

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE KING'S SCHOOL

Peterborough

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110898

Headteacher: G L Longman

Lead inspector: N A Pett

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 259315

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	900
School address:	Park Road Peterborough
Postcode:	PE1 2UE
Telephone number:	(01733) 751 541
Fax number:	(01733) 751 542
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Helen Bath
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The King's School is an 11-18 co-educational Voluntary Aided Church of England comprehensive school located close to the centre of Peterborough. It has a long tradition of association with the Cathedral through its foundation by Henry VIII in 1541. It is similar in size to other secondary schools nationally, having 900 pupils on roll, although the sixth form is larger than average. Attainment on entry is above average and pupils come from over 50 primary schools, within the City and also from a wide geographical area. At sixth form level, about one third of the students join after their GCSE examinations in other schools. There is a broad balance of boys and girls in each year group, and very few pupils or students joined or left the school other than at the usual time at the beginning or end of the school year. Pupils and students come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds, with a significant proportion enjoying both financial and social advantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Just under ten per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Only a small minority of pupils do not have English as their mother tongue and no pupils are supported with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, mainly for dyslexia, is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who hold statements to address their specific needs. The school holds Beacon status and has received School Achievement Awards.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17331	N A Pett	Lead inspector	General studies
14756	J R Lovell	Lay inspector	
30648	B Skelton	Team inspector	English
3643	D Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics
10905	Dr A Brewerton	Team inspector	Science; Chemistry
31958	P O'Neill	Team inspector	Art
13805	L Lowery	Team inspector	Design and technology
30545	D Castell	Team inspector	Geography
7399	P Roberts	Team inspector	History
10894	P Reynolds	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
22953	P Dacombe	Team inspector	French; German
31906	K England	Team inspector	Music
8622	H Housden	Team inspector	Physical education
28002	S Taylor	Team inspector	Citizenship
12852	G Henshall	Team inspector	Business Studies
4720	R Carter	Team inspector	Physics; Biology
32252	D Wring	Team inspector	Latin

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Ground Floor  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
Bristol  
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

# REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 8</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9 - 14</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>14 - 22</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>22 - 24</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25 - 58</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>59</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** with some outstanding characteristics. It has a very positive ethos which enables its pupils and students to achieve well and to develop into mature and responsible young people. Results are well above average and often high in comparison with national statistics. The quality of teaching is good. The school is well led, although some aspects of management require development to improve the overall quality of education. It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the examination results at GCSE and GCE are well above average;
- the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- pupils' and students' very good response to the high expectations for their personal development;
- the many outstanding opportunities which enrich the curriculum;
- the very good partnership with parents and the community.;
- the statutory curriculum requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) and citizenship are not met;
- the procedures for assessment and for monitoring and evaluation have too much inconsistency; and
- the quality of the accommodation inhibits some developments.

**Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in 1998.** It has improved results in GCSE and GCE A level examinations. The provision for art has been well addressed, with improved standards. Good progress has been made in improving accommodation, although this is an ongoing need. The improvements in ICT, staff development and planning have been satisfactory overall, although further improvement is still required.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A*	A*	A	E
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	n/a	A*	A*	

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

**Pupils and students do well and achieve good results in their examinations but some could do better.** Standards by the end of Year 9 are high in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, **average in ICT** but above average overall in most other subjects. **Standards in Year 11 are well above average**, except in **ICT where they are below average in the use of skills across the curriculum**. Standards in the **sixth form are above average except in Latin where they are average**. These standards are well reflected in examination results which are consistently well above average and often high (A and A\*) when compared with results nationally. The comparison with similar schools (many of which are selective) indicates that achievement against pupils' prior attainment in Year 9 is well below average (E) but other measures show that it is at least average. In relation to similar schools based on free school meals, results are very high.

Pupils' and students' **attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good overall**. They **respond very well to the opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural**

**development**, and the opportunities informally cover many aspects which encourage their development as good citizens. The manner in which they accept responsibility for their work and **contribution to the life of the school is outstanding.**

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The overall **quality of education is good. Teaching is consistently good**, with examples of very good teaching in a significant proportion of lessons. This leads to **good learning** and supports pupils' and students' **good achievement although assessment outcomes are not used well enough for planning and raising standards further.** The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils in Years 7 to 11 well, although it has shortcomings. The **statutory requirements for ICT and formal teaching of citizenship are not met.** There is not enough use of information and communication technology for pupils to develop their skills in subjects across the curriculum. Whilst the school's ethos makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, there is not enough planned provision. The sixth-form curriculum meets the needs of the students well. **Extra-curricular activities and opportunities to enrich the curriculum are a strength of the school, and include many competitive sporting and musical activities.** Pupils and students are well known and the **quality of individual care, support and guidance is good.** Arrangements for **health and safety and for child protection are satisfactory but require more effective management.** The **partnership with parents and carers is very good.** They are very supportive of their children's education and contribute very well to the life of the school. The quality of reports is only satisfactory and they do not give sufficient information about how pupils and students might improve. Links with the many primary schools are sound and with further and higher education are good. **Links with the community are very good.**

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The governors are very supportive and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are effectively involved in planning and operate good approaches to ensure that the school gains best value from its spending. **The headteacher has a clear vision and leads effectively.** He is being well supported by a new senior management team, three members having been in post for only three weeks. The **leadership and management of subject leaders and pastoral staff is satisfactory overall** with some good and very good practice. Whilst the whole school development plan is strategic, **some subject plans are not clear enough.** The effectiveness of the **management could be better if there was more consistency in the quality of monitoring and evaluation to improve target setting and thus support planning for improvement.** It has not effectively addressed the provision for information and communication technology or for citizenship, and thus further raising of achievement has not occurred.

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

**Parents consider that this is a good school and are very supportive of the work that it does. Pupils and students are very proud of their school.** Parents are well pleased with standards of behaviour, although pupils response in Years 7 to 11 indicated that they feel that a minority of their peers do not always behave sensibly towards one another. In the 14-19 age range, a minority feel that there should be a wider range of subjects within the curriculum.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- extend the methodology for monitoring and evaluation procedures, particularly of teaching and learning, so that staff and governors can check and evaluate more rigorously how well the school is doing;

- use assessment procedures more consistently and systematically to support pupils' and students' progress and to inform monitoring and evaluation procedures;
- develop the teaching of information and communication technology in Years 8 to 13; and
- continue to seek ways to improve the accommodation further.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- for the teaching of ICT in Years 10 and 11, and in citizenship in Years 7 to 11, to raise standards and achievement.

## THE SIXTH FORM AT KING'S SCHOOL PETERBOROUGH

The sixth form is larger than average and provides an academic curriculum of GCE AS and A2 courses.

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good sixth form which is well managed.** A high proportion of pupils in Year 11 stay on and they are joined by a significant number of students from other schools. Standards are well above average. Teaching is good and students learn well. The overall provision is very cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- results in GCE AS and A2 examinations are high and most students achieve very well;
- the very good links with the community provide students with a wide range of opportunities which support their learning;
- students willingly accept responsibility, set a very good example to the rest of the school and give very good support in the day-to-day running of the school as prefects;
- access to, and the use of, ICT are underdeveloped; and
- the accommodation for private study and for some lessons is unsatisfactory.

### QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English	<b>Very good.</b> Teaching is very good and pupils achieve very well. Standards are well above average.
French	<b>Good.</b> Through effective teaching, students achieve well and standards are above average.
German	<b>Very good.</b> There is only a Year 12 group and students are achieving well and reaching above average standards. Teaching is good.
Latin	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards are below average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.
Mathematics	<b>Very good.</b> Teaching is very good and students achieve well. Standards are well above average.
Biology	<b>Good.</b> The good teaching and learning helps students to achieve well. Standards are well above average.
Chemistry	<b>Good.</b> Teaching is good and students achieve well. Standards are well above average
Physics	<b>Good.</b> Students achieve well because of good teaching and learning. Standards are well above average.
Geography	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are well above average and students achieve very well. Teaching is very good and enthuses the students.
History	<b>Very good.</b> The good quality of the teaching enables students to achieve very well and standards are well above average.
Art	<b>Good.</b> Teaching and learning are good and this leads to students' good achievement. Standards are above average and rising.
Sports Studies	<b>Very good.</b> Standards are well above average and improving. The quality of teaching is very good, leading to students' good achievement.
Business	<b>Good.</b> Standards are above average, being well supported by good teaching and learning.

*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'.*

The following subjects were sampled: music, design and technology, economics, ICT, and general studies. The provision for music and design and technology is very good and students gain good

examination results and achieve well. Teaching is very good. Provision in economics is good and results are above average at AS and A2 levels. Provision in ICT is unsatisfactory as there are no examination courses and teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT in their teaching or encourage students to use it effectively. The majority of students have skills below those required to raise standards in their examination courses or to prepare them for when they leave the sixth form. Provision in general studies is satisfactory.

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

**This is good overall.** Students are given very good advice for further and higher education and are very well supported in the application process. The advice given for other opportunities in training and careers is only satisfactory, although there is access to external agencies for this purpose. The marking of students' work varies from being exemplary to occasions when there is insufficient advice as to how work might be improved. Generally, students have a reasonable grasp of how well they are doing but the systems for assessment are inconsistent. The support available to students who are experiencing problems is generally very good, as the head of sixth form is easily accessible and students appreciate this facility.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

**Overall, the leadership and management are good.** It is under the direction of the deputy head who works in partnership with the head of sixth form. There is a clear vision that the provision should encourage the personal development of the students and include an academic curriculum. Curriculum decisions are taken by the senior management. The management is good and the head of sixth form works very effectively with the tutorial team. Although there is a sound overview of students' progress through formal and informal procedures, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and procedures for assessment are not always effectively carried out to address issues.

### **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

**The students have very positive views.** They consider that they are generally well taught and that teachers and pastoral staff are readily available to help them when they are in difficulties. They enjoy the responsibility that they have for supporting staff as prefects and in their leadership of the House system, and they carry out their duties willingly and conscientiously. They consider that this is an important part of their service to the school. Students feel that the subjects offered provide a good basis for their higher education but they would like the school to consider the opportunity of widening the range of subjects available. They also feel that whilst they make the best possible use of their accommodation, it does have limitations.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AND STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

**Good achievement occurs by the end of Year 9**, in relation to pupils' above-average prior attainment on entry in Year 7. The **standards of attainment are well above average** in most subjects, including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. **By the end of Year 11, pupils' achievement is good** and is well reflected in the GCSE examination results. Girls and boys do equally well in most subjects. Most pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve at least as well as other pupils. **Provisional results for 2003 are the best yet realised. Achievement in the sixth form is also good** and standards are broadly well above average, as is seen in the GCE AS and A2 examination results.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses in Years 7 to 11

- Pupils' overall attainment is well above average and achievement is good, although a minority of pupils could do better.
- Test results at the end of Year 9 are high in comparison with the national average.
- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- Pupils' language and literacy skills and their numeracy skills are well above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, although not all gifted and talented pupils do well enough.
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) achieve well and in line with many of their peers.
- Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and in citizenship could be higher.

#### Commentary

1. **Attainment on entry is above average overall.** A small proportion of pupils have not reached the expected levels for their age at the end of Year 6 when they left their primary schools and some are identified with special educational needs. **Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average overall.** They were well above average in English and high in mathematics and science. Boys performed better in 2002 than girls in mathematics and science and girls did better in English but there is little difference in their performance. Achievement was average in comparison with pupils' prior attainment at the age of 11 in English and science and above average in mathematics, although there is significant value added to pupils' performance. In comparison with similar schools, results were high. Targets set are appropriately challenging and are being met, with the trend for improvement above that found nationally.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	38.6 (41.3)	33.3 (33)
mathematics	43.4 (43.1)	34.7 (34.4)
science	40.6 (42)	33.3 (33.1)

*There were 130 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. **Results at GCSE, based on those over the last three years, have been very high in comparison with the national average**, although the trend for improvement has been below

that found nationally between 1999 and 2002. However, in 2002, results were well above the national average, as shown in the table below. The provisional results for 2003 are the best yet recorded with 97 per cent of the pupils gaining five A\*-C grades, and the school met its targets. Even though national comparators have yet to be published, this is seven per cent better than in the previous year. There is a significant increase in the percentage of pupils gaining the highest grades of A\* and A, showing the improving levels of achievement amongst the gifted and talented pupils. The value that has been added to pupils' performance in 2003 is well above that realised in 2002. Indicators for 2002 do show that pupils' achievement was well below average in comparison with what they had achieved in their tests at the end of Year 9. However, many of the schools included in that comparative analysis are selective and when other measures are taken into consideration, achievement was much closer to the average.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002**

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades	90 (90)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades	97 (100)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades	98 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	57.8 (58.0)	39.8 (38.4)

*There were 130 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. From inspection evidence, standards in English and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 9 and 11. In science, they are high by Year 9 and well above average by Year 11. Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is good overall and, in science, it is good by Year 9 and very good by Year 11. Pupils' literacy skills are well above average. Most pupils can converse easily and use appropriate vocabulary correctly. They can write well and read with understanding and recall. Similarly, pupils' basic numeracy is well above average and they have the skills to cope well with the demands in calculations, graphs and recording data. These basic skills are a crucial asset to their progress in other subjects.
4. In information and communication technology, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory by Year 9 and unsatisfactory by Year 11. This is because the subject is only taught in Year 7 and thereafter it is the responsibility of subjects and there is not enough planned provision. Thus pupils' skills in the use of computers to support their learning are underdeveloped. In citizenship, there are no measures yet available for standards but the level of achievement is only satisfactory by Years 9 and 11 because provision is not planned effectively. This has to be balanced with the very good awareness and understanding the pupils achieve through the high expectations of the school's ethos, to which they mostly respond very well. Achievement is good in the core and often very good in the examination course in physical education, with above average standards, reflecting the additional motivation of the examination course pupils.
5. Standards and achievement are very good in geography, history, and design and technology overall, and this reflects the very good quality of teaching and learning. In modern foreign languages, standards are well above average and achievement is good overall. In art, standards are above average and achievement is good, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection, reflecting the much better provision. Standards in music are above average, with good achievement by the end of Year 9, and well above average standards and very good achievement by Year 11. This again reflects the differences in the quality of teaching and learning between the different year groups. Two additional courses are introduced into Years 10 and 11, Latin and business education. The overall good provision in business education leads to well above average standards and very good achievement. In Latin,

standards are average and achievement is satisfactory, as the provision has had some shortcomings which are now being well addressed.

6. Overall, there is little difference between the achievement and attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. They show some very good improvements in their academic work, the development of literacy skills and in becoming independent learners. Their progress is best when they are effectively supported or teachers make use of individual education plans. Pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented achieve well, but there is a minority who do not always achieve as well as they might. This is because teaching strategies and the challenge in the work set are not well enough structured within departments and in some lessons. Additional extra-curricular events are organised, such as business challenges and summer schools which focus on thinking skills and challenges in chemistry, physics, geography and maths to provide enrichment for these pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic heritage and who do not have English as their mother tongue are generally quite fluent and have good command of English. This enables them to achieve and attain as well as their peers.
7. Although achievement in subjects is judged as good and standards are well above average, judgements on leadership and management issues indicate why achievement is not better. There are occasions when a department is doing as well as it can, but it is not empowered further as links with senior staff are not always ensuring that strong development plans exist to maximise achievement, for example, in mathematics, science and ICT. To raise achievement and standards still further, attention needs to be given to monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and improving procedures for assessment. This would develop planning still further and ensure that the levels of challenge are raised.

### Main strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form

- Students achieve well and attain standards which are well above average.
- The average points score at GCE A level is very high in comparison with the national average.
- Students are articulate, have a good general knowledge, and many contribute well to lessons and enjoy the repartee of discussion.

### Commentary

8. The 2003 results, which have yet to be finalised and compared with the national picture, do indicate that students have again performed very well. Their average points score is very close to previous years overall with an increase in the percentage of pupils gaining the higher A/B grades.

### Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	96.7 (91.0)	90.3 (n/a)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	51.5 (50.6)	35.5 (n/a)
Average point score per pupil	87.6 (n/a)	75.9 (n/a)

*There were 144 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

9. **Students' achievement is good overall**, with examples of very good and outstanding achievement. About one third of this year's Year 12 has joined the sixth form from other schools. The best standards are achieved in English, geography, history, music, and art and design, where they are well above average. In other subjects, standards are at least above average and achievement is good or very good. Only in information and communication technology and in Latin are standards below average and achievement unsatisfactory. This is because the previous provision has been unsatisfactory and undermined students' progress. Good remedial action is planned for and is beginning to take effect.

10. As with the main school, students' literacy skills are very good and this facilitates their note taking, discussion and writing. They converse very well, arguing their case very well, and enjoying it. Their written work is of a high standard, contributing well to their achievement.

### **Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

**Pupils' and students' contribution to the life of the school is outstanding** in the context of the 'King's Family' tradition. It reflects the Christian status of the school. Their standards are very high. They respond very well to the spiritual, moral and social expectations and display a high level of responsibility for their actions. They acknowledge and respect the cultural traditions of their school. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour, attendance and personal development of the pupils and students have remained a significant strength of the school, as it was at the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and students are very proud of their school.
- Most of them take responsibility for their work and their personal standards seriously, and are mature and responsible young people.
- Very good relationships exist amongst pupils and students and with school staff.
- They have a strong sense of right and wrong, and are trustworthy.
- Their behaviour is very good, although a small minority can occasionally be immature and undermine relationships, and disrupt learning.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.

### **Commentary**

11. **A very significant factor in the characteristics of this school is the maturity shown by the overwhelming majority of the pupils and students.** Their attitudes are excellent. Because the school develops pupils' personal qualities so well, it is popular with parents. The way in which most pupils willingly take on responsibility contributes very well to the life of the school. These responsibilities extend beyond what they take for their work and study patterns, where the positive attitudes add to their developing potential and achievement. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes towards their learning and overcoming their specific difficulties.
12. The **standards of behaviour** seen during the inspection in lessons and around the school were **very good**. Class management is very good. Although a significant percentage of pupils indicated in their questionnaire that there is some immature behaviour, in discussion they confirmed that they felt safe to come to school. Indeed, most fully understand the difference between right and wrong. The fact that bags can be left in open lockers with very little incidence of theft shows that pupils and students are trustworthy. However, there is a small minority of pupils who can challenge authority and disrupt their own learning and that of others. The disciplinary procedures are well understood and the overall quality of very good behaviour is well illustrated by the exclusion table below which shows that only a very few pupils were excluded from school. All exclusions recorded were for a short fixed term and there were no permanent exclusions.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	785	10	0
White – any other White background	19	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	24	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	21	2	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other black background	2	0	0
Chinese	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0

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

13. **Most pupils enjoy very good working and social relationships.** This also extends to the quality of relationships with their teachers and other staff. On many occasions, groups of pupils – sometimes in single sex groups but at other times in mixed groups – eat together, discuss issues together and generally enjoy a good level of repartee. Where there are incidents that might be described as bullying, many of these were down to some immature name-calling and the breakdown in relationships. Pupils consider that most incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively by the pastoral staff and that staff are generally fair in their dealings with them. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds confirmed that they were not racially harassed in school.
14. The wearing of school uniform is very good and the pupils are proud of their school and the recognition it receives. Pupils and students enjoy coming to school, and their very good attendance is well illustrated when it is compared to the national averages for Years 7 to 11. They are also arrive punctually to school and at most lessons. These high levels of attendance and punctuality make a significant contribution to the high standards and results which are reflected in many subjects and courses. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits. However, the school does not usually contact parents about absences until the third day in those few cases where parents fail to contact the school.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3	School data	0.2
National data	7.6	National data	1.2

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

15. Overall, **most pupils have developed a clear set of values, principles and beliefs;** they behave well, relate well to each other and support their school. The inspection of collective worship, religious education and spiritual development has been carried out by a Section 23

inspector appointed by the governors. The denominational status of the school is visible in its everyday life. The contribution of subjects to personal development is very significant. In subjects such as English, geography, history, science, art and music, there are activities which develop an awareness and understanding of ethical, moral and religious issues. Through sporting, musical and cultural extra-curricular activities pupils respond well. Sport adds to their moral and social understanding of fair play and the need to operate as part of a team. Music develops spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding. The orderly nature of the school on a daily basis, and the fostering of the King's family tradition, leads to the pupils having a good understanding of their cultural heritage. The development of their awareness for the multi-cultural diversity present in society is at least satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form**

- Sixth formers set a very good example and have high personal standards.
- They make a significant contribution through their support for staff in the day-to-day running of the school as prefects and in the leadership of the House system.

### **Commentary**

16. The school is popular with young people at the age of 16 who transfer to it for their sixth form education. They speak very positively about the opportunities it offers for their personal development. The manner in which students willingly take on responsibility contributes very well to the life of the school. Through the House system, students have a range of leadership roles but they also contribute well to the management of the school. This is seen, for example, in the way that prefects supervise the dining areas and other areas of the school at break and lunch times, a valuable activity which contributes to their personal development. It is also visible in the manner in which they support school and House extra-curricular activities. They are proud of their school and are very good role models to the younger pupils who, seeing the privileges and responsibilities that come from being in the sixth form, aspire to this stage of their education. Sixth formers also attend very well and they are serious about the manner in which they use their private study time, even though the facilities have some significant shortcomings. In this time, students enjoy social and academic discussion, and the high levels of literacy which exist in the school make for some very interesting and well-informed discussions. Through their behaviour and attitudes, they clearly show that they have a very well-developed sense of moral and social principles. They relate very well together. The attitudes of most sixth formers are very good and make a significant contribution to their achievement as they work hard and respect the work of their teachers.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are good and encourage pupils' and students' good learning. The overall ethos permeates many activities and the curriculum is enriched very well by extra-curricular activities and links with the community. However, there are shortcomings in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, managing assessment and in ensuring that all pupils have their entitlement to information and communication technology and to citizenship.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 7 to 11, and was at least satisfactory in virtually all lessons inspected. Teaching over time encourages the good achievement of most pupils in Years 7 to 11, although it does not consistently challenge some of the most capable pupils.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in about one third of lessons seen and occasionally outstanding.

- In the best lessons, the teachers challenged and enthused their pupils, leading to some very good learning.
- Homework is often well used to consolidate learning and also to extend it.
- In about one quarter of lessons the teaching and learning could have been better, especially if teachers had set work which met the different needs of the pupils more extensively.
- Not all teachers use assessment well enough to support achievement.
- The teaching of ICT in subjects across the curriculum and the teaching of citizenship needs to be improved.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 165 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
9 (5.5%)	40 (24%)	79 (48%)	33 (20%)	4 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; the figures in brackets show percentages.*

17. **The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.** Pupils consider that they are generally well taught and that most staff are readily available to help them with any problems. Since the last inspection in 1998, good improvements have been made in the overall teaching of art and design, but shortcomings in 1998 still exist in information and communication technology and in personal, health and social education (PSHE). The teaching of citizenship was not a requirement at that time. The most consistent and best teaching was seen in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, history and drama. The areas where teaching requires most improvement are in cross-curricular ICT, and in PSHE/citizenship. The overall monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not consistently managed and this prevents best practice from being shared, addressing the need for professional development, and improving lessons where it is required. There are examples of effective monitoring both by senior staff and some heads of departments but it is not consistent enough.
18. The good quality of teaching enables pupils in Years 7 to 11 to learn and achieve well. The quality of learning is very well supported by the good subject expertise of most staff, enabling them to have the confidence to ask challenging questions and to develop pupils' and students' knowledge, understanding and skills well. In the most effective lessons, expectations are high. This is effectively illustrated in the humanities, English and mathematics. The best lessons are well planned and draw on this subject expertise and the strategies that teachers develop, which holds the interest of their classes. There is good use of homework across all year groups which both consolidates and extends pupils' learning.
19. Although the teaching of ICT is very good in Year 7, because there is no dedicated teaching in other year groups, pupils' skills are insufficiently developed. Good examples do occur where ICT is well used to boost achievement and pupils' personal development, as, for example, in modern foreign languages and in geography. In an excellent Year 8 French lesson, a multi-media presentation was used very effectively to present new language, reinforce grammatical points, to remind pupils what they had to do in pairs and to help pupils evaluate their progress at the end of the lesson. This built up their confidence and they then recalled some important facts from a previous presentation about the position of French as a world language. The lesson finished with an evaluation of what had been learned, with pupils expected to answer in French.
20. Expectations for behaviour are consistently high and teachers manage their classes very well, using a combination of humour and effective relationships, which pupils enjoy. This good management of classrooms contributes significantly to the overall expectations and ethos of

the school. It sustains a climate for learning. It also encourages pupils to work independently and many quickly acquire this skill and see it as their responsibility to complete assignments. This aids their achievement. However, the teaching of PSHE and citizenship is not managed well enough to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement. Whilst it is recognised that the school's expectations and ethos contribute extensively to personal development, the school needs to ensure that all pupils have the opportunities to be well taught in these areas.

21. However, there are instances when teachers do not make the most of lessons. The work set does not always extend the highest attainers sufficiently and whilst they achieve well, they could do better. The school recognises some issues relating to underachievement and has appointed a Key Stage 3 strategy manager to address them. This shortcoming is also linked to the inconsistency in the use of assessment to inform planning and to set pupils adequate targets so that their achievement can be rigorously monitored. This activity was also criticised at the last inspection. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and responsibility is delegated to departments but with no rigorous oversight of their approach of their approach towards implementing the whole assessment policy. There is a lack of consistency in the way in which pupils' work is marked and the frequency of assessment. For the pupils in Years 7 to 9, assessment is generally weaker and inconsistently linked to National Curriculum Level descriptions. Many subjects mark in line with GCSE criteria for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 and therefore assessment practice is more consistent for these year groups. There is some very good practice in English, geography and PE where pupils are consistently assessed and informed about their progress and what they need to do to improve. However, in Latin and science, marking is sparse and not used to track progress. Overall, there is generally too little use of target-setting and planning to meet pupils' needs and so drive up standards. This is particularly true for the more capable pupils, where insufficient challenge through different approaches and resources is provided to meet their needs in lessons.
22. Overall, teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs in lessons is good. Their progress is very well monitored and the learning support department provides frequent very good quality information to subject teachers about individual pupils. Individual education plans (IEPs) provide clear targets which are sufficiently practical for teachers to implement without support. Some teachers use these well to provide appropriate learning approaches and resources but others do not plan for individual needs. Learning support staff are developing links with subject departments to increase their subject expertise and further exchange of information. Pupils who are withdrawn from lessons receive very high quality support from learning support assistants who encourage the development of independent learning skills. The small minority of pupils for whom English is not their mother tongue are all fluent English speakers and there is no specific support. They cope well and where necessary, teachers address their needs well.
23. The teaching of pupils who are identified as gifted and talented by using their scores in national testing systems soon after entry and staff recommendations, is also inconsistent. Overseeing of the methods used to teach these pupils is the responsibility of each head of subject department and guidelines are provided. This approach leads to inconsistency in the methods adopted across the school and a consequent lack of challenge in some lessons. The co-ordinators for this initiative works hard to raise awareness of staff of the needs of these pupils through, for example, staff meetings. This further reflects the shortcoming in monitoring and evaluation as procedures are not in place to measure the effect of the strategies used to challenge these pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form**

- Teaching and learning are good overall and support students' achievement well.

### **Commentary**

24. The overall quality of teaching is good with examples of very good teaching. Students consider that they are generally well taught and that most staff are readily available to help them with any problems. Most of the characteristics listed above, and subjects in which the best teaching occurred, are equally applicable to the sixth form. Teaching was very good in physical education, where the advantages of ICT were seen as a good means of improving teaching, learning and achievement. Most of the theory work for GCSE and sports' studies A-level and AS is imaginatively written on computer with a print out for each student. Teaching is supported by judicious use of PowerPoint with interactive images and photographs. The advantages of this excellent in house produced material means that content can be matched closely to the needs of students, time is saved taking notes and teaching of theory and practice are effectively integrated. A hand-out on the skeletal system included diagrams, commentary, spaces for pupils' answers, and photographs of athletes performing different movements. A short film of one of the teachers playing hockey certainly maintained interest very effectively! Students cover the optimum amount of work, have time to discuss difficult topics and follow a text that is both challenging and interesting. Having accurate and complete notes for reference ensures that students have a good foundation on which to build further work.
25. Assessment overall is satisfactory. In PE, there is very good practice which provides regular interviewing of students and monitoring of progress to identify whether there is a difficulty, whilst in history, there is very good planning and target-setting and a high focus given to learning skills. However, physics, chemistry, biology and ICT do not use assessment to support students adequately and some students remain under-challenged. In these subjects, marking schemes do not always provide enough detailed information for students to improve their performance and assessment is not used to track student progress or to set challenging enough targets.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory overall** and ensures that most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education but it has some shortcomings. It concentrates on a good range of academic subjects, leading to GCSE examinations in Year 11 and AS and A2 examinations in Years 12 and 13. There is equal access to the full curriculum for all pupils. There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular activities. However, because the statutory requirements are not met for ICT and citizenship, this undermines the quality of provision. The accommodation hampers some activities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum has good breadth and is relevant to the needs of most of the pupils and students.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and effective but it is not always as effective for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- The extra-curricular opportunities provide many experiences in cultural, expressive arts and sporting activities, and these are very well supported.
- There is no systematic monitoring of how well the PSHE and citizenship programmes and sixth-form general studies, are planned and taught.
- Staffing and resources are good overall.
- The accommodation has significant limitations although some good improvement has taken place and more is planned for.

### **Commentary**

26. All National Curriculum subjects are taught in Years 7 to 9. No judgements are made about religious education and collective worship as they were inspected by the Section 23 inspector. Links with primary schools are quite difficult to develop as pupils are drawn from some 50 schools across a very wide geographical area. Pupils consider that there is a broad range of subjects from which they can choose adequately after Year 9 for GCSE, which includes Latin

and business education. The curriculum on offer is appropriate as a part of the 14-19 age range and very few pupils expressed the view that they were disaffected by the curriculum.

27. The weakness in ICT is because after Year 7, it is the responsibility of subjects to ensure that the ICT curriculum is covered and this is not happening sufficiently. There is no assessment in place to monitor pupils' work and no accredited course is offered in Years 10 and 11. Although there is a networked system of computers in the ICT suite, not all departments are taking sufficient advantage of the resources. The overall situation represents unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Across Years 7 to 9, the school has yet to develop the formal timetabling and teaching of citizenship. There is a satisfactory personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) in place, taught in discrete lessons. The lessons focus on study skills and careers education, with adequate sessions about sex and relationships education and alcohol and drugs misuse. An audit is being carried out to review how different subjects contribute to elements of citizenship. However, criticism was made at the last inspection about the overall provision for PSHE, and overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11. The overall curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
28. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the whole curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, although there is some carefully considered withdrawal from lessons for tuition to meet specific targets. There is very good support in terms of high quality learning support assistants and some specific equipment, particularly for those with sensory impairment. Very effective liaison with outside agencies provides advice and teaching programmes for individual pupils. There is very good identification of pupils' specific needs and provision of appropriate programmes. For able and talented pupils, additional extra-curricular events are organised, such as business challenges, summer schools which focus on thinking skills, and challenges in chemistry, physics, geography and maths to provide enrichment for these pupils.
29. A strength is **the very good programme of extra-curricular activities**. This is very well supported by the pupils as well as parents. Staff willingly give of their time for musical, dramatic, House, sporting and exchange activities. It is also well linked with the community as pupils take advantage of links with the business world and community service. The activities also link well with pupils' personal development, as seen, for example, in competitive sport where they gain in playing the game fairly. House competitions include sport and cultural activities and the latter are often celebrated by events in the local community theatre or in the Cathedral. Residential courses and exchanges occur across Years 7 to 11. All of these out-of-school activities have very good elements of learning which add to the formal curriculum of the classroom.
30. There are **sufficient teachers who have good subject knowledge** overall and meet curriculum needs. There is, however, a need for further specific training for the learning support assistants in the needs of some of the pupils they work with. **Resources are good overall**. Mention has been made of the computer network and most subject areas have adequate supplies of textbooks and, where applicable, for example in science, practical resources. However, **the accommodation is unsatisfactory**. The main Victorian school building has narrow corridors and many small rooms, and approximately a quarter of the rooms are below the recognised area specification overall. Although there have been some good developments, with further activity planned, this accommodation does have an adverse effect on standards. For example, although a new sports hall has recently been opened, the playing fields are a mile from the school and thus time is lost in walking between sites. Although the accommodation for science has been refurbished, there are still not enough laboratories, limiting the flexibility for teaching and learning. Music uses the old boarding house and whilst this provides well, it is also some distance from the school. Hard play areas and grass areas on site are below average. Whilst significant progress has been made in adapting access for physically disabled pupils, it remains unsatisfactory in the older buildings. At

lunchtimes, there is insufficient space for dining. Many pupils behave exceptionally well at this time as they find suitable areas in which to sit and talk.

### The sixth form

31. The **curriculum has good breadth and balance**. A minority of pupils and students indicate that they would like access to additional subjects, although they acknowledge that there is a good choice, which enables them to proceed on to higher education. Indeed, a significant number of the students who join the sixth form do so because of the subjects available. For pupils and students of above average attainment, the curriculum is appropriate for the 14-19 age range. Very few students expressed the view that they were disaffected by the curriculum. Where necessary, alternative arrangements are made for a small minority of students who may wish to take a subject such as law or psychology. There is a cohesive programme of General Studies, which leads to the GCE examination. The main syllabus is augmented by sessions in careers and higher education advice. Students also have the opportunities listed within the community for younger pupils as well as links with France and Germany. The overall curriculum prepares students effectively for the next stage of their education.
32. Comments above relating to staffing and resources are equally applicable to the sixth form. The dining room has to be used for sixth form private study, and it is to the credit of the students that they use it in a very sensible manner. Their own social accommodation is basic and access to computers in private study facilities is unsatisfactory although students can find access if they have the time to look for it.

### Care, guidance and support

**This is good overall.** Induction arrangements are very good. Pupils and students are well known and enjoy very good relationships with staff, giving them the confidence to seek support when they have any problems. The monitoring of academic progress and provision of appropriate support are satisfactory. Arrangements for health and safety and child protection are satisfactory but some shortcomings need to be addressed.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils and students and monitor their personal development well, generally knowing when pupils and students are not working hard enough.
- Through the very good relationships, the school knows and values the pupils' and students' opinions.
- Good advice is provided at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Induction and transfer procedures and the careers guidance programme are well planned.
- Advice for the sixth form is good.

### Commentary

33. **Induction arrangements are very good** and quickly enable pupils from a very wide range of feeder schools to develop good relationships with staff, their peers and pastoral prefects as well as identifying with pupils throughout the school who are in their house. Those pupils who join the school other than at the age of 11 are very well supported in settling in and gaining an understanding of the very high expectations of staff and the distinctive 'culture' of the school. These arrangements start the work of developing good and trusting relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. They give pupils the security and confidence to share concerns and seek support and guidance when they have any worries about their work or a personal problem. Staff provide a good response to such requests and, through their good

knowledge of pupils as individuals and monitoring of pupils' personal development, provide well-informed support, advice and guidance. However, because of the shortcomings in assessment, the monitoring of academic progress is only satisfactory.

34. Pupils and their parents are provided with good advice to assist them in making their option choices at the end of Year 9. Careers advice provided to pupils is satisfactory overall, although the school recognises that improvements could be made and is seeking to address some of the deficiencies in conjunction with the careers service staff who provide good support. Good use is made of nationally-recognised systems to support decision-making. Pupils in Year 11 undertake three weeks' work experience and find this beneficial. Pupils with special educational needs have trusting and respectful relationships with learning support staff and are very well supported and guided by them. They work together to develop IEP targets. Monitoring of a range of pupils is carried out in lessons by learning support assistants and support put in place if needed. Great thought is given to the type of support provided in lessons, so that pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Statements are regularly reviewed and the provision is in place. The learning support department is not, however, on the school pupil network, which limits communications with the whole staff and direct access to pupils' work.
35. Pupils, staff and parents talk about the 'family of the school'. The school successfully seeks pupils' views and pupils generally identify very closely with the school and have a sense of 'ownership' in which they are involved. They can clearly articulate their views and readily contribute ideas, ranging from their concern that gowns should be retained in the sixth form to ideas for the further development of the school's buildings and facilities.
36. **The procedures for ensuring the care, safety and well-being of pupils are satisfactory overall.** The school has worked hard to make safe a disparate set of buildings with many small rooms and narrow staircases. First-aid provision is good. Safe practice is promoted well in lessons.
37. Equipment is regularly checked and tested but not always taken out of use when found to be defective. There is an appropriate health and safety policy, and hazards are identified but a portfolio of risk assessments is still being developed. Child protection procedures meet requirements and are based on those of the local area protection committee. Recent staff changes mean that there is a new designated officer who has been fully trained to enable her to take over this very important and sensitive role. Two senior staff are to undertake training this term to ensure continuity of cover. However, the school now needs to include reference to child protection in the staff handbook, and to ensure that all staff and prefects are aware of the new arrangements, so that the management of child protection is secure.

### **Sixth form**

38. The overall quality of **guidance in the sixth form is good.** Effective arrangements are in place for a general studies programme which incorporates a range of activities which cover personal issues and careers and post-18 education, although some students expressed the view that they would like more information on different pathways post-18. The monitoring of students is effective and they speak highly of the levels of care they experience. There are very good links for sixth-formers prior to higher education entry.

### **Partnership with parents and carers, other schools and the community**

**Parents and carers have very positive views** of the school and the education which it provides. The partnerships between school and home, other schools and the community are good overall and play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is held in high regard by parents, carers and the community.
- The quality and informative content of newsletters and general information provided are good.
- The quality of reports is only satisfactory and does not give sufficient information as to how pupils and students might improve.
- The school works effectively with the 50+ primary schools which pupils have previously attended.
- Very good links are maintained with the community.

## Commentary

39. The very positive views of parents and carers, obtained at the pre-inspection meeting and through their responses to the questionnaire, reflect an overall **high level of satisfaction** with virtually all aspects of the school's provision. They are very satisfied with their children's progress, the standards of behaviour, the quality of teaching, homework, and extra-curricular activities. They are particularly pleased with the school's expectations and that it helps their children mature. Most consider that their children enjoy school. The only area where they expressed some concerns was in how well the school seeks their views. Interestingly, their children do not fully agree with some of their views. Some concerns were also expressed, more on an individual basis, about the range of subjects available and some aspects of teaching.
40. There are satisfactory arrangements to survey parents and gain their views, which are fed into the school improvement planning process. It normally manages to resolve any concerns of parents informally. However, in the event that a parent should wish to make a formal complaint, there is an effective complaints procedure. Information provided to parents about the work and life of the school is good and the school works closely with parents to provide the information in a format that meets parents' needs – sending paper copies, accessing information on the school's website or receiving information by e-mail. One of the best facilities is the early production of a comprehensive calendar of events which can be accessed in its entirety or 'filtered' to provide only the information relevant to a particular year group or groups. Reports on pupils' progress are supported by consultation evenings but the written reports vary in style and format and often fail to clearly identify targets which could help parents understand what is necessary for pupils to learn to improve their standards.
41. Parents are very supportive of pupils' learning and their effective partnership with the school and support for its ethos and high expectations make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. The work of the parent staff association, and voluntary contributions from parents raises very significant sums of money to support the work of the school. Links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good through both formal and informal contacts. There are frequent phone calls home to provide information or to confirm a pupil's progress and the special educational needs co-ordinator is always available at parent consultation evenings. All parents of pupils with statements attend their annual review meeting. There is very good liaison with primary schools for pupils with special educational needs prior to their entry, which enables appropriate planning to meet their needs.
42. **Very good links exist with the local community**, who are supporting the school's science college bid and provide good work experience opportunities. It also enables pupils to undertake a wide range of visits and receive visitors who provide good enrichment of the curriculum. In a wider context, very good use is made of international links and residential centres. This supports pupils' personal development.
43. King's receives pupils from over 50 primary schools and works hard to establish good links which support the transfer of pupils at the age of 11 by providing opportunities for pupils and their parents to visit and gain an understanding of what secondary schooling will be like. There are many sporting links with other schools which enable pupils to develop team skills through competitive participation. The school's Beacon status, its advanced skills teachers and its science college bid have all been used effectively to forge beneficial wider partnerships.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**The overall leadership of the school is good.** It is clearly focused on improving facilities and accommodation and gaining science college status. The governors operate effectively and work well with staff to ensure best value. A significant number of staff are new to their responsibilities and whilst **the overall management of the school is satisfactory**, some staff with management responsibilities are not leading and managing well enough.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision.
- The new senior management team is very supportive and is quickly developing its role as key leaders and managers.
- There are examples of very good practice in leadership and management of other key staff but it is satisfactory overall.
- Administrative staff make a good contribution to the life of the school.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- They do not fulfil the statutory requirement for ICT and citizenship.
- The school gives good value for money overall and is very cost-effective in the sixth form.

### Commentary

44. The school has clearly stated aims and objectives based on its Christian tradition which are widely publicised and shared, both within and outside the school. They are exceptionally well met in relation to pupils' and students' personal development and well met in relation to their academic achievement.
45. **The governance of the school is satisfactory.** The headteacher and chair of governors have a very good professional relationship and governors operate well within their committee structures. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weakness and both challenge and support the staff. The governing body does not, however, fulfil its statutory duty for ICT and citizenship in the curriculum for Years 7 to 11.
46. **The headteacher leads the school effectively** and has initiated improvements in standards since the last inspection. His vision for the school is being effectively translated and the school holds Beacon Status for its work, which it shares with other schools. To help to rectify some of the shortcomings in science and ICT, a bid is being made for specialist science status. **Management is satisfactory.** After having a stable senior management team for some time, promotions and retirements have brought about change, involving internal promotions and appointments of new staff. The current senior group has 3 new members amongst the overall membership of 5 staff, and several heads of departments are new. Senior staff have clearly delegated responsibilities and are quickly assimilating them and becoming a cohesive unit. One member of the team has responsibility for the National Key Stage 3 strategy which will involve closer monitoring of provision. The learning support department is led by an able and knowledgeable co-ordinator. He provides strong leadership to a cohesive team of learning support assistants who provide pupils with high quality provision. However, the overall management has some shortcomings as there has been, and is, inconsistency in the approach of both senior staff and subject leaders. This report has highlighted inconsistencies in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, shortcomings in the use of assessment and the fact that statutory curriculum requirements are not met. Not all departments are cohesive teams committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Because of these issues, standards and achievement are affected and not all pupils achieve as well as they might.

47. Since the last inspection, **improvement has been satisfactory** overall. Strategic planning is sound and shows clear improvement. The whole school development plan is well structured and covers the period from 2003-2005. It is well linked to the budget and financial forecast. Departmental plans vary too much and are not always giving clarity to a vision for improvement. The plans contain success criteria, but these are not always adequately shaped to measure the impact of the developments. Performance management is in place and works soundly although it is not always capable of drawing on a wide range of teaching and learning evaluations. Staff professional development has been effectively enhanced. The induction process for new staff is effective and there are close links with higher education for teacher training. Standards have risen overall and this year's GCSE and GCE A2 results were the best yet achieved. The progress in the provision for art has been good, as has been that for spiritual and cultural development. ICT remains an area that the school is working on but improvement has been unsatisfactory as there is still no certificated course and there is insufficient cross-curricular use to meet National Curriculum requirements.
48. The **management of the school's finances is good** and financial controls are secure. The deputy headteacher has the overall strategic management role, and is assisted by the finance manager on a day-to-day basis with the effective support of the finance office staff. Procedures ensure that the principles of best value are very well applied in fair competitive tendering and the securing of goods and services. Careful evaluation of catering services has enabled the school to make a profit on the provision of breakfasts, snacks and lunches, whilst responding to the need of customers. The school is very conscious of its comparative position in relation to other schools and uses national and local data effectively. However, whilst the school does consult with staff, pupils, students and parents, it does not have the rigorous systems in place to effectively challenge itself. Overall, based on the personal and academic standards achieved, the quality of teaching and learning and education and its management, the school gives good value for money.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2001 to March 2002*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,133,999	Balance from previous year	79,717
Total expenditure	3,148,926	Balance carried forward to the next	63,983
Expenditure per pupil	3,570		

## Sixth form

49. The leadership of the sixth form is under the direction of the deputy head who works in partnership with the head of sixth, who in turn has a team of tutors carrying out administrative and pastoral work. **Overall, the leadership and management is good.** Students are effectively monitored and there is a developing methodology to look closer at their academic achievement. Other aspects are mirrored in the overall comments made above about leadership and management. However, because national funding is now aimed at vocational courses, the amount of funding that the school receives for the sixth form is the lowest in the local education authority. On the basis of the standards and overall provision, it is very cost-effective.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils would benefit if teaching styles gave them a more active role in lessons and enable them to be less dependent on their teachers.
- The accommodation is poor as many rooms are small and limit teaching strategies.

#### Commentary

50. By the end of Year 9, pupils achieve well and results were very high in relation to national standards in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. Girls achieved better than boys, although boys' performance is much better than the national results for boys. Results were lower than in mathematics and science. Good progress is maintained in Years 10 and 11 and results at GCSE have been consistently very high compared to national levels, especially the percentage of pupils gaining grades A\*-C in both English language and English literature in 2002. The standards reached by girls are higher than that attained by boys but both are attaining standards which are well above average. There was no evidence of the disaffection amongst some boys noted in the last inspection and one group of low-attaining boys was seen achieving very well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as do those pupils who have English as an additional language. Work examined and pupils' achievement observed in lessons confirmed the high levels achieved in examinations.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and, in three-quarters of the lessons observed the teaching was good or very good. The best lessons were characterised by teachers' very good knowledge of their subject and a well-planned sequence of tasks related to clear academic objectives. Pupils are well motivated and respond well to very good teaching participating well in class discussions. Pupils perform well in a wide range of tasks including language skills, some aspects of media studies and a challenging range of literature, including Chaucer and Shakespeare. Good examples of extended and creative writing were seen, for example, the "Island Project" but pupils do not always have enough opportunities for creative self-expression in some lessons. Pupils read well, speak very well and can discuss, argue and explain points well. Work is very well planned and assessed, with scrupulous attention to assessment objectives and improving pupils' examination skills. Marking is good and pupils receive accurate recognition of their personal achievement and guidance about how to improve.
52. Planning and drafting of work in relation to GCSE requirements are strengths of the teaching in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and the relevance of the tasks set so they work conscientiously and achieve well. There is coverage of an exceptionally wide range of literature including "The English Patient", "A Room with a View", "Romeo and Juliet", "The Crucible" and "To Kill a Mockingbird". The scrutiny of written work, including completed coursework assignments from last year, provided clear evidence of the high quality of the teaching enjoyed by pupils. However, a significant amount of the teaching is over-directed by the teachers through controlled discussion which depended heavily on the quality of the

teacher's input. Group discussions for pupils are short and their feedback is chaired by the teacher. Thus, pupils are not always challenged enough to investigate for themselves and draw more of their own conclusions. Teaching is not helped by that fact that many rooms are small and limit teaching strategies.

53. There is good leadership from an experienced head of department who conscientiously guides efforts to maintain high academic standards. The curriculum is good and includes a wide range of learning experiences to develop skills in listening and speaking, reading and writing. Curriculum planning makes effective use of those elements from the National Literacy Strategy and the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for English suited to the needs of pupils with very good literacy skills. The management of the subject is good. Teachers are well deployed and work well together. The head of department recognises the skills of a team of able teachers who know their subject very well and he effectively monitors the quality of teaching and learning. However, there is only limited use of ICT. The challenge for the department is to find ways to improve on the very high standards that have been maintained since the last inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

54. Reading and writing skills are well above average. Examples of good practice were seen, but the contribution of subjects to developing literacy skills is inconsistent across the school. The recent appointment of a Key Stage 3 strategy manager has the potential to address this shortcoming by supporting the overall management. In history and geography, pupils display a wide range of writing skills and can support their arguments well in discussion sessions; their understanding of the work they have read enables them to detect bias. Lessons in modern foreign languages make excellent use of pupils' innate language skills and offer frequent opportunities for creative writing. There is a strong emphasis on grammar, which is very well taught and pupils are provided with copious vocabulary lists which they are expected to use. In science, technical vocabulary is well explained in context and teachers and pupils use language very accurately, but there is no recognition of literacy policy for science teaching.

### **Modern languages**

Overall, the quality of provision in French and German is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards for 14 and 16 year old pupils are well above average.
- There is good achievement in both French and German.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge.
- Good support and guidance which helps pupils to achieve well.
- Some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The quality of the accommodation.

### **Commentary**

55. National Curriculum teacher assessments at age 14 in 2002 were well above the national average in both French and German, including at the higher levels. At GCSE, the results were well above average in 2002. The percentage of pupils gaining A\* - C grades has been regularly well above average in both languages in recent years. The provisional results for 2003 are amongst the best the school has achieved.
56. This picture is reflected in the current standards seen, where the majority of 14-year-old pupils use past, present and future tenses with some confidence and have a good working vocabulary across a range of topic areas. Most pupils can write extended paragraphs on everyday topics with good levels of accuracy. By the age of 16, pupils develop a wider range of vocabulary and more sophisticated range of structures. For example, in a Year 11 class

preparing a practice coursework exercise, pupils used the conditional and imperfect tenses to talk about a recent sponsored walk.

57. The achievement of pupils is good. Younger pupils are expected to learn new material at a good pace and the department has clear expectations about how pupils should progress through the different levels of the National Curriculum. Boys and girls generally achieve equally well, as do pupils with special educational needs and those who do not have English as their mother tongue. At GCSE level, pupils build well on their earlier learning and extend the range and complexity of their writing. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. Work in exercise books is well organised and standards of presentation are high. Pupils build up useful grammar notes and also make good use of their booklets and dictionaries to check their work or to extend it with new vocabulary.
58. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are well qualified and very knowledgeable. There are, however, some significant inconsistencies in the way pupils are being taught. Where teaching is very good or excellent, the teacher uses the target language most of the time. Pupils are also expected to speak the language they are learning and develop their skills through a wide range of activities such as choral work, pair work and games. The pace is demanding and pupils' learning is stimulated by good quality resources produced using ICT. Good use is made of ICT to boost achievement and pupils' personal development. Where teaching is only satisfactory, teachers use more English and there are fewer opportunities for pupils to use the language productively in pairs or groups. On occasions, the pace is a little slow. Books are regularly marked and younger pupils receive encouragement for their efforts. However, in day-to-day marking, there are some inconsistencies in the way longer pieces of written work are assessed. Pupils of all ages are well supported in their learning with very helpful booklets, vocabulary lists and guidance on coursework at GCSE level. These support materials are well organised and are a good source of reference material. They help pupils develop independent learning skills and give pupils explicit models of the standards expected. The quality of accommodation is unsatisfactory. Three main classrooms are below the recommended minimum size and, when occupied by a large class, they are cramped and the range of teaching and learning strategies that can be employed is limited.
59. Over the past few years, high quality schemes of work have been developed collaboratively and a comprehensive set of support materials for pupils has been produced. Opportunities for creative and productive activities have been written into schemes of work and there are now some very good examples of pupils' creative work. Teaching materials in French now match National Curriculum requirements and assessment has been very well linked to the National Curriculum level descriptors. Robust systems for assessment have been set up and pupils' progress is closely monitored in tests and in end-of-year examinations. This is good improvement. The newly-appointed head of department is providing good leadership and developing the management effectively. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has not been effective enough and leads to inconsistency, and the sharing of good practice has been unsatisfactory. Departmental development planning does not focus clearly on teaching and learning. Thus, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall with some good features.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are very high.
- Teaching is very good and pupils achieve well.
- Assessment is used well to manage pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management are good although there is room to improve monitoring and planning.

- Better use needs to be made of ICT to develop pupils' skills.

## **Commentary**

60. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for 14-year olds, results were very high. Performance in mathematics was average in comparison with science, but better than in English. A notable feature was the large number of pupils who attained at the highest levels. The trend in results over time is above the national trend. Results in the GCSE in 2002 were also very high for the number of pupils earning grades A\* - C. Few pupils fail to reach GCSE grade C. Standards were maintained in 2003. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The minority of pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and they achieve well. Pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue often achieve very well.
61. Standards seen in the inspection reflect the examination results. From inspection evidence, achievement is good overall, although in lessons it ranged from very good to satisfactory. The higher attainers achieve well in their higher level GCSE course because their algebraic skills at the end of Year 11 are very high. This provides them with a firm foundation for further study of mathematics. Average attainers also achieve well. Their mathematics knowledge is largely secure. They have a good appreciation of planes of symmetry, for example, but have yet to develop a secure knowledge of negative indexes. Lower attainers achieve well through the large amount of work they do, which contributes very well to ensuring that numeracy levels across the school are very high. Whilst lower attainers arithmetical skills are secure, they encounter difficulties with more advanced work requiring algebraic expertise.
62. There is not enough use of information and communication technology. Access to equipment is difficult but there is no effective approach to develop pupils' skills to support their work and to improve standards further. Standards in literacy are well above average. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is not their first language, make good progress because of the good support for their learning. Lessons are fully inclusive for all the different groups of pupils: boys, girls and ethnic minority pupils.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teaching is good or better in all lessons, very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in the earlier years. Teachers' very good subject expertise, encouragement and engagement of pupils are major factors that determine pupils' very good learning. The work set challenges the pupils very well and they respond very well because of their very good attitudes. They persevere well, even if the work takes longer than expected. Homework is used well and all pupils do it. Occasionally, the teaching is excellent, as was seen in the teaching of recurring decimals with some Year 9 pupils. The pupils' thinking skills were engaged very well through the very good use of open-ended questions. Pupils were intrigued by the idea that a recurring decimal goes on forever and this good introduction captured the full attention of the pupils and accelerated their learning. Where teaching is not always so effective, it is because the end part of lessons is not always used well enough to check what has been covered and learned. This is why achievement is occasionally satisfactory in lessons as opposed to good.
64. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has an effective vision and has thus also developed an effective team of teachers. Assessment is effective and good use is made of the information, both in planning the curriculum and in discussion with teachers and pupils, individually and collectively. Challenging targets are set. Rightly, the department is exploring further initiatives for gifted and talented pupils to further improve their opportunities and achievement. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained, as has the quality of the teaching. Marking of pupils' work and the use of assessment have improved. There has been no improvement in the use of ICT. Attention needs to be given to the quality of departmental planning and monitoring to improve self-evaluation procedures for teaching and learning.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Whilst there is currently no whole-school numeracy policy in place, competency in numeracy across other subjects is high because of the standards being achieved in the mathematics department. A draft has been drawn up and is to be presented to the governors in the near future. There has been staff training.
66. Standards are very high in most areas of numeracy, for example, in all forms of measurement and data handling. The majority of departments have effective strategies for using numeracy techniques to enhance subject learning. Specific skills apply across the whole school, in the method of subtraction, for example.

## SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average overall and achievement is good.
- Teaching is good with some very good and outstanding features.
- Assessment is not used well enough to support the progress and achievement of pupils.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not sufficiently rigorous.
- There is not enough use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool to support pupils' learning.

### Commentary

67. As a result of good teaching and hard work by pupils, achievement is good, and standards which are well above average overall, and often high, are being maintained. Standards could be even higher as a result of improvements in assessment, in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and by greater use of information technology as an aid to teaching and learning. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school is in the process of formulating a bid for Specialist Science College status.
68. In 2002, National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 9 were high compared with national averages. Boys' and girls' results were similar. When compared with similar schools, results were average. Science results were better than those for English and similar to those for mathematics. Teachers accurately assessed the attainment of pupils in Year 9. Achievement relative to attainment on entry to the school was as expected. Since the last inspection, results have improved at a rate which was higher than average. GCSE examination results in 2002 were well above average, but were not as good as those for English and mathematics. Girls' results were better than those of boys. Achievement relative to attainment at the end of Year 9 was very good. Even though results in 2003 fell slightly, they have improved since the last inspection.
69. As a result of good teaching, pupils are making good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards, overall, are well above average and high for higher-attaining pupils. For example, by the end of Year 9, higher-attaining pupils can write balanced chemical equations and have a good understanding of gaseous exchange in the lungs. Although their attainment is still average, lower-attaining pupils are less secure. They are, for example, less confident in writing equations. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 have a very good understanding of the factors which affect the rate of chemical reactions and of wave forms and can do calculations thereon. Lower-attaining pupils, however, whilst still achieving average standards, are less secure in their knowledge and understanding. Overall, pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The standards of literacy and numeracy are at least very good and sometimes high.

70. Teaching is good overall, with some being very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils learn well as a result. The principal features of teaching were the use of good subject knowledge by teachers, their high expectations of pupils, good well-focused planning and, in many lessons, a range of methods which maintained interest and engendered learning. In some lessons, however, there was insufficient opportunity for pupils to work independently. Homework was set which extended or consolidated classwork.
71. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Insufficient use is made of assessment outcomes to monitor the progress of pupils, to identify underachievers, adjust teaching and guide curriculum planning. Day-to-day marking, whilst being thorough overall, does not always indicate how students could improve, neither does it always provide targets for future work. The identification of appropriate learning objectives coupled with good support for pupils' learning, enables pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in improving their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. In most lessons, pupils work hard and at a good pace. However, in a few lessons, some pupils, mainly girls, are not always fully engaged by their teachers.
72. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The new head of science is hard-working and dedicated and has a clear vision of what is needed to improve. He is supported by an adequate number of teachers, many of whom are either employed on a part-time basis or have additional senior management responsibilities. This increases the difficulty of moulding the department into a single cohesive unit. Educational direction is clear and focused. As a result, there is evidence of new developments, including a bid for Specialist Science College status, which are likely to lead to further improvements. Development planning, which is in line with school development planning, is effective and manageable, but planning for long-term development with longer term targets, costing and focused success criteria has yet to be carried out. Procedures for assessment and for the monitoring and evaluation of teachers are inadequate. These have both been identified as priority areas for improvement. Resources, in terms of books and equipment, are satisfactory but the department has insufficient computers to support teaching and learning. The number of laboratories is insufficient for a school of this size and has a negative impact upon standards since a significant proportion of lessons are taught in ordinary classrooms, reducing opportunities for practical work.
73. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Provided that the current good quality of teaching is maintained and further opportunities are provided for independent learning coupled with improved assessment and monitoring procedures, the capacity for improvement is good.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average in Year 9 but below average in Year 11, and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The course for pupils in Year 7 is very good and is well taught.
- When teachers in other subjects use ICT in lessons the teaching is good or very good but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills overall
- The requirements of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 4 are not met.

### Commentary

74. At age 14, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. During their first year at the school, the pupils' experience of ICT is very good. They are taught how to use the school's computer network and how to use basic programs for word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, making presentations and how to search the internet to find useful information.

Pupils have reached the level expected in terms of their capability to carry out research and produce a range of reports using text and images. At age 16, standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory as there is no discrete teaching and no certificated course for exam recognition. Pupils have not had sufficient opportunity to develop their skills and how to apply them in different subjects. With the exception of a minority with a well-developed personal interest in ICT, pupils have not reached the level expected.

75. The quality of teaching in the Year 7 discrete lessons is good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are very well planned and teachers have excellent knowledge of the network system and the programs pupils are using. Very good use is made of large screen projected images to conduct whole-class sessions such as introducing new work. When pupils are using computers to work individually, they use the excellent guidance material provided. It is available as worksheets or on-line and contributes to the good progress pupils make during lessons. For pupils with special educational needs or experiencing other difficulties, teachers provide appropriate additional support and encouragement. There is good support from learning support assistants, who are well briefed and skilful. Members of the school's sixth form with an interest in ICT help during lessons. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged to try more advanced techniques. In the best lessons, teachers vary the range of activities, require pupils to work in small groups and expect them to talk to the whole class about their work. These lessons have very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve, run at a rapid pace and generate enthusiastic responses. To expand the range of equipment used by the pupils, the technicians work with them to enable them to use scanners, digital cameras and then operate the software to control the images produced.
76. The accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Access to the school's network is only generally available in the computer suite. Key areas such as the special educational needs base and the school's Library and Resource Centre are not linked and pupils wishing to continue their studies are not able to do so as they cannot gain access to their work stored on their user area of the network. The accommodation in the school's three computer rooms is satisfactory. Two rooms have sufficient up-to-date computers to accommodate whole classes. The rooms have projectors to generate large screen images and control of the environment is possible in terms of ventilation and the use of blinds on windows. Teachers produce effective displays to promote pupils' learning of the key vocabulary for ICT. The computers in the third room are much older and do not have a sufficiently high specification to meet the demands of current software in use. Many pupils have access to computers at home. This factor, combined with pupils' access to the computer rooms outside lesson times and their great enthusiasm for their use, contributes greatly to their competence and confidence in basic ICT applications.
77. The management and leadership are unsatisfactory. The separate aspects of the management of resources and the development of the curriculum for the lower school are well managed. At the whole-school level, leadership is weakened by a lack of a clear vision. There is not a unified whole-school development plan detailing how all pupils can experience ICT as defined in the National Curriculum.
78. Good progress has been made in terms of teachers of other subjects using ICT to improve how their subject is taught and how pupils are able to learn during lessons. However, these activities do not promote pupils' progression and the development of higher skills and applications. Improvement in the provision since the last inspection has however been unsatisfactory for Years 10 and 11 as fourteen to sixteen year old pupils still do not receive their entitlement as defined in the National Curriculum and are not given the opportunity to gain accredited qualifications in the subject.

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

79. The provision for, and use of, ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory because insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to build on the foundation given in discrete lessons in Year 7 and to develop the full range of ICT skills as required by the National Curriculum. Although lessons in some subjects give opportunities to use ICT, this does not develop pupils' skills sufficiently and their individual experiences vary according to the use of ICT made by different teachers.
80. Good use has been made of the Advanced Skills Teacher programme to support the development of ICT and overall staff skills. This has led to some teachers now using ICT well to improve their teaching and to help pupils learn in new ways. Very good examples of this are seen in modern foreign languages. In geography, history and science pupils make very good use of the Internet to get access to a wide range of up-to-date resources. Geography and English teachers have produced excellent study and revision resources on CD-ROM. The science and PE departments use ICT to cover aspects of the curriculum that are not normally easily covered. In a physics lesson, pupils were able to plot and compare the rates of radioactive decay of a variety of isotopes. In these contexts, the teachers are demonstrating very high levels of personal skill and understanding of ICT, but for pupils this use of ICT is only consolidating existing skills and not extending and developing their capability to use it in the more challenging and complex ways defined in the National Curriculum. For pupils in years 10 and 11, opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum are not co-ordinated and their ICT work is not assessed.

## **HUMANITIES**

The focus of the inspection was on geography, history and Latin. Religious education was not inspected as this fell within the remit of the Section 23 inspection.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards achieved by pupils are well above average.
- Achievement is very good in all years.
- A wide variety of learning activities raises pupils' interest.
- Curriculum development is promoted through very good leadership.
- Monitoring teaching and learning are not fully developed in Years 7 to 9.

#### **Commentary**

81. At the end of Year 9, the attainment of girls is higher than boys but for both it is well above expectations for their age. Results at GCSE are consistently well above the national average and this has been maintained in the provisional results for 2003. These show a further increase in the percentage of pupils gaining grades A\* or A. Both boys and girls perform better in geography than they do overall in their other subjects.
82. The high standards are confirmed by work seen during the inspection, although the standards observed in lessons in Year 7 and 9 were somewhat lower because pupils were not fully extended in those lessons. Overall, however, pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9. They acquire very good geographical and enquiry skills and choose effective ways of presenting their work. Thus, in Year 9, pupils can use ICT to investigate and exchange information on the global fashion industry and produce video or audiotape documentaries and PowerPoint presentations of a high quality. Achievement is also very good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils gain a good knowledge of processes and reach a high level of competence in their use of

geographical terminology. GCSE coursework shows very good understanding of the theory which underlies their fieldwork and the ability to evaluate the limitations of their data. Many pupils presented coursework of a standard usually expected by sixth-form students. In all year groups, there is no difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language.

83. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9. In a few lessons, there is insufficient challenge for some pupils and a need for differentiated work for lower-attaining pupils. Nevertheless, the pupils' very positive attitudes and the stimulating range of classroom activities result in very good learning by all groups of pupils. Teachers make opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity; for example, Year 7 pupils' models of coastal management schemes and Year 9 pupils' video of a fashion show an alternative script to illustrate global inequalities. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 10 and 11. All pupils are very well challenged. Marking is detailed, assessment is very helpful to pupils and examination technique is taught throughout the GCSE course. Throughout Years 7 to 11, the aims of lessons are made clear to pupils. In many lessons, imaginative starter activities are used to reinforce learning and excite pupils' interest.
84. The quality of leadership is very good. It shows good vision in developing the curriculum and it embraces a culture of self-evaluation which leads to well-devised action planning. The management is very good in Years 10 and 11, in which teachers work closely and share good practice. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but there is a need to monitor teaching more closely and to evaluate the impact of teaching and aspects of organisation, such as timetabling. In all year groups, new schemes of work are detailed and helpful for planning lessons and give a high profile to cross-curricular links. Work is planned which extends pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and makes a very good contribution to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through the teaching of aspects of citizenship. The department makes exemplary use of information and communication technology to support and promote pupils' learning.
85. Accommodation is overall just satisfactory. It is very variable in quality. The location of teaching in different parts of the school gives very unequal access to resources for different classes. It also contributes to the head of department's difficulty in monitoring the work of all teachers effectively, especially those who teach geography for a small part of the week. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Fieldwork and information and communication technology now have a high profile. Action planning is very good and standards have continued to rise.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards and achieve very well.
- Leadership and management is good.
- Assessment is well used.
- There is limited use of information and communication technology.
- Monitoring of the work of non-specialist teachers is insufficiently developed.

## Commentary

86. Standards attained by pupils at the ages of 14 and 16 are well above national averages. In the 2002 GCSE examination, the proportion of A\* - C grades was very high and was well above the national average. This improvement on the national average was higher than for any other GCSE examination subject in the school with the exception of music. The proportion of A\* - G grades was also above the national average and indicates the highest possible level of inclusion. Girls performed marginally better than boys. The results for 2003 indicate that the

high standards have been maintained. The results for the period 1998-2002 clearly show an improving trend. National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of year 9 in 2002 were well above average. The performance of girls was notably better than that of boys although the provisional 2003 results show that this gap is narrowing.

87. Pupils' achievement is very good. They enter the school with above-average levels of attainment and in Years 7 to Year 9 make very good progress. Notebooks show that they are competent with the organization and communication of knowledge and understanding acquired. Their range and depth of knowledge is extended and they develop the necessary skills of enquiry. They gain an appreciation that historical issues are capable of differing interpretation in their work on the English Civil War in Year 8 and on Nazi Germany in Year 9, and their chronological awareness is sound. In addition, they learn to compare and contrast different periods of British history, acquire a confident understanding of cause and effect relationship and develop their empathy. By the end of Year 9, pupils of higher and average attainment write well.
88. In Years 10 and 11, pupils build very well upon their achievements at the age of 14. Their notebooks show greater depth of study as well as the more skilful interpretation, usage and evaluation of sources, both primary and secondary. They become more adept in researching topics independently, especially for GCSE coursework, some of which is completed in an impressive manner. They also become more confident in their use of subject-specific vocabulary, both orally and in their writing, showing a very good standard of literacy.
89. Teaching and learning are very good overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Very good subject knowledge, careful lesson planning and an effective use of learning resources hold pupils' interest. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' capabilities and challenge them well through questioning and in the work set. This constantly demands the pupils to demonstrate both their knowledge and understanding of the study topics although the gifted and talented pupils are not always fully stretched in this regard. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those in Year 7 to Year 9, would benefit from the provision of more learning to match their level of prior attainment. These pupils make good progress when they are supported in lessons, as seen in a Year 9 lesson in which a support assistant gave very effective help to a small group working from disparate sources on the history of Peterborough. Pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) make the same level of progress as pupils generally. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. Lessons would be even more successful if more frequent use were made of information and communication technology, both in lesson presentation and in pupils' work
90. Leadership and management are good and ensure the maintenance of high standards and achievement. The curriculum is well planned for the development of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding, although further consideration should be given to extending studies in the post-1945 period. Some of the work that pupils do in Year 9 when they study the extension of the franchise in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain makes a significant contribution to citizenship. There is delegation, and one member of the department takes responsibility for liaising with the special educational needs co-ordinator. It is recognized in the department's self-evaluation that there is a need to improve the monitoring of the work of the two non-specialist teachers of the subject.
91. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. Schemes of assessment for the work of pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 are now closely related to National Curriculum criteria. In addition to giving due praise for high quality work and effort, marking also gives pupils appropriate guidance and sets targets for improvement. In the development plans for the subject, both costing and success criteria are clearly specified and the items are closely linked to whole school targets.

## Latin

Overall, provision in Latin is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching is now good, and strategies are used well to enliven the lesson and check pupil understanding.
- There are some weaknesses in the understanding of basic Latin grammar in Year 11 due to a lack of in-depth language teaching in Year 10.
- Leadership and management has some shortcomings as there is no formal monitoring of teaching and no departmental development plan.

### **Commentary**

92. Pupils start timetabled lessons in Year 10, and although there is the opportunity for all pupils in Years 8 and 9 to attend an after-school Latin session once a week, no judgements can be made about standards. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 for the small entry were sound and the provisional grades for 2003 show that all pupils gained a pass grade. Boys achieved the higher grades.
93. Standards in Years 10 and 11 for the very small minority of pupils who take the subject are broadly in line with expectations. However, some pupils in Year 11 are unable to translate simple sentences, due to weaknesses in their understanding of basic grammar. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, pupils had difficulty in identifying present, imperfect and perfect tenses. This term, with the newly-appointed teacher, pupils are revising the basics of grammar and are now able to translate indirect statements with accuracy. Year 10 pupils are making good progress and pupils in both year groups are motivated and keen to do well. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils recommended to their teacher and the class, current radio and television programmes about the Romans. In Years 10 and 11, pupils use dictionaries well and are encouraged by their teacher to deduce the meanings of new words.
94. Teaching is good overall. In the lessons observed, the teacher set high expectations and tailored work to meet the needs of the pupils. For example, in work completed this term, pupils performed very well in a revision exercise on the passive voice and deponent verbs, a topic identified as needing strengthening. Pupils receive useful verbal feedback in lessons and the starter and summary activities ensure a crisp start to lessons and a check on pupils' understanding of new work. However, there is little evidence in pupils' books and files of written guidance on how to improve. Pupils' work is well organised and they refer to the very useful grammar grids in their books when translating passages. However, at points in a lesson when the pace is slow, pupils lose concentration and as a result, make limited progress. Some pupils do not learn vocabulary fully and this hampers the development of their translation skills.
95. Latin forms part of the languages department and, as such, there is inadequate monitoring and evaluation of teaching and Latin does not feature in the departmental development plan. This leads to unsatisfactory leadership and management. However, the newly appointed teacher has already rewritten schemes of work for Years 10 and 11 and has changed the examination board to suit the needs of the pupils. There is a visit to Pompeii at half-term for pupils studying Latin and the after-school lessons are very well attended. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection when GCSE grades were described as very high, with over 50 per cent of pupils achieving A\* and A grades.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The provision in design and technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards at the ages of 14 and 16 are well above national averages.
- Teaching is very good.
- Very effective use is made of information and communication technology.
- The formal monitoring of teaching is limited.
- Assessment is inconsistent within the department.

### **Commentary**

96. In 2002, teacher assessments of Year 9 pupils were well above the national average. The number of pupils achieving higher levels was well above expectations. This reflects the quality of pupils' work seen during the inspection. Pupils make very rapid progress when they come into the school. They develop a very wide range of practical skills and become confident in the use of the design process. They develop their competency in the use of ICT for a wide variety of purposes, including computer-aided design (CAD). Their analytical, evaluation and research skills are consistently developed. Teachers provide challenge for the highest-attaining pupils, including extra activities for the gifted and talented, and individual support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, all pupils achieve well for their capability.
97. GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average for A\*-C grades and for A\*-G grades, and provisional results for 2003 indicate a similar picture. Standards across the range of options are above average. Boys and girls achieve and attain equally well for their differing capabilities. Pupils work very hard and put a terrific amount of effort into their GCSE coursework. They take a real pride in the quality of its presentation, using ICT well to achieve this. They show considerable initiative when carrying out research and producing their design ideas. Pupils consistently evaluate their work to improve it.
98. Teaching is very good. Teachers have very high expectations. Their subject knowledge is very secure. This enables them to provide very competent demonstrations and explanations of new skills and techniques. They are very aware of the examination requirements and give pupils the advice they need to do well. Teachers manage pupils well and consequently, a calm and purposeful working atmosphere is present in lessons. They plan interesting activities which the pupils enjoy and which motivates them to work hard. Teachers give very good oral guidance to individual pupils. When teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs, they do so very competently. They ensure they have full access to the curriculum and achieve well. Relevant homework is an integral part of lessons and contributes positively to pupils' learning. Written marking of pupils' work is variable in quality and not all of it indicates how pupils could improve. Assessment outcomes are not always adequately used to inform planning and to set targets.
99. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of department has a very clear vision for the development of the subject and has created a hard-working and conscientious department which shares his aspirations. The department is well organised and runs smoothly. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in local and national competitions and for the oldest pupils to work with local businesses. High quality specialist accommodation is well maintained and contributes positively to pupils' learning. Displays of pupils' work enhance the teaching areas and stimulate interest in the pupils. The department lacks access to networked computers and this restricts the work GCSE pupils can do during lesson time. Although the sharing of facilities is well managed, the need for two groups to share specialist graphics and food technology rooms means that pupils cannot always have access to the specialist equipment they need at the most appropriate times. The formal monitoring of teaching needs to be developed to identify and share best practice for teaching and learning.

100. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement. Standards have improved. The quality of teaching is now very good overall. The food technology room has benefited from extension and refurbishment. The department has extended its work in the local area and in competitions. It now provides work for gifted and talented pupils both in school and through its work with primary schools in the area.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good, leading to pupils' good achievement.
- The procedures for assessment are insufficiently developed to successfully measure the quality of pupils' learning.
- The monitoring procedures do not ensure that department policies are being consistently implemented.

#### **Commentary**

101. Teacher assessment in Year 9 indicates that pupils have reached a standard higher than average when compared with other pupils of their age. GCSE results indicate that this trend continues and results were well above average in 2002, especially at grades A\*-C, and provisional results for 2003 show that this has risen.
102. The standards achieved by Year 9 and 11 are above average. Pupils in Year 9 have a good working knowledge of the key elements of art. They develop skills in a variety of two- and three-dimensional activities, extending beyond drawing and painting to print-making, papier-mâché, ceramics and ICT. They understand and use appropriate vocabulary. The pupils are proficient in researching, recording and interpreting evidence. They have an insight into the lives of some artists and also understand the significance of some movements in art and the significance of art in some early cultures. Pupils can apply their knowledge to what they do and can articulate their views in the evaluations of their own work.
103. By Year 11, pupils have extended their skills, knowledge and understanding further, and are encouraged to diversify in increasingly personal responses to set assignments. Consequently, some pupils have moved into photography, textile design, dry-point etching and simple constructions. Their artistic research takes them to artists as diverse as William Morris and Escher. The quality of the work becomes more creative and evaluations become increasingly more personal and reflective. One pupil, as a consequence of his research into Japanese culture, responded by creating a series of ceremonial artefacts, including a full size Samurai sword.
104. Achievement is good. Where teaching is challenging, pupils respond positively and achievement is very good. This is most noticeable in Years 10 and 11, although it is equally apparent in Years 7 to 9, particularly with the gifted and talented and pupils with special educational needs. The small number of students with English as an additional language adapt well to art and their achievement mirrors that of the other students. Boys and girls achieve and attain equally well. Where teaching is less rigorous, pupils do not always work to their capacity.

105. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is satisfactory or better in over four out of five lessons. In half the lessons, it is good or very good. All teachers have good subject knowledge and, in the best lessons, ensure that assignments are presented with challenge and enthusiasm. Skilful classroom management and appropriate use of time ensure that initial pupil commitment is sustained throughout the lesson. Searching plenary sessions elicit what has been learnt and understood. Homework is set regularly and is usually recorded in pupil sketchpads, providing both a record of achievement and a resource for future work. Assignments are designed to appeal equally to boys and girls. Their content is up to date and imaginative; for example, an exercise in pen and ink drawing is built around the apothecary shop, referred to in the Harry Potter books. Where teaching is less successful, expectations are less demanding so that all pupils do not maintain their efforts. Teaching is not sufficiently planned, so that some pupils become confused, frustrated and therefore tentative in their work. In such cases, homework, for example, is sometimes seen as optional. Consequently, standards in a minority of sketchpads are inconsistent. Work is sometimes missing, written instructions are ignored, and presentation is poor. Assessment is not effectively used to support pupil progress through target setting. Although in-class support is good, marking is inconsistent and pupils are not always clear about their National Curriculum Level, nor what they need to do to improve. However, when pupils do encounter problems, they seek and receive excellent support
106. Pupils like art and generally make good progress as they concentrate and persevere with their work. Most are well behaved and courteous. When taught well, they quickly gain and retain skills and knowledge in their desire to improve. They take a pride in what they achieve and gain confidence through their own improvement. Pupils can express their ideas well and older pupils in particular show considerable initiative. Deadlines for the completion of work are adhered to. A very popular art club, run by art prefects, takes place each Monday and the department remains open most lunchtimes for students wishing to continue with their work.
107. Leadership and management are good overall. Currently, the joint head of department is on maternity leave and has been replaced by an NQT. There has been significant progress in addressing the weaknesses outlined at the last inspection. In particular, a new and imaginative scheme of work has been written, divided into well-structured assignments that fully conform to National Curriculum requirements. The assignments are well planned to develop skills and encourage creativity. Other improvements, however, although planned for, require more time to become fully embedded. The shortcomings in assessment procedures and absence of a formal monitoring and evaluative process are weaknesses. Nevertheless, the atmosphere within the department is one of a calm, successful and improving department, which has the potential to improve still further.

## **Drama**

Provision in drama is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good.
- Pupils respond very well and their achievement is good.
- Timetable arrangements limit the continuity and development of pupils' skills.

### **Commentary**

108. Standards achieved by pupils in Years 7 to 9 are below average. Pupils receive only 35 minutes of drama in every two-week cycle and do not have the opportunity to build up a good understanding of the subject before they opt for it at GCSE. Year 8 pupils were observed achieving well and demonstrating good performance skills in dance routines. Pupils achieve very well in years 10 and 11. Results at GCSE in 2002 for the small minority of candidates

were above average and this trend has continued in the provisional results for 2003, especially at grades A\*-C.

109. Teaching and learning were very good in two of the three lessons sampled and good in the third. The teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge and a good awareness of appropriate teaching strategies. Lessons were very well structured with a challenging sequence of individual and group tasks. These included opportunities to explore ideas and to learn drama theory, acting techniques and theatre history. Pupils are fully engaged intellectually, physically and emotionally in their work and achieve well. Drama makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
110. The teacher responsible for drama is new to the school, but is ambitious for the subject and has good educational vision about the scope of drama within the context of performing arts. Rehearsals for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" have already begun. Drama clubs, visits by theatre in education groups and greater collaboration with the art and music departments are planned for the future.

## Music

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11.
- Instrumental and vocal performance are a significant strength with a significant proportion of pupils receiving an instrumental lesson.
- The extensive diversity and challenge in extra-curricular opportunities
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped.
- The use of assessment needs to be improved.

## Commentary

111. Pupils enter the school with standards just below the national average. The most recent end of Year 9 assessments showed most pupils to be attaining above the national average; this reflects the good progress pupils make through Years 7 to 9. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results were well above average and candidates achieved their best results in music. Results have improved since the last inspection. All pupils entered for the examination have achieved A\*-C in GCSE for the last two years.
112. Standards for most pupils are above average by the age of 14, and their achievement is good. Pupils comparing and contrasting "A Madrigal" with the "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen used the musical elements to demonstrate that they have a very secure knowledge of musical literacy. This enables them to appraise music with confidence and accuracy. They successfully compose music in a variety of style and genre, including the use of ICT to accurately shape these compositions into binary, ternary, variation and rondo forms. An excellent example of computer composition work entitled 'Randomicity' uses sampling and sequencing to produce a Rap, demonstrating style and panache. Pupils demonstrated their capability to sing a song in four parts, independently rehearse the ensemble without teacher supervision and sing with good intonation and dictation, using dynamics and a sense of style. The pupils work with obvious enjoyment and enthusiasm. Year 8 pupils are confident in their use of the 'Dance E J' software programme on computers, giving them a firm foundation on which to develop their composition skills. Year 7 were allowed to use the spacious accommodation to work independently in small groups to select sounds to create a 'Musical Scene', to perform to each other their compositions and again appraise their work.

113. Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11, leading to very good attainment for most. They are shown how to develop their musical compositions using the musical elements. Aide-memoires are prepared to enable pupils to appraise music through critical analysis. Pupils use the criteria from the examination boards to enable them to set their own targets. Standards are well above average, due to the high standards of practical performance.
114. Pupils with special needs make good progress in most lessons through specifically targeted work to extend their skills. Talented pupils are extended through open-ended tasks in lessons and are also given additional opportunities for performance through many extra-curricular activities. The department works hard to include all pupils into the musical life of the school. A notable success is that of attracting many boys on to courses and to extra-curricular activities. Sixth-form students are very good role models through their contribution to conducting and directing lunchtime ensemble rehearsals with confidence and success in preparation for the House Music Competition.
115. The overall quality of teaching is good in Years 7, 8 and 9, and is very good in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate an overwhelming love of their subject and a wish for their pupils to enjoy music. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace. Expectations are good and the work set is challenging. New concepts, including Year 7 pupils learning how to compose 'A Musical Scene', editing Dance Music in Year 8 using software on computers and an introduction to complex Twentieth Century harmonies covered by Year 11 pupils, are taught with total clarity. The provision of worksheets catering for the needs of individual pupils ensures that most pupils make good progress. However, assessment procedures are not used effectively enough to support planning and so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their standards in performing, composing and appraising. In Years 10 and 11, teaching arrangements do not enable teachers to support pupils composition skills sufficiently.
116. The leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is a very high level of commitment and organisation for the musical life of the school, and this is very well managed. The department contributes strongly to the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the participation in the life of the community. There are choirs, a band and an orchestra who give performances locally, nationally and through visits abroad. Visiting instrumental teachers contribute significantly to the department. However, within subject management, there are some shortcomings. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are only satisfactory. The procedures for assessment are inconsistently used and there has been inadequate staff professional development to recognise this weakness.

## **Physical education**

Overall, provision is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards reached are well above average.
- Good teaching and very positive pupil attitudes result in good achievement.
- Staff commitment is unusually high and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- In core PE, assessment and monitoring procedures are not driving up standards.
- Lack of on-site facilities for games restricts whole school curriculum and timetable innovation.

## **Commentary**

117. Standards are above average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. This is reflected in the 2002 GCSE examination results when almost all pupils obtained higher pass grades, with over one-third being A\*/A grades. Results are comparable with other subjects within the school. Most pupils make good progress. Although good overall, pupils on GCSE examination courses are achieving better than pupils in core practical lessons in all

year groups, because monitoring and assessment procedures on examination courses are more effective. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls or those with special educational needs. Overall, provision for school sport is excellent and there is an extensive programme of inter-school fixtures. The school enjoys considerable success at county and district level, for example, the under-19 boys are currently the County Football Champions and the girls' hockey teams are eminently successful in the district. An unusually high number of pupils reach the very highest standards in their respective sport. High standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. This is largely due to good teaching, teachers' dedication to extra-school activities and pupils' enthusiasm for sport, which lead to good achievement overall.

118. Effective games skills quickly develop from Year 7. In only their third lesson in hockey, most Year 7 girls can dribble with control and hit the ball up to ten metres with accuracy. By Year 9, boys fearlessly play a full game of rugby, having learnt the skills of rucking and scrummaging. Evaluation skills are less well developed as the new schemes of work are not yet embedded into the work of the department. Knowledge of health-related fitness is variable. Many pupils know about the effect of exercise on the body but few know the names of muscles. Having successfully learnt the basic skills in Years 7 to 9 most pupils go on to develop a good understanding of the finer points of tactics and techniques in Years 10 and 11. In a GCSE rounders lesson observed, Year 11 pupils, with little prior knowledge of the game, were positioning the ball intelligently and working effectively as a team.
119. Overall standards of oral and written skills in Year 10 to 11 GCSE groups are very good. This greatly enhances their chances of success in the written element of the course where there is much technical language to be mastered. Pupils accurately and confidently described movements of different types of joints of the body, such as the ball and socket joint, using the descriptions 'adductors' and 'abductors'. Evaluation of their written work shows that most pupils are working to the higher grades.
120. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. One excellent lesson was observed and one unsatisfactory. Where teaching is excellent, it is well matched to pupils' needs, practices are devised with purpose and flair and the lesson presented in a lively and stimulating way. As a result, excellent progress is made and pupils work hard and feel satisfied with their achievements. Unsatisfactory teaching is due to inappropriate curriculum-planning and lack of space, leading to under-achievement. Teaching is strengthened by very good subject knowledge which stretches the gifted and talented pupils. Lessons are well structured, allowing ample time for learning and developing new work. Excellent use is made of in-house-produced resource material, supported by interactive PowerPoint. This reduces the need for note taking, freeing more time for fruitful discussion. The predominant didactic style is generally effective in the teaching of basic skills. Teaching lacks consistency in approach to cross-curricular aspects such as literacy, numeracy and health-related fitness.
121. Leadership is satisfactory with considerable potential. The new head of department has made a good start by correctly identifying key issues for development. Day-to-day management of the department is very good. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is insufficiently rigorous at both departmental and senior management levels. The main playing field is over a mile from the school and this hampers whole school curriculum development and places significant constraints on the timetable. Despite improvements to the range of activities offered by the new sports hall, on-site facilities remain unsatisfactory. Pupils miss out on formal opportunities for learning and socialising, although they make very good use of their free time, when weather permits, to participate in some of the activities which they organise amongst themselves. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The department development plans are much improved; more pupils, particularly girls, take GCSE and schemes of work are in the process of being developed. Insufficient progress has been made on linking schemes of work and assessment procedures to the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

No vocational courses are taught.

### **Business Studies**

Provision in business studies is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of attainment are well above average.
- Achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT to enhance their learning, achievement and presentation.

#### **Commentary**

122. GCSE business studies was sampled to support the main focus on the sixth form. One lesson was seen, together with a substantial sample of the work of the present Year 11.
123. There has been considerable improvement in attainment at GCSE in the last four years. Standards in 2002 were well above national averages and in 2003, only one candidate in an entry of 46 achieved lower than grade C. Standards in the work seen during the inspection are well above average and represent very good achievement in what is for the pupils a totally new subject. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
124. Pupils' achievement is supported by very good teaching and learning, which is reflected in the way pupils act on the study skills advice given by teachers on how to take notes efficiently and to lay out a written submission so that it is clear, legible, and easy to follow. They have also developed good analytic and research skills. Presentation and organisation of work is of a high standard, despite the fact that opportunities for more creative presentation using ICT are limited. Pupils of all levels of capability are very well supported and challenged.
125. Assessment is consistent and frequent, and pupils are aware of the levels they have achieved and the minimum targets towards which they are working. Feedback is full and, being both encouraging and critical, is designed to improve performance. Teachers have begun to apply further rigour in monitoring and grading the standard of note taking. This, coupled with the considerable improvement in GCSE results, reflects the good leadership and management of the department in ensuring that standards continue to rise.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The overall ethos of the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development as good citizens.
- The personal, social and health education course is satisfactory.
- The statutory requirements for citizenship are not met. The overall leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

## **Personal, social and health education**

Overall, the quality of provision **is satisfactory**.

### **Commentary**

126. There is a satisfactory personal, social and health education programme in place, which provides discrete lessons. The lessons focus on study skills and careers education, but also provide adequate sessions about sex and relationships education and alcohol and drugs misuse. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching where there are good question-and-answer-sessions stimulating the involvement of the pupils.

## **Citizenship**

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Commentary**

127. There are no national norms available for this subject against which pupils' attainment and experience can be measured. However, pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes and the way that they are involved in whole school and house activities indicate that they have above average standards. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills through the school council and opportunities to exercise responsibility and enterprise. They undertake a range of duties in relation to whole school and house activities as well as participation in extra-curricular sport and cultural activities, which they support very well.

128. Very few identified lessons occur and there was a very limited amount of specific work to analyse. From lessons seen, the standards were broadly average. Although it is clear that the school ethos does develop the skills of enquiry and communication, participation and responsible action, these aspects are not identified or assessed as part of the citizenship curriculum.

129. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The statutory requirements for citizenship as set out in the National Curriculum, which have been in place since August 2002, are not being fulfilled. A decision has been made to teach citizenship through other subjects in the curriculum, rather than as discrete lessons. At present, work is being carried out to determine which subjects already contribute to the citizenship curriculum through their lessons and schemes of work. Some additional items have been added to the personal, social and health education programme, including work on government and a module on crime and punishment during Activities Week. However, planning, the development of schemes of work and supporting documentation are at a very early stage of development. There is no assessment system in place. Schools are required to report annually to parents on pupils' achievement in citizenship and, at the end of Year 9, on their attainment. The statutory requirements for this are not met.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002.

### Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	%gaining grades A-B		%gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	7	57.1	33.2	100	81.6	42.9	33.2
Chemistry	5	0	36.9	60.0	84.8	16.0	35.2
French	6	33.3	35.2	100	85.4	40.0	34.9
Design and technology	5	0	32.0	100	89.2	32.0	35.7
History	5	80.0	37.2	100	91.8	46.0	37.8
Mathematics	11	36.4	34.3	100	74.2	38.2	31.3
Physics	10	40.0	36.2	90.0	82.0	36.0	34.3

### Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	%gaining grades A-B		%gaining grades A-E		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	13	61.5	48.7	100	96.1	87.7	85.1
Biology	36	52.8	36.03	97.2	91.6	86.7	74.1
Business studies	20	50	32.8	100	96.4	90	76.5
Chemistry	28	53.6	45.9	92.9	94	83.6	81.1
Economics	16	75.0	45.8	100	96.2	101.3	83.1
English/English language	39	28.2	36.5	100	98.3	82.6	80.1
English literature	11	45.5	43.7	100	98.5	92.7	84.3
French	19	47.4	46.1	94.7	96.2	76.8	83.0
Design and technology	16	25.0	35.5	100	95.3	75.0	76.5
General studies	130	51.5	29.1	98.5	90.1	89.1	69.3
Geography	29	75.9	40.5	100	97.1	100	80.9
German	9	22.2	44.3	77.8	96.3	48.9	82.1
History	45	64.4	41.0	100	97.1	93.3	81.2
Mathematics	33	69.7	52.2	100	93.3	97.6	84.7
Music	10	40.0	41.8	100	97.7	86.0	82.2
Physics	29	65.4	42.8	100	92.8	94.6	78.6
Religious education	13	61.5	44.0	100	96.3	93.8	82.2
Sports/PE	25	40.0	29.5	100	95.4	87.2	73.2

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan lessons very well.
- Assignments are very well planned so that students make the most of their capabilities and achieve very well at AS and A2.
- Lessons could have a wider variety of teaching styles to promote more investigative study from students, to make them more responsible for their own progress and provide better preparation for higher education.

#### Commentary

130. The curriculum is very good with a choice of an English Literature course or one that combines both English Language and English Literature. Both courses are popular and the retention rate is very high. Attainment on entry to the AS level course is high with a large proportion of students having gained grades A or B at GCSE. Students make very good progress and achieve very well. Both courses attract more girls than boys and girls achieve better than boys. In 2002, over half achieved grades A or B in English Literature and provisional results for 2003 show that the proportion obtaining grades A or B in English Language and Literature have significantly increased. Inspection evidence confirmed that students are well taught and work hard to achieve these grades. Some excellent work was seen from both courses, including work in a number of genres such as travelogue, media studies and autobiography. Research and study skills are systematically developed especially to investigate the cultural and historical context of literary texts. In conversation, students confirmed that they were all pleased with the progress and the growth in maturity achieved over the two years and were grateful to their teachers.
131. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and they have worked hard to develop knowledge and skills for both the English Language and Literature courses, which has enhanced the teaching, and thus the skills of the students to meet the demands of the syllabus. Students write very well and it is a feature of the very good teaching that language skills are systematically developed, especially in those elements which require writing for a specified audience. Even though the teaching is very good, too much of the lessons are over-directed and discussion is constrained to students working in pairs with the teachers guiding discussion with firm instructions or a worksheet. However, such capable students should be required to do more of their own investigative work and have more opportunities to present their own findings. The bibliographies to their written assignments indicate that they would respond well to the challenge. Good relationships, anecdotes, humour and a good reference to a wider literary context meant that lessons were interesting and that students did not flag or go off task.
132. The leadership and management are very good with a strong sense of direction and purpose. Courses are well planned to meet syllabus specifications and to promote students' personal development. Achievement is closely monitored; assessment is accurate and students receive very good guidance about how to improve their work. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they work hard to develop. They are well deployed and work well in partnership. There is a confidence in what they are doing which is well justified and which communicates itself to the students who respond very positively to the challenges.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

133. Standards of literacy and oracy are very high in the sixth form. Students achieve very well and make very good progress over the two years. The school has recognised that even the highest attainers need to learn note making and essay-planning skills if they are to further develop their potential. In history and geography lessons, students were observed being taught skills of managing facts and arguments to a high level. In science, students' expression of ideas is very precise and they use technical terms very accurately. Grammar is taught very thoroughly in modern foreign languages. Many subjects give students specific lists of key concepts and vocabulary to support and extend the work being done on assignments. In the English lessons observed, no opportunity was missed to enrich students' understanding and use of language.

## Modern foreign languages

Both French and German were inspected in depth, although there is only a Year 12 German set.

Overall, the quality of provision is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average, students are achieving well and making good progress.
- Very good support, individual help and guidance are given to students.
- The arrangements for developing students' independent listening skills need to be addressed.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to practise and consolidate language at their own pace.

## Commentary

134. In 2002, French and German results at A2 were below the national average but results in AS French were well above the national average. Provisional results for 2003 indicate a very significant improvement in A2 results, with an above-average proportion of higher grades in both languages.
135. The current students' work is of above average standard. Early drafts of coursework show good levels of grammatical accuracy combined with a broad range of topic specific vocabulary. In one French lesson, students practised giving a wide range of opinions and justifications in the format of a lively debate. Early in the course, AS German students are revising and consolidating key areas of grammar in a very methodical way.
136. Achievement is good. Students are well prepared for the demands of A2 courses and they make good progress in applying grammar and deepening their knowledge in oral and coursework topics. They are encouraged to choose topics which interest them and to research them thoroughly. After just one year from GCSE, the quality of students' work has matured considerably.
137. Overall the quality of teaching is good, with some very good features, and students are very appreciative of this provision. For example, in a lively lesson on the topic of smoking, students' confidence was built up by rapid and demanding question-and-answer work before they were expected to practise further in pairs and groups. In another AS level lesson, students' capabilities were being extended by a well-structured set of activities which built on what they knew already but moved them on steadily in small steps. Effective use is made of ICT. Teachers are very knowledgeable and prepare their lessons well. In some lessons, students would benefit from having better opportunities to practise and consolidate knowledge at their own pace, for example, by working in pairs or small groups. The development of independent listening skills needs some improvement. Previous attempts to provide students with tapes to

practise listening skills independently have not been entirely successful, and the quality of advice students receive on how to approach this skill is not at the same good level as in other skill areas. Students are very appreciative of the support which they receive from teachers. Staff are very willing to arrange extra help on an individual basis when needed. Very detailed information is made available to students about different aspects of the examination, especially written coursework and the oral examination. Grade criteria for examinations are clearly presented and students are given good feedback on how they are doing. The atmosphere in lessons is very good.

138. There is good provision of foreign language assistants and a long-standing parent volunteer also acts as an assistant. These arrangements contribute significantly to the development of students' speaking skills and students appreciate these opportunities. The current AS French class contains 24 students which is unusually large. This makes it difficult for teachers to give sufficient individual attention to students.
139. Following the below average A2 results in 2002, a self-evaluation exercise was conducted and a detailed action plan drawn up to bring about improvement. Progress in this area is good, with teaching closely focused on the specifications and grade criteria. Good leadership has had a positive impact on raising standards. Students report that they enjoy having three different members of staff in A2 French and that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average.
- Teaching is very good and students achieve well.
- Students' attitudes are excellent and they enjoy their work.
- Leadership is good.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in the teaching.

### **Commentary**

140. The inspection covered the A-level modules in mechanics, pure mathematics and statistics. Year 12 students complete the first module in each of these. Year 13 students choose between second modules in either mechanics or statistics after completing the second pure mathematics module. Further modules allow students to complete the more advanced 'further mathematics' courses.
141. Results at GCE A-level in 2002 were well above the national average for the number of students with the higher A/B grades. All students earned a grade. Although no national comparison is available, results for the 2003 examinations indicate that students have achieved slightly better results. At A/S-level in 2003, over half of the large number of students entered achieved the higher grades and all but four earned a grade. Retention rates on the courses are high. A notable feature is the number of students studying further mathematics and their enthusiasm for it.
142. Standards seen in the inspection reflect the examination results. Achievement is good in lessons because time is used well in extending students' knowledge, both in developing further aspects of calculus and in the introduction of more complicated functions in pure mathematics. Students work hard and well together. Problem solving in mechanics is well above average. Achievement is good in mechanics, helped by photocopied notes and marked exercises that help students learn. Statistics notes are particularly neat and accurate. Achievement overall is good when compared to students' attainment at GCSE.

143. Teaching is very good because the subject expertise of the teachers is very good. New work is explained very well. Lessons are quite lively at times, with some good humour, encouraging and engaging students very well, so they learn very well. Planning in both the short term and long term is very good, ensuring continuity and progression in the learning as well as a good pace. Planning also provides good opportunities for students' private study. They make good use of this and are becoming less dependent on the teachers for their learning. The limited use of computers in the teaching restricts the pace of learning in some aspects of mathematics: graph work, for example. Students have to use their initiative in private study for this experience.
144. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is good as it includes further mathematics, but time for teaching is limited. Students know what they have to do to succeed in their studies because they know their target grades. Students' performance data is monitored well and appropriate action is taken. Leadership has formed an effective group of teachers who work well as a team. Improvement since the last inspection is good because standards have improved.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

145. Standards in numeracy are above average and support the work in all subjects very well. This enables students to carry out their work in the handling of statistical data, and translating this in to graphs, effectively. This is seen, for example, in the science subjects and geography, where they are very capable of interrogating the information and drawing appropriate conclusions. In business and economics the students show an understanding of, and capability to interpret, statistical information and accounting systems. They are very well supported in these activities because of their very good literacy skills so that they express their ideas and findings in a cogent manner.

### **SCIENCE**

All three science subjects were inspected in depth.

Provision for chemistry is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- The above average proportion of grades A-B.
- The use of assessment and target-setting is underdeveloped.
- The use of information and communication technology has some shortcomings.

### **Commentary**

146. The GCE A-level examination results in 2002, overall, were above those of other schools nationally. The results for male students were well above the national average but those for female students were below average. The proportion gaining higher grades, A and B, was above average. In the 2003 examinations, provisional results show that all students gained a pass grade but the number gaining the higher grades was below that for 2002 and female students performed better than male students. The AS-level results in 2002 were above average. AS results for 2003, however, were not as good as those for 2002. In each of the 2002 and 2003 examinations, students' achievement was as expected relative to their GCSE grades.

147. The standards of Year 13 students are above average and they achieve well in relation to their GCSE results. In lessons, students achieve well as a result of the good teaching which demands much of them. In one lesson, for example, all students made good improvements in their knowledge and understanding of chemical equilibria.
148. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. Nevertheless, they are achieving well overall. Higher-attaining students show, for example, good knowledge and understanding of how to determine relative atomic masses, using a mass spectrometer. Lower-attaining students however, have more difficulty in interpreting information from mass spectrographs. Most are successfully moving on from GCSE work into new areas of chemistry. A few lower-attaining students, however, have greater difficulty in applying the concepts learned in GCSE to more advanced work.
149. Written work is generally well presented and matches the confidence which students display in the classroom. Students display a high degree of numerical competency.
150. Teaching is good. The use of very good subject knowledge coupled with good, well-focused lesson-planning maintains interest and engenders learning. However, students are not always provided with sufficient opportunity for independent learning. Whilst all students have targets, insufficient use is made of assessment to monitor their progress against these targets, to identify underachievers and adjust teaching accordingly. Day-to-day marking is thorough overall and often provides good guidance for students on how to improve.
151. Students learn well. They respond well to challenge, work hard and show interest in their work. They support and help each other and enter into mature discussion as part of their learning. When provided with the opportunities to do so, they undertake independent work maturely.
152. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. There is a commitment to improving standards. The difficulties which the department has experienced during the past year with respect to staffing have improved. The head of department, who is beginning his second year in post, has recognised the need to improve standards by improving assessment and by monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching to mould the department into a more effective team. Apart from the provision of computers, which is unsatisfactory, a satisfactory range of learning support materials is used well to develop opportunities for learning. More attention needs to be given to the use of information and communications technology as an aid to both teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the capacity to improve further is good.

## Physics

The overall provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above the national average by the end of Year 13.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Insufficient use is made of assessment data to improve individuals' performance and improve curriculum planning.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to develop learning.

### Commentary

153. The GCE A-level examination results in 2002 were well above those of other schools nationally. The results for female students were above the national average and those for male students well above. The proportion gaining higher grades, A and B, was above average and all students gained a pass. In the 2003 examinations, provisional results show that all students

gained a pass but the number of students gaining higher level passes was below that for 2002. The AS results in 2002 were well above average; 90 per cent of students gained a pass and the number gaining A and B grades was above the national average. In 2003, the results were better and the proportion of students gaining A and B passes was higher than in 2002.

154. Students achieve well. This is as a result of good teaching and very good attitudes to learning by most of the students. Year 12 students made good progress interpreting results of an investigation into the changing resistivity of materials as a model of an archaeological survey. In a Year 13 lesson, high teacher expectations and good use of whole class demonstrations enabled students to achieve well in an investigation of particle size using laser beam diffraction.
155. Most students by the end of Year 13 have good grasp of the essential nature of waves and matter, and in discussion, higher-attaining students show a very good understanding of the differences between transverse and longitudinal waves and describe well applications of the photo-electric effect.
156. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use well in demonstrations and in probing questions. Homework is often used well to reinforce learning and good links are made with other subjects, such as mathematics, as in a Year 13 lesson about circular motion. Students learn well because the teaching is often challenging and teachers expect a high work output, particularly when the lesson requires interpretation and evaluation of a practical investigation. Teaching is frequently enhanced by the very effective use of an interactive whiteboard but insufficient opportunities are available for students to develop their own ICT skills during lessons. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection, although the school has major plans to address this issue in the near future.
157. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and formally-assessed work is well marked, although overall approaches to assessment do not always help individual students make better progress
158. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader provides a good teaching role model and has influenced the recent introduction of a more practical and interesting teaching programme. However, the use of data to improve forward planning and self-review is underdeveloped. Since the time of the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory.

## **Biology**

Provision for biology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 13.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Assessment data is not used effectively to improve individual student performance and improve curriculum planning.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to develop learning.

### **Commentary**

159. The GCE A-level examination results in 2002 were well above those of other schools nationally. The results for male students were above the national average and those for female students well above. The proportion gaining higher grades, A and B, was above average and almost all students gained a pass. In the 2003 examinations, all but two students gained a pass but the number of students gaining higher level passes was below that for 2002. The AS-level results in 2002 were high in comparison with the national average and all students gained

a pass. AS results for 2003 were not as good as those for 2002 and the proportion of students gaining A and B passes was lower.

160. Overall, achievement is good. In the best lessons, students achieve well in relation to their prior learning, as in one Year 12 lesson when students made good gains in a relatively short time in their understanding of relative sizes of organisms and organelles, such as bacteria and mitochondria. By Year 13, students have a very good knowledge of respiration. They discuss well the importance of the Krebb's Cycle, and higher-attaining students have a good grasp of the chemical function of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) as an energy supplier in the process. At this early stage in the term, higher-attaining Year 12 students have a good understanding of plant and animal cell structures and their characteristics. Lower-attaining students have some difficulty understanding the chemistry of the nitrogen cycle in their study of ecosystems.
161. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. In the best lessons the pace is lively and teacher expectations high. In a good Year 12 lesson, the teacher used his knowledge to challenge students to think hard about the relative sizes of organisms and organelles seen under the microscope. Students rose to the challenge well and many could derive units, such as the *nanometre*, on the whiteboard, making good links with their mathematical knowledge. Occasionally, opportunities to assess students' understanding through challenging questioning are missed. Homework is used well to reinforce learning, and marking is supportive and regular.
162. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Assessment data is not adequately used to help individual students make better progress or to review curriculum planning. The provision of information and communication technology to support students' learning, and review and evaluation strategies are under-developed. Since the time of the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

**There is no certificated course at AS or A2.**

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

163. Provision is **unsatisfactory**. Teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT to improve their teaching and they do not have sufficiently high expectations of how students can use ICT to improve their learning. Some students have a very good grasp of the ways in which they can carry out research and process information from the internet to aid their study in other subjects. They use this skill well to carry out assignments they have been set and for individual projects they develop. This can be illustrated by the way in which a student in A-level chemistry was using a spreadsheet to assist in the analysis of his experimental results in the study of acidic reactions. However, the majority of students have ICT skills below those required to raise standards in their examination courses or to prepare them for when they leave the sixth form. The school has no system to assess what skills students have or for these students to improve their skills.

## HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was on geography, history and Latin. Religious education was not inspected as this was within the remit of the Section 23 inspection.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good with some excellent features.
- Teachers pass on their enthusiasm to their students.
- Students are very well supported so that their achievement is very good.
- There are no major areas in need of improvement.

## Commentary

164. The results for students who sat the A2 papers in 2002 were well above the national average: nearly half attained grade A and three-quarters grades A or B. Girls overall achieved higher grades than boys but results for both were well above the respective national averages. Achievement in the A2 papers in 2003 was in line with the school's expectations but lower than in 2002, mainly due to the performance of boys, who on the whole had entered the sixth form with lower prior attainment than previous groups. The results of Year 12 students in AS examinations are above average and in 2003 were similar for boys and girls.
165. Inspection evidence confirms that standards seen in the current sixth form are well above average and that there is no difference in standards between boys and girls. Achievement is very good. Students are highly motivated and show high levels of commitment and organisation. In Year 12 students benefit from a comprehensive programme of fieldwork so that they do well in the skills paper in the AS examination. They gain a very good understanding of processes and their impact when considering issues; this was evident when a Year 12 class was evaluating different models of population change. The standard of presentation of work is very good; in one Year 13 lesson, groups of students used PowerPoint very effectively to share the results of their investigation into a biome with the rest of the class.
166. Teaching and learning are both very good. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of the subject and an infectious enthusiasm which engages students throughout lessons and promotes their desire to learn. Relationships between teachers and students are excellent. Aims and objectives are made clear, in terms of the lesson and of the examinations. Development of study skills and examination technique takes place alongside the teaching of the subject. Lesson-planning is thorough. Well-devised resources, developed by the teachers, include writing frames so that students learn to structure written answers well. Detailed marking, very good use of assessment and students' evaluation of each other's work also provide strong support for learning.
167. The leadership and management in the subject are very good and share the strengths of vision and planning with the main school. The sixth-form teachers work closely as a team. They evaluate the impact of their teaching and review strategies where necessary; for example, the approach to the synoptic paper in Year 13 has been amended. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Geography is an increasingly popular and successful subject.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results at both GCE AS and A2 levels are well above the national averages and students achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are very good, although more opportunity could be given to discussion work.
- The marking and assessment of students' work and progress is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

## Commentary

168. Results in the 2002 GCE 'A' level were well above average at both A-B and A-E grades. Boys performed slightly better than girls but on the basis of a smaller entry. At AS level, the proportion of A-B grades was well above the national average. A-level results since 1998 show an improving trend in performance.
169. Achievement is very good and students maintain the high standards attained at GCSE level. They have well-developed note-making skills, and can collect and collate information from disparate sources which they use to produce detailed and well-structured accounts of study topics in their files. They write analytical essays on both British and European history in which they consider the causes and consequences of events and developments in depth, and balance opposing arguments and hypotheses.
170. Attitudes and values are excellent. Students in both year groups demonstrate a very mature approach to their studies and a high level of commitment. They take full advantage of the opportunities they are afforded, to take a lead in the presentation of material following research although boys are more confident than girls in this regard and display more advanced oral skills. They consider the marking and assessment of their work to be very helpful since clear indications are always given as to the improvements and refinements that could be made. Students in Year 13 are very appreciative of the wide choice they are given in respect of coursework requirements. Students in Year 12 consider that they have adapted well to the much greater demands of AS level work although a few find the amount of reading that is required of them rather daunting.
171. Teaching is good and in, combination with the excellent attitudes of students, promotes very good standards of learning. All three teachers have a secure knowledge base for A-level work. Their planning both of individual lessons and of a series of lessons on the areas of study allows for coverage of all aspects at a suitable depth of enquiry. Teachers take care to stress, and to make students aware of, the broad themes and developments running through topics and periods as well as their more particular aspects. Given the high ability levels of students and their excellent approach to the subject however they would profit considerably from more encouragement to raise and discuss issues and arguments in class at greater length.
172. Leadership and management are very good. Strategies for the recruitment of students to sixth-form work have proved very effective; there are currently 75 students in Year 12 being taught in four distinct groups. Retention rates are equally impressive. The content of AS and A-level courses is clearly set out in a handbook which also specifies how historical investigations and the course work element will be assessed. The teaching of groups is shared between the three specialist teachers in the department. There is a considerably greater number of scholarly works in the school library on the European than the British history elements of the course; the department's self-evaluation recognizes a deficiency in books and resources for the study of American history. The previous inspection report did not identify any issues for attention in the sixth form.

## Latin

Overall, provision in Latin is **unsatisfactory but improving**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in AS and A2 Latin are below average.
- Students in Year 13 have a poor understanding of Latin grammar and syntax.
- The newly-appointed teacher has already identified and implemented strategies to raise achievement in AS and A2 Latin.

- There is no formal monitoring of teaching and no departmental development plan.

### Commentary

173. Although only a minority of students take the course, making comparisons with national statistics difficult, standards in both AS and A2 Latin are below average and there have been few A and B grades achieved over the past three years. Students in Year 13 have a poor understanding of Latin grammar and, as a result, their translation skills are weak. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection, when achievement was described as high. However, achievement looks set to improve since the standards seen in the current Year 12 were higher than those in Year 13. The newly-appointed classicist has already begun to address the weaknesses in the language skills of all students by revising the basics of Latin grammar. The students themselves fully appreciate the need for this in order to progress. In both year groups, students respond well to the study of Latin literature and they discuss both the content and the language of the poem with feeling and maturity.
174. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, it is characterised by a variety of tasks, challenging questions and lively discussion. Students respond very well and ask equally searching questions of their teacher. For example, in a Year 12 literature lesson, the teacher set a 'starter' activity for students to consider individually the reason why Catullus might have used a pseudonym for his girlfriend. This led to an in-depth, articulate discussion of Catullus's view of his relationship with Lesbia. However, where teaching is less than satisfactory, it is because the tasks do not meet the needs of the students. For example, in a Year 13 language lesson, students were unable to translate a passage of Cicero since they did not have the appropriate knowledge of Latin grammar or vocabulary. This poor grasp of the language is further illustrated by the low grades in the AS level Latin language papers of the current Year 13. However, during the lessons observed, the teacher gives helpful verbal feedback and support to individual students and she checks current understanding well through precise questioning.
175. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory. Students have respect for their teacher who responds to them with encouragement and warmth. They work well in pairs and listen attentively to the views of others. They have very positive attitudes to Latin with two students planning to study classics at university, all AS level students intending to continue with Latin to A2 level and one Year 12 student studying GCSE Greek in her own time.
176. The weakness in leadership and management highlighted for the main school exists in the sixth form. Latin forms part of the languages department and, as such, there is inadequate monitoring and evaluation and no departmental development plan. This leads to unsatisfactory leadership and management. In addition, there is no assessment procedure for monitoring student progress. However, the newly-appointed teacher has already identified, and is beginning to address, the areas of weakness of individual students. There is a good selection of books for individual study and students use these and the Internet for research homework. There are few opportunities for students to enrich their studies by attending lecture days or visiting sites of archaeological interest.

### ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

177. **Design and Technology** was sampled. Provision is **very good**. Standards are above average and students achieve well, regardless of their level of capability. Teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations and give students very useful help and guidance to ensure they achieve their potential. Students are encouraged to make extensive use of ICT to support their work. The quality of their practical work is very good. Coursework shows extensive research, analysis, evaluation and high standards of presentation. There are very good opportunities for students to work in collaboration with local industries. Leadership and management are very good.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

178. Art was the main subject inspected although music and drama were sampled. **Provision for music is very good.** Standards are well above average and students achieve well. Teaching is very good and enables students to follow an independent line of study and to be creative and progress while learning self-discipline. The quality of performance is very good. Leadership and management are good. The sixth form lead many of the varied extra-curricular activities within the school at lunchtime and after school to further enhance opportunities. Students fully participate in the range of choirs and orchestra. **The provision for drama is good.** Standards in Year 12 are broadly average. Students' script-reading skills are good, but they do not have sufficient grasp of basic technical concepts and terms. Teaching is very good and there is a clear vision for future development.

### Art

The quality of provision is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at AS and A2 are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good overall; it is well planned and carefully structured to meet student needs.
- An effective programme of workshops and field trips support progress with set assignments.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the teaching to ensure consistency.

### Commentary

179. Standards are well above average. The GCE AS/A-level courses offered are well matched to requirements. They have improved significantly since the last inspection. Results at GCE A-level and AS level are consistently above national averages, both in the proportions achieving at least a pass grade, and in terms of those gaining higher grades. Students are very successful, with the majority achieving high-grade passes. Retention rates are also consistently high. Both these trends can be seen to have continued in the provisional results for 2003.

180. The quality of the work in student portfolios confirms these high standards. It shows that students have carried out thoughtful investigations and creative responses to assignments, in an increasingly diverse range of media. In particular, one student built a full-size wicker man to encapsulate her father's personality, supported by a detailed and reflective evaluation of her project. Most students can move comfortably between figurative and abstract work. The quality of students' work in oil painting is very good. A small number of students also diversify into photography with equally high outcomes. Achievement is good, and sometimes very good for an increasing minority of female students, even when taking account of their high level of attainment at GCSE. Progress is successfully maintained and celebrated by the high expectations of the course leader and the high level of support given by the entire department.

181. The quality of teaching is good overall, and on occasion is very good. The department has prepared a new programme of work since the last inspection. Assignments are well designed to include aims and objectives, staged tasks and clear deadlines for completion. As a result, students understand what is expected of them and work at a good pace. Teachers successfully combine the teaching of new skills with artistic understanding within each of the set assignments, so that most students quickly grow in confidence. For example, students work in pairs with digital cameras to photograph each other from different angles, as a preliminary to their work on cubism. Teachers are very effective in encouraging independent

learning in students. Through group and individual support, they also develop students' capacity to discuss their work critically and respond sensitively.

182. The availability of good quality resources, particularly oil paints and canvases, ICT provision and photographic equipment, encourages students to produce work of high quality. The courses are well supported by intensive 'workshops', for example in oil painting, when required. There are also residential field trips and a series of visits to galleries to enable students to expand their experiences and develop their individuality. Many students speak highly of the support provided by their teachers.
183. The quality of leadership and management is good. The new courses are well managed. Students benefit from the enthusiasm and commitment of the course leader. Teachers set targets for pass rates and regularly monitor progress against these targets. Target-setting for individual students is at an early stage of development, and strategies to ensure consistency and to monitor and evaluate progress are not adequately implemented. Records of formal meetings are insufficient and communications between teachers who share groups are not always effective.
184. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. All the teaching staff have joined the department since that time. Courses have been imaginatively updated. High expectations, personal support, and the celebration of student success have engendered a powerful ethos for learning that continues to grow in strength each year.

## **HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL**

### **Physical education/Sports Studies**

Overall, provision is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average and improving.
- Very good teaching with some excellent features results in good achievement.
- Monitoring, mentoring and guidance of students is driving up standards.
- Staff commitment is very high and competitive sport is thriving.
- There are no significant weaknesses.

#### **Commentary**

185. Two lessons were observed one Year 13 A-level theory and one joint Years 12/13 recreation. It was quickly established that physical education post-16 is a strength of the school. Progress since the last inspection is good.
186. A-level examination results in 2002 were well above average, having improved since the last inspection. Numbers of students entered have increased in recent years, with females obtaining marginally better results than males. This is partly due to excellent female role models. Although there is no published national data at AS level, standards are judged to be well above average and follow a similar pattern to that at A-level. In view of students' prior levels of attainment, their achievement is good. They make good progress both in lessons and over the course as a whole. Success is largely due to very good teaching and rigorous monitoring.
187. Analysis of written work shows literacy skills are very good. In accurately describing and explaining the codification of sporting structures that took place in the public schools, students showed that they are developing good independent research and ICT skills. Work is well structured and organised, closely matched with both the needs of the students and the demands of the course. Excellent interactive, PowerPoint course material has been produced

in-house, resulting in quality learning. Indications are that some of the teaching is inspirational. In the Year 13 lesson observed, students successfully grasped the principles of the qualities and characteristics of leadership. The teacher skilfully drew on their own experiences as captains and coaches to bring relevance, interest and understanding to the topic. Although students worked hard, they tended to be passive. Teaching to provoke dynamic debate and discussion was not well developed.

188. Students receive very good guidance and support. Almost all students, bar two or three out of approximately 30, continue onto A-level after AS. Students express high levels of satisfaction with the help they receive and are particularly appreciative of fortnightly mentoring sessions. All students interviewed hoped to go on to higher education to study for a degree in sports studies or an allied subject.
189. Leadership and management are good. Students are used extensively to coach young pupils, contributing significantly to their personal development. Most students continue with recreational physical education and participation in competitive sport is good. Staff are highly committed to the students.

## **BUSINESS**

Economics was sampled during the inspection. Provision is **good**. At AS and A2 level in 2002, results were above national averages with two-thirds of candidates gaining the higher A/B grades in the A2 examination. Provisional results for 2003 show that these standards have been maintained. Observation and scrutiny shows that students are fulfilling the requirements of the course and therefore achieving at least satisfactorily.

### **Business studies**

Provision in business studies is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average.
- Achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Students have little opportunity to contribute to lessons and to use ICT to enhance the quality of their learning and presentation.

### **Commentary**

190. In 2002 standards at GCE A2 level were above average, with half the candidates gaining grades A and B. In the provisional results for 2003, two-thirds of the entry achieved those grades, indicating that attainment is well above national averages. Similar change has occurred at AS level, with students gaining higher grades than in 2002. In 2003, nine out of the fourteen candidates achieved A and B grades, and all achieved grade D or above.
191. Students' work in Year 13 shows good achievement in the way they match independent research skills, good organisation and efficient presentation with a thorough understanding of the different aspects of business. In class, however, much of the students' contribution is in response to mainly teacher-led discussion. Although they show good retention and understanding of key terms and issues, there are few opportunities for students to make their own independent input into the lesson. This tends to lessen their achievement. In Year 12, many students, some new to the course, still need to acquire the skills to provide precise information in completing their set tasks, and to remember to illustrate theory with practical examples from their case study.

192. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have a profound knowledge of their subject and constantly challenge students to contribute to discussion of the current topic, skilfully using prior knowledge to “tease out” ideas and direct students’ thinking processes. This method is very efficient and students react well to it, but opportunities are often missed to invite students to lead discussion. Brainstorming, researching and presenting arguments or aspects of a topic, in pairs or groups, would give them more independence and responsibility for input into their learning. In this way they would need to analyse, support and justify their arguments and would raise their skills and achievement to higher levels. Nevertheless, some lessons do have to take place in a very small room, which is an inhibiting factor.
193. 193. Leadership and management are good, and both teachers are able to share good practice informally and through mutual observation. The assessment of students’ work is consistent and effective and includes regular checking and assessment of note-taking, and clear target-setting. The department is seeking ways of increasing student access to ICT to provide greater opportunity to enhance learning and presentation. Since the last inspection, target-setting has become clear and consistent, and is highlighted in each major assessment.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

There are no courses taught in this area.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

194. 194. **General studies** and **critical thinking** were sampled. The provision is **satisfactory**. The general studies course is offered at AS and A2, and critical thinking at AS level. Students generally achieve well and results are above average. The personal development course also provides students with opportunities for careers advice and the process of applications for higher education. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The lessons are taught by a team of teachers drawn from across the school, and this leads to inconsistency. Although the lessons are well planned centrally, there is inadequate monitoring to ensure that the provision is improved. In the lessons observed, some took the form of lectures and the students were not always sufficiently involved in discussion, although when they are, they can articulate their views very clearly.

## 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>2</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	2	2
Attitudes	1	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	4	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	5	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	3	4
The effectiveness of management	3	4

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

