfactory teaching was linked to poor behaviour management and a failure to engage students. In general, students learn well and develop their awareness of being a citizen both in specialist lessons and across other subjects. Other special features of the school further enhance their experience. The democratically-elected *Student Voice* is a forum that gives students rights and responsibilities. In a very good meeting observed, students negotiated effectively with a representative of a local bus company on school bus services. Citizenship and environment days, and participation in the local Youth Forum, bring students into direct, practical contact with a range of social issues.

### **Leadership and management**

143. Citizenship was not inspected during the previous inspection. However, the subject is well organised and is having a positive impact on students' personal development and the ethos of the school. The subject is well led and managed, although inconsistency in teaching suggests a need for closer monitoring. This is shortly to be addressed through the school's "focus week". The curriculum is well planned and structured to ensure full coverage of the various elements of citizenship. Recent subject department audits have highlighted its significance across the curriculum. Provision for assessment and reporting is good, with elements of effective self-assessment by students.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

Inspectors reported in detail on the two subjects taught at the school to sixth form students attending Northampton College. Inspectors also sampled the teaching by teachers at the school of mathematics at the College.

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

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Design technology	15	60.0	72.6	27.0	13.9	N/a	24.3
Music	8	75.0	79.8	0.0	16.9	N/a	27.5

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Music	5	100.0	98.2	40.0	37.1	N/a	79.5

## MATHEMATICS

Mathematics was not inspected, as only part of the course at the local college is taught by staff from the school. The subject was sampled.

144. The school contributes to the delivery of AS **mathematics** at the local further education college, teaching a programme of topics allocated by college staff. Of the 11 current students, 3 were previously students at Danetre. Standards are average at the start of the course. Students' progress is monitored through the use of end-of-topic assignments. Students make little use of ICT in their study of AS mathematics.
145. Students interviewed during the inspection were positive about the course, although they varied greatly in how difficult they perceived it to be. They reported that the marking feedback on the assignments is helpful and that they experience no problems resulting from the shared teaching. In the thoroughly planned and well-constructed lesson observed, the skilful teaching ensured that the students made very good learning gains in their first lesson on calculus. A high degree of student involvement was required throughout. Understanding was carefully developed, starting with the estimation of gradient by graphical methods, followed by numerical approximation, and finally ensuring that the students were confident to obtain derivatives of powers of x from first principles.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

### Design technology

Provision in design technology is very good.

	Years 12 & 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Not applicable (not inspected last time)

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good teaching inspires students to produce high quality work
- Detailed planning and assessment is used to monitor students' progress
- Teachers are good role models

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

146. This course is only in its second year but, in 2004, students sitting the exam at AS level achieved 75% A-C grades.

#### **Standards and achievement**

147. Standards of work seen are above average at AS and A2, both in lessons, design folders and practical work. Students have a good grasp of the design process and analyse, research, produce a design specification and design and make a product from an initial design brief. Students are aware of the need for a quality finish to their products and know how to achieve this.

#### **Teaching and learning**

148. High quality teaching produces high quality outcomes from the students. Teachers are professional yet friendly towards the students and the students thrive in this adult atmosphere. Short, intense projects ensure students can produce work under pressure and reinforce all the skills gained on the course. Students work effectively alone and in groups and deliver *PowerPoint*<sup>TM</sup> presentations to their peers in a very mature way.

#### **Leadership and management**

149. The leadership and management ensure a consistently high quality of teaching, with high expectations of students' achievement. Assessment is also very good and gives the students very good guidance for improving their work. Accommodation and resources are good and good use is made of all available equipment, machinery and ICT in the department, which contribute to the variety and quality of students' work.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

### **Music**

Provision in music is good.

	Years 12 & 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable (not inspected last time)

### **Main strengths**

- The teaching draws on very good subject knowledge across a wide range of musical styles
- The good teaching respects the different musical backgrounds of students and results in good achievement
- Students are keen to learn

### **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

150. The numbers taking the course are small, and that makes significant comparisons of examination results unreliable. However, in 2004, results in A2 examinations were well above the national average, with four out of five students gaining grades A-C. Results in AS examinations were below the national average, with only one student out of seven achieving above a Grade D. Girls achieved better results than boys in both examinations.

### **Standards and achievement**

151. Standards observed during the inspection were average. Those students following the AS course are mostly rock musicians. They bring to their music learning wide-ranging skills in improvisation and performing and an open-minded approach to a wide range of music. However, their ability to read and analyse notation is below average and this has a negative impact on standards.
152. Good teaching, which takes into account an accurate assessment of students' strengths and weaknesses, results in consistently good achievement. In a lesson on contemporary choral music, Year 13 students answered complex question about John Tavener's carol *The Lamb*, using appropriate musical terminology.

### **Teaching and learning**

153. Teaching and learning is good, overall, with examples of very good teaching observed during the inspection. Lessons have good pace and integrate very well performing, composing and listening activities. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and is able to draw on examples of music from a range of styles to support students' learning.
154. The teacher is particularly skilful at using students' improvising and aural skills as the basis for developing their ability to read notation and analyse music. For example, students were asked to improvise around Gershwin's *Summertime*. They did this primarily through learning the music aurally, but were then encouraged to use the notation to manage difficult entries. This was a model way in which different kinds of musical learning and experience can be successfully brought together. In a following improvisation activity, one guitarist produced a very effective improvisation.

### **Leadership and management**

155. Leadership and management are good. There is good co-ordination between the head of music and the local tertiary college where the course is based. The monitoring and support of students is effective and students are clear about what they need to do in order to achieve their potential.
156. Students speak very highly of the way in which the course is taught and managed at the school and they hold the department in high esteem. This is due in no small part to the school's strong commitment to enabling musicians from all backgrounds to take AS and A2 courses in music and then giving them the support they need to succeed.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	8	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	3	3
<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>3</b>
Attendance	8	4
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets students needs	8	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	8	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for students	8	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	8	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	8	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	8	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	8	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	8	3
The effectiveness of management	8	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). Inspectors use an 8 where this aspect has not been graded because it is not applicable.*