

ERRATUM SLIP

William Ellis School

Unique Reference Number: 100056
Contract Number: 262647
Date of inspection: 08/03/04
Reporting inspector: Graham Preston

INSPECTION REPORT - the following table should read as follows:-

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	93.9 (100)	83.6 (90.7)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	33.0 (55.5)	25.0 (30.7)
Average point score per student	218.0 (245.7)	246.3 (252.6)

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

INSPECTION REPORT

William Ellis School

London Borough of Camden

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100056

Headteacher: Richard Tanton

Lead inspector: Graham Preston

Dates of inspection: 8–11 March 2004

Inspection number: 262647

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of students: 11–19
Gender of students: Male
Number on roll: 911

School address: Highgate Rd
London
Postcode: NW5 1RN
Telephone number: 020 7267 9346
Fax number: 020 7284 1274

Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Derek John

Date of previous inspection: 08 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

William Ellis School is a slightly smaller than average comprehensive school for boys with an annual intake of around 128 students a year and includes 12 students selected on the basis of musical interest and ability. It has a larger than average mixed sixth form which is part of a popular and long standing local sixth form consortium. The school was founded in the last century on utilitarian principles and as a voluntary aided school is now largely funded by Camden LEA and the Learning Skills Council. As an oversubscribed school it takes in a very wide range of students in terms of social and ethnic background reflecting the diverse local area. Around half of students are white British with a quarter from Asian or African-Caribbean backgrounds and many others with different origins including 71 designated refugees or asylum seekers. English is not the first language for about a third of students, though most of these have sound linguistic skills. The school attracts a significant number of boys from more affluent professional backgrounds where many of the parents have experienced higher education. However around a third of students are less economically advantaged, reflected in their eligibility for free school meals and about a quarter of all students are identified as having special educational needs. Overall ability on entry is a little below national average, though this covers a diverse range of students, including a higher than average number of gifted and talented students. William Ellis has been a specialist languages school for seven years and recently gained approval and additional funding to continue its work in this area. In recent years its development of work-related learning has been recognized and has also gained two School Achievement Awards. It is currently involved in the Excellence in the Cities initiative to further improve standards, attendance and behaviour.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1990	Graham Preston	Lead inspector	Design and technology 11-16
9958	Tim Page	Lay inspector	
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	English 11-19 English as an additional language
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	Sixth form co-ordinator Special educational needs
30699	Arthur Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-19
20420	Stuart Rawcliffe	Team inspector	Science 11-16 Biology 16-19
22849	Ron Catlow	Team inspector	Geography 11-16
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	History 11-19
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages 11-16 French 16-19
8052	Ken McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 16-19 Business studies 16-19
33727	Nick Vinall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology 11-16
33711	Michael Hird	Team inspector	Physical education 11-16
15198	Marcellina Cooney	Team inspector	Citizenship 11-16 Religious education 11-16
25591	Jenny Hughes	Team inspector	Music 11-16
23063	Peter Latham	Team inspector	Drama 16-19 Media studies 16-19
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design 11-19

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS	11
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	16
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	25
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	58

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

William Ellis is a good and improving school. It is a well-regarded voluntary aided school that provides a good education for its students drawn largely from the Dartmouth Park, Kentish Town and Gospel Oak areas. The new headteacher is proving very effective in taking the school forward. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve well in most of their GCSE subjects because of the good teaching and learning that includes a significant proportion of very good practice.
- The new headteacher has made a very good start in establishing a broader management team and improving provision in key areas.
- The good care and support systems including induction arrangements, reflect the effective work of senior managers and heads of year.
- Arrangements for identifying and meeting the needs of particular needs of students are good, including those designated as gifted and talented, at an early stage of English language acquisition or in need of additional learning support.
- The school participation in the very popular local sixth form consortium enables it to offer a very good range of course provision and has established very good and longstanding links with other schools.
- The behaviour improvement programme and alternative curriculum arrangements are having a very positive impact on the behaviour and progress of disaffected students.
- The provision for citizenship across the school and for religious education in Years 10-11 and in the sixth form, is unsatisfactory and does not meet statutory requirements.
- Punctuality in the school, including the sixth form where student attendance is also a concern, is unsatisfactory and adversely affects learning in the already short lesson periods.
- Despite the many strengths of teaching, the quality of marking and assessment is variable and, in some of the mixed ability classes in Years 7-9, the learning tasks and materials do not fully take account of the very wide range of student knowledge and skills.

The school has made, or is in the process of making, good progress since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are stronger, ICT, music and, more recently, modern foreign languages are all improved and standards are being more consistently sustained. The school has not satisfactorily addressed the statutory breaches in religious education and collective worship.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Students' standards on entry are a little below national average, reflecting the comprehensive intake that includes a significant number of higher attaining students but also many with special educational needs or at an earlier stage of English language acquisition. **The school has sustained the good achievement found at the last inspection.** Students make good progress in their first three years in the school and at the end of Year 9 reach standards in line with national average.

At the end of Year 11, William Ellis boys gain GCSE results in line with national average and noticeably better when compared with boys nationally. Against similar schools this represents good achievement and is reflected in the B grade in the table below. Most recent results were stronger in mathematics, English literature, single sciences, history, drama and media studies. They were noticeably weaker in modern foreign languages, PE and art and design. The inspection found that most of the better standards were being maintained and the weaker subjects were showing some improvement.

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

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

Sixth form results fell across the La Swap sixth form consortium and this affected the William Ellis boys too, reflected in the grade D in the above table. In the inspection, standards seen were broadly in line with national average and better in some subjects, with most students making good progress and achieving well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. The major strength of provision is in the teaching and learning of students. Students follow a mostly appropriate range of courses but they do not receive sufficient citizenship education and have no religious education in Years 10-11 or the sixth form. The students benefit from a wide range of sixth form courses because of the joint arrangements with other schools. There are good and supportive care systems and the needs of particular students are identified and largely met. Student punctuality is a concern in many years, particularly the sixth form, where attendance is also unsatisfactory. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of students is sound, although the development of citizenship and religious education, with PSHE, would strengthen that development further.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with a significant proportion of very good teaching and enables most students to achieve well. Teaching is effective in most subjects and reflects the high proportion of committed and well qualified staff with low levels of staff turnover. Teachers cope well with the wide range of students they teach and, though on occasion do not adapt their learning materials to meet the needs of all students, they sustain good relationships with students and manage classes effectively. Student learning is helped by the well-informed teaching and the intellectual challenge found in some of the best lessons. Assessment practice is sound, though teachers are still developing the use of assessment to help students' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The relatively new headteacher has made a very good start in establishing a broader management team and improving provision in key areas such as ICT, special educational needs, modern foreign languages and design and technology. **He is well supported by senior managers and some strong heads of year and heads of department.** Financial management is good and the school is in the process of improving other management systems. The governors now work closely with the headteacher and senior staff and contribute well to school development but governance is unsatisfactory while statutory requirements are not met in citizenship, religious education and collective worship.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have high expectations of the school and are generally supportive of most aspects. They value being kept informed, like the induction arrangements for new students and value the commitment of most staff. They feel homework setting is variable and not necessarily well monitored. Pupils liked coming to school, did not consider bullying an issue and valued the good teaching.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Given its important status as a specialist language school raise standards in modern foreign languages.
- Share the best teaching and learning practice in order to raise standards in less strong curriculum areas.
- Even in the stronger subject areas, ensure that the learning materials and approaches are appropriate and challenging for the diverse range of students, particularly in the mixed ability teaching groups.
- Fully implement the ‘assessment for learning’ strategy to improve marking and assessment practice.
- Ensure students in most years get to lessons on time by establishing clear teacher expectations and reducing student movement around the school.
- Establish a more rigorous sixth form registration and monitoring system in order to better account for students on site and improve student attendance.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Properly implement provision for citizenship so that the programme of study and assessment procedures are covered.
- Introduce religious education for all students in Years 10-11 and the sixth form.
- Better provide for a daily act of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT WILLIAM ELLIS (AS PART OF THE LA SWAP CONSORTIUM)

The sixth form is run jointly with Parliament Hill Girls School and is part of La Swap, a consortium of four schools that has operated successfully for nearly 20 years and currently provides for 1229 students. There are 271 William Ellis boys in La Swap, representing about three quarters of boys from the school who stay on. The William Ellis sixth form consists of a mix of male and female students with a third from minority ethnic backgrounds. About three quarters of sixth form students continue their education at university.

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall, provision in the sixth form is good. Current standards are in line with the national average. The sixth form caters well for its current students through a range of 38 courses leading to AS-level and 35 to A-level. It also provides a satisfactory environment for their personal and social development. Teaching in the sixth form is good and students learn effectively as a result. The consortium is very popular and substantially oversubscribed. William Ellis students achieve well in relation to their standards on entry. The sixth form is cost-effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- The good quality of teaching contributes to students learning effectively.
- The very good range of academic courses is made possible by the consortium arrangements.
- There is a high level of student satisfaction.
- The procedures for monitoring attendance and promoting punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- The lack of dedicated study facilities and the absence of a strong culture of independent learning mean that insufficient focus is placed on the development of students’ personal study skills; as a result many students find it difficult to engage in productive independent study.
- There are very few opportunities for students to assume responsibility in the school.
- The school is in breach of statutory requirements in respect of the provision of religious education and an act of collective act of worship.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

CURRICULUM AREA

EVALUATION

English, languages and

English: Very Good. Very good teaching, assessment and planning leads to

communication	high standards. French: Good. Good teaching and good assessment of students' work with particularly effective marking.
Mathematics	Mathematics: Good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject expertise and standards are improving.
Science	Biology: Good. Able teachers work with pupils with positive attitudes to achieve results that are in line with or above those expected.
Information and communication technology	Information and communication technology: Good. The often very good teaching and learning enable the students to achieve well in what is an improving sixth form subject.
Humanities	History: Good. Students are positive in their attitudes and achieve well although overall standards are below average. Two other humanities courses were sampled A level philosophy: teaching was sound and the subject has a good take-up and has recently achieved good examination results at A Level. A level politics: In the one Year 13 lesson observed during the inspection, the teaching was good, and succeeded in involving the students in active debate about the sensitive issue of racial and ethnic politics, so that they achieved well.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Design and technology: This course was sampled and the lesson taught was very good and students were making good progress
Visual and performing arts and media	Media Studies: Very Good. The quality of teaching is very good. Students are positive in their approach and make good progress. Drama: Very Good. Students have very positive attitudes and make very good progress through the course. The quality of teaching is excellent. Art and Design: Satisfactory. Teachers are well informed and provide good verbal feedback during lessons. Students have a very positive attitude to the tasks that are set by their teachers.
Business	Business Education: Very good. Provision for business and economics is very good as a result of very good teaching in a very well organised department.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Sixth form managers provide a good quality of support and guidance in Years 12 and 13. Information about sixth form courses is good and students are very well prepared for the requirements of AS-level and A-level courses. There are a number of extra-curricular opportunities, and a good range of subject-based educational visits in the UK and overseas. The quality of advice offered in preparation for university entry is good. Review procedures are generally satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The senior leaders of La Swap provide a clear strategic vision the school's contribution the consortium over time has been particularly good. The sixth form leadership by the management team is satisfactory overall with strengths in day-to-day management and the development of good personal support systems. Student academic monitoring is appropriate but attendance procedures are a concern and the tutor programme could do more to contribute to student development.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are very positive about the sixth form, the range of subjects offered, the quality of teaching and the level of support they receive. The strengths they have identified are justified.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Students make good progress in the school and achieve well in most subjects. William Ellis students achieve GCSE standards which are above national average when compared with those of boys nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enter the school with below average standards and make good progress to reach standards in line with national average by the end of Year 9.
- Mathematics and English standards are above national average by the end of Year 9 and the school has a higher than average proportion of students who reach the higher National Curriculum levels in the core subjects.
- Despite its diverse intake, the school has sustained GCSE standards in line with the national average for all students and above average compared with boys nationally.
- GCSE results reflect good achievement for most boys, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language.
- In recent years a small number of boys gained only a few qualifications, although the school is beginning to address this issue effectively.
- Current progress of sixth form students taking courses at the school is satisfactory and in some cases good, though sixth form results were below national average for William Ellis boys in 2003 and this represented some underachievement.

Commentary

1. William Ellis has a fully comprehensive intake with students coming to the school with a very wide range of prior attainment. Overall standards are a little below national average on entry because a large proportion of students have special educational needs or come from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Many of the students for whom English is an additional language enter the school with low levels of skill in English. As a result of the well-directed additional help they receive, and of their own strong motivation, the majority rapidly acquire the necessary skills. They make faster progress than their peers, and go on to reach standards appropriate to their individual capabilities. However, a significant number of students come from professional backgrounds and enter the school with well above average educational standards.
2. Standards at the end of Year 9 have largely been maintained at or around national average over time. The 2003 end of Year 9 tests in English and mathematics showed that students made good progress and achieved well when compared with those in similar schools. The higher attaining students in the school performed well in reaching the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests particularly in English where standards for those students were well above those nationally. This good achievement in English is the result of students' own good motivation and the effective teaching they receive. This includes those with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented.
3. Standards in science for all students at the end of Year 9 have been a little below those for English and mathematics, though they remain close to the national average for all schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.2 (32.3)	32.1 (31.9)
mathematics	36.8 (36.8)	35.4 (34.8)
science	33.5 (34.6)	33.7 (33.4)

There were 128 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- GCSE results have similarly varied from year to year though over a fairly narrow range and the most recent results in 2003 were a little above those at the last inspection. In the latest year, 52 per cent of students gained five grades A*-C, which was just above average for all students and better than boys did nationally. The GCSE/GNVQ average points score was about in line with all schools nationally and a little better when compared with boys nationally. Over the five years from school entry to the 2003 GCSE examinations, William Ellis boys made good progress and achieved well when compared with students in similar schools. A small but significant number of students failed to complete most or all of their GCSE courses in previous years, though improved and more relevant educational programmes contributed to an improved student completion rate evident in the 2003 figures below.
- The current standards reflect the most recent GCSE results. In mathematics, the progress of the higher attaining students is very good. In the 'fast track' GCSE course early entry students attain outstanding results at the very highest grades. This represents very good achievement and excellent preparation for further study. Students make good progress in most other subjects including English, music, design and technology, history, business studies, drama, media studies and most notably, leisure and tourism which is proving successful in motivating some of the previously disaffected boys. Current modern foreign languages standards are showing clear signs of improvement, though students' progress in art and design and geography is modest.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	52 (51)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (89)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (91)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	38.7 (41.5)	38.0 (37.2)

There were 129 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In some respects the presence of a significant number of higher attaining students, including the gifted and talented, has raised the prior attainment average and on that measure has probably understated the amount of progress made by students from less advantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs. The school does identify and support such disadvantaged students well and when it is compared against schools with similar free school meals take-up, the comparative measures indicate that William Ellis students achieve very well.

- Standards in the sixth form are more difficult to evaluate because William Ellis boys continue their education in one or more of four local schools that make up the long established local sixth form consortium. The 2003 consortium results dipped significantly compared to previous years and this applied to the boys, whose standards fell below the national average in terms of their average point scores.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	59 (100)	83.6 (90.7)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	13.1 (55.5)	25.0 (30.7)
Average point score per student	218.0 (245.7)	246.3 (252.6)

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

- In 2003, the A level results at La Swap were just below the national average and above the local education authority average. Overall, the average point score per candidate fell slightly and was just below the national average. The average point score per subject for male students, including those from William Ellis fell in 2003 to be four points below the national average of 74.5 for male candidates.
- In 2003, the proportion of La Swap students who attained A grades at A level was broadly similar to the previous year, though the proportion of students gaining grades A-C fell more to be in line with the national average. The 2003 results in English, Art and Design and Drama and Theatre Studies were significantly above predicted grades. Overall, value added analyses across the range of subjects show that a number of higher attaining students did less well than was expected, though other students largely performed in line with expectations
- In lessons observed and in the samples of work scrutinized during the inspection overall standards were in line with national average and both male and female students were achieving at least as well as and often better than expected. In over four of five lessons seen students were making good gains in learning and in about a third of lessons they were making very good progress. Much of this was because of the students' response to the good and very good teaching.
- There are 13 students with special educational needs (SEN) in the sixth form and three students have statements of need. In addition, a number of students do not have English as a first language (EAL) but usually have secure linguistic skills. Overall, students with SEN make at least the same rates of progress as their peers; those with EAL achieve better than their peers.
- Students' standards in numeracy are good. Literacy skills are in line with national expectations. Students are generally good listeners and become increasingly confident speakers.
- Evidence from the inspection indicates that students are competent independent users of ICT.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students like coming to school and most behave satisfactorily. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Attendance is satisfactory but too many students are late to lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students like coming to school and the great majority behave appropriately.
- A large majority of students display positive attitudes to learning and are actively involved in lessons.
- The school has more recently encouraged students to have a voice through the School Council but there are still too few opportunities for them to take responsibility.
- Bullying is infrequent and dealt with effectively but the boys' behaviour can be boisterous at times, which is more noticeable in the confined spaces of the school.
- Moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall, but spiritual awareness is weak.
- Attendance is satisfactory in Years 7-11 but registration procedures for the sixth form are unsatisfactory and attendance is below national average.
- The short lessons result in frequent student movement and in most years too many students are late to lessons.

Commentary

14. The overwhelming majority of students like coming to school. They appreciate the opportunities for sport and other extra-curricular activities and take part enthusiastically. They understand the need for rules for a community to prosper and generally comply with the school's expectations for behaviour in lessons.
15. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory, if somewhat boisterous, and, though usually good humoured, is, on occasion, inappropriate in the cramped corridors of the older buildings. There were no permanent exclusions last year and the previously high number of fixed period and internal exclusions has been much reduced by the success of the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and improved behaviour management system. The great majority of students respond positively to the school's high expectations though a small but significant minority do not.
16. While teachers successfully sustain appropriate student behaviour in lessons through effective class management, it is sometimes at the cost of encouraging students to take more personal responsibility. There is little evidence of students' undertaking responsibilities within their peer groups and the School Council had limited significance for many boys. The very limited integration of the sixth form into the life of the main school also removes many opportunities for the promotion of positive role models.
17. Moral development is satisfactory. Students can clearly distinguish between right and wrong. Relationships are good, and there is very little evidence of any racist behaviour. Students are aware of occasional bullying but students say that it is not significant and the school has effective measures to deal with it. There are many opportunities for students to receive information on moral issues but fewer opportunities to reflect upon them. Decision-making opportunities are limited.
18. Social development is satisfactory. Good examples of peer and group work were seen and there is a sensitive understanding by all groups of students of their differences. A moving and rare example of spirituality was seen in a Year 7 personal, social and health education, (PSHE), lesson when a student with profound difficulties was spontaneously supported by another boy from a totally different background who effectively included him in the lesson and, more widely, in the community of the school.
19. Cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities for the exploration of values are good in English, whilst there is very good multi-faith provision in religious education. Multi-cultural appreciation is evident in some art work, and in music. School trips to China, France, Russia, and Spain provide opportunities for students to experience other communities at first hand.

The school organizes a Black history month, and there is an international evening which celebrates the foods of different cultures.

20. Spiritual development has some weaknesses. Students have insufficient opportunities to explore and take responsibility for their own learning. There is insufficient time for discussion or reflection in PSHE, incomplete coverage of religious education across all year groups, and little collective worship that could further stimulate thoughts and ideas. The grubby state of some the classrooms militates against an inspirational learning environment.
21. Attendance is satisfactory and about in line with national average. However, too many students are late getting to registration and lessons. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality is very good, with the school employing its own attendance officer who supports senior staff with a detailed analysis of daily absence and punctuality. This is used well in terms of care, with very few absences going unexplained or unsupported, but is clearly less effective in reducing the number of late arrivals. The current timetable with its seven lessons a day and frequent movement around the school increases the opportunity for students to be late and punctuality may well improve with the move to fewer and longer lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.0
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	1.1

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	482	57	0
White – Irish	22	11	0
White – any other White background	77	4	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	13	5	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	6	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	5	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	65	5	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	46	5	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	40	6	0
Black or Black British – African	74	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	16	2	0

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

Sixth Form

22. Students' attitudes to the education provided by La Swap are very positive, and are reflected in the high and growing numbers of students who apply to enter the sixth form. Seventy per cent of boys from Year 11 at William Ellis stay on at the school. As part of the inspection process,

students were asked to complete a questionnaire. In addition, a significant proportion spoke to inspectors during lessons and more formal discussions. Students identified closely with the La Swap and spoke well of their experience in the sixth form.

23. The sixth form is, in effect, an entirely separate entity with little overlap with the rest of the school. Students are confident and responsible members of their own community, focused on achieving examination success to take them on their chosen routes to further education, or employment. They have a greater awareness and mature understanding of what is happening in the outside world and adopt a hands-on approach to issues they see as important such as demonstrating their feelings about the war in Iraq. They are representative of the local community and are entirely at ease with one another.
24. Students appreciate the rich social mix that such a large and cosmopolitan sixth form provides. They demonstrate respect for multicultural diversity and cooperate well.
25. Given the requirement for students to be mobile and to attend courses on different sites, there are few opportunities for them to assume responsibilities or to contribute to the development of any one school. Involvement with students in the 11 to 16 age-range is at a minimum. Overall, the personal development of students in the sixth form is satisfactory.
26. In spite of the strong enthusiasm demonstrated for La Swap, not all students possess the attitudes to learning and the self-motivation required to maximise the learning opportunities presented. The majority of students demonstrate self-assurance and confidence in their own abilities, but many find difficulty in working well independently.
27. The good levels of support offered by teachers encourage students to enhance their personal learning skills. Relationships are generally secure and teachers encourage good levels of openness and involvement.
28. Sixth form managers strive to create a purposeful community. Much is done to provide students with forward-looking and interesting enrichment opportunities through active community links and contact with universities. Each year, sixth formers participate in a very good range of subject-based educational visits and overseas excursions. The range of regular extra-curricular activities offered to students is satisfactory.
29. Lesson counts during the inspection indicated that attendance and punctuality were unsatisfactory. It is a weakness of the consortium that there are no centralised systems of monitoring attendance and punctuality. Early morning registrations tend to be informal and perfunctory, reflecting an overly relaxed approach to student monitoring.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is good. The major strength of provision is in the teaching and learning. Students follow a mostly appropriate range of courses but they do not receive sufficient citizenship education and have no religious education in Years 10-11 or the sixth form. The students benefit from a wide range of sixth form courses because of the joint arrangements with other schools. There are good and supportive care systems and the needs of particular students such as the gifted and talented, those with special educational needs or at an early stage of English acquisition, are identified and largely met. Ensuring that students get to lessons on time is a concern in many years, particularly the sixth form where attendance is also unsatisfactory. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of students is sound although the development of citizenship and religious education, with PSHE, would strengthen that development further.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** and enable most students to achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, teaching is good and in some lessons is very good or even excellent.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Lessons are well structured and have a good variety of activities.
- Behaviour is well managed in most lessons.
- The quality of support offered by learning support assistants is very good.
- There are variations between subjects in the quality of marking and assessment.
- Some teachers in some lessons do not cater for students at either end of the spectrum of ability.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10 (6%)	37 (21%)	78 (44%)	46 (25.5%)	6 (3%)	1 (0.5%)	0

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

Commentary

30. In Years 7 to 11, teaching is good or better in all subjects apart from in physical education and art where it is satisfactory. Teachers are knowledgeable and keen to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with students. In the good and very good lessons, the skilful questioning ensures an appropriate level of challenge for the range of students in the class. Teachers use a wide variety of methods to keep lessons moving at a good pace. Explanation, demonstration, discussion, teamwork and ICT are all used in different ways to motivate students to work hard and to enjoy learning.
31. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, the pace of work was slower and teachers did not always make their expectations for the quality and quantity of work clear enough and did not check students' understanding thoroughly enough. The level of challenge was not always accurately matched to the needs of both high and lower achievers. In a few unsatisfactory lessons, students did not have enough time to practise and consolidate what they knew or the teacher had not anticipated where they might have difficulties and had not thought about suitable strategies to help all students to complete the tasks successfully.
32. Many students are not naturally well motivated and teachers have to work hard to engage their attention and interest. However, most students behave well and teachers are able to deal effectively with any low-level disruption or lack of attention. On the occasions when behaviour was not well managed, learning was less than satisfactory.
33. Most teachers have an easy and confident manner, relating well to students in lessons. Many are relatively inexperienced but this does not show in the quality of their work. The school has a successful system for supporting inexperienced teachers through its Newly Qualified Teaching programme (NQT) and its commitment to introducing new teachers to the most skilled practitioners. The school makes good use of its support staff. Overall, the recruitment and retention of staff are good. There is very little disruption to teaching.
34. Most teachers make constructive use of assessment but this is not consistent across the school. In the best practice the students benefit from clear indicators as to how they can improve their work. The progress of students towards examination success in Years 10 and 11 is checked regularly and good use is made of data in adjusting teaching. However, the use of data to set target minimum grades for students is underdeveloped. There are variations between subjects and between teachers in the quality of marking, with a demonstrable weakness in religious education.

35. There is evidence of national 'good practice' initiatives introduced to enhance teaching such as the 'Key Stage 3 Strategy'. Several subject areas incorporate the concept of a three-part lesson; however, summaries to consolidate learning at the end of lessons are of variable quality and use.
36. The provision for the promotion of language skills throughout the school is satisfactory. Many departments see it as part of their tasks to ensure that pupils know subject-specific vocabulary well, and key words are emphasised, for example, in science and information and communication technology. Inaccuracies of expression in written work often go uncorrected, however. There are frequent good examples of the application of speaking skills in class and small group discussions, but individual spoken presentations by pupils are rare. Drama, however, very successfully promotes a wide range of oral communication.
37. The teaching of students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is generally good. There are instances, particularly in mixed ability classes, where learning materials are not so well matched to the different student needs. However, good use is made of the targets within students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and teachers work closely with the learning support assistants to ensure that the activities and the materials provided in lessons enable students to learn well.. The LSAs offer a very good level of professional support in the classroom and have a very good knowledge of students' learning needs.

Sixth form

38. The overall standard of teaching and learning in the sixth form is good. Teachers plan well and set clear objectives for their students. They use their own very good subject expertise to enliven lessons and engage students. Tasks are appropriate and supported by good use of resources.
39. Very good classroom relationships with groups of students underpin the best teaching seen in the sixth form. Students make good gains in lessons when they are provided with the structure to acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is excellent, as in drama and English, work is very well planned and closely matched to the requirements of the syllabus. A collaborative style of teaching means that lessons become a shared and mutually enjoyable experience. Value-added information shows consistently high level teaching and learning by national standards in the areas of English, drama and theatre studies, philosophy and sociology.
40. Across the consortium, teaching uses a good range of activities which reflect different teaching styles that encourage students to develop their learning in different ways. Teachers know their students well and, where opportunities arise, they invest time in continuing academic discussions outside lessons. Teachers are aware that the management of independent study is difficult for many students but insufficient attention is paid to developing a culture of independent learning. There is a general lack of corporate focus on the development of independent study techniques.
41. In most subject areas, homework is set regularly and well planned to extend and consolidate classroom learning. Overall, assessment is used effectively to ensure that students are clear about the standard of their work and what they must do in order to improve their grades. Overall, students are well supported in the setting of target grades for improvement.
42. Language and literacy across the curriculum are promoted well. In all subjects in the sixth form teachers take pains to develop the correct subject-specific vocabulary, and to teach appropriate ways of reporting and responding to examination questions. Written work is carefully marked, and most teachers pay due attention to spelling and grammatical errors where these occur.

43. Based on the student questionnaire and inspectors' discussions with students, it is clear that students consider that teaching is both challenging and demanding. They particularly value the expertise of their teachers and their readiness to offer individual help and advice.

The curriculum

44. The school in most respects provides an appropriate range of courses, including a good and developing work-related education provision but, as long as there remain significant weaknesses in citizenship, ICT and religious education the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The sixth form consortium arrangements enable students to have a much wider than average range of course opportunities. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a specialist language school, students have greater opportunities to study modern foreign languages.
- The sixth form consortium arrangements enable students to have a wider than average range of course options.
- The very good work-related and vocational programmes in Years 10-11 are significantly improving provision for less motivated students.
- Citizenship is a National Curriculum subject and the school has not sufficiently covered the programme of study or made provision for assessment.
- There is no provision for religious education in Years 10-11.
- The much improved management of whole school ICT has yet to ensure that all subjects make effective use of ICT to enhance learning.

Commentary

45. The curriculum in Years 7-9 is broad and balanced and covers almost all of the National Curriculum requirements. In this specialist languages school the students have greater opportunities to study more than one modern foreign language and the strengths in English and mathematics help explain the good progress students make in those subjects. In Years 10-11 the school provides a surprisingly good range of GCSE options that include a number of languages, three design and technology course options and a number of newer courses such as media studies. Drama and music are strong and the school has made very good progress in developing more work-related programmes. However, weaknesses in citizenship and religious education seriously detract from those strengths.
46. The school has recognised the importance of continued curriculum innovation and development and, as the only boys' school that has accepted the challenge of being a specialist languages college, has persevered in its efforts to engage boys' interest and raise standards. This provides good opportunities to study French, German and Spanish as well as less common languages such as Mandarin Chinese. Recent improvements in the subject leadership and teaching provision are now having a positive effect.
47. Another curriculum area identified as having weaknesses at the time of the last inspection was music but this too has shown considerable improvement. The school has strengths in the performing arts areas such as music and drama and these contribute well to the good range of extra-curricular activities. There are numerous visits including those abroad such as the history trip to Russia, and the school owns 'The Mill' a rural centre that is used well for a range of field trips and other activities. Gifted and talented students benefit from links with local sports clubs and from specialist coaches, particularly in basketball.
48. William Ellis students are mostly prepared well for each stage of their education and eventual employment. Students benefit from an appropriate careers education course, although historically a large proportion of the boys continue their education in the sixth form, either at

William Ellis on in one or more of the other three schools that make up 'La Swap' – the local sixth form consortium. However, in recent years the school has recognised the need to interest and involve all of its students, including a small number of the previously disaffected

and consequently has developed more vocationally-related education. Provision for work-based learning is very good and, in the last two years, the school has received the Excellence award in Work-related Learning at Platinum Level from the Learning Skills Council.

49. All year groups have a day a year focusing on work-related learning. Year 10 students have work experience for two weeks and those following vocational courses at entry level or applied GCSE, have an additional four weeks. In lessons observed during the inspection students had a clear sense of purpose about their work and were achieving to the best of their ability.
50. There is a very active Business Community Partnership involving local businesses, public sector employers (e.g. the Royal Free Hospital) and charities. There is a strong focus in the curriculum in Year 10 and 11 on employability skills and students are made aware of current trends on the local labour market.
51. There is provision for students to engage in full-time vocational education in Year 10 and 11. A minority attend full time at Camden Jobtrain's New Turn Ventures Project at Maitland Park Gym where they follow a Sports and Recreation course. A small number take part in extended work experience and taster courses in the construction industry with a major international building company, where they have the opportunity to take a Modern Apprenticeship after leaving school. All students have full access to the curriculum whether they have special educational needs or are at an early stage of English acquisition. All such students are, as far as possible, fully integrated into lessons and other activities. The policy is that additional support should be provided within lessons. Nevertheless, when it is likely to enhance progress, as in the use of appropriate software programs, or when assessment and monitoring are necessary, withdrawal from lessons is carefully monitored. Learning support assistants are very well used and the respective co-ordinators for the different students ensure that student needs are carefully assessed and progress is regularly monitored.
52. Similarly some benefits have been achieved by new resources, such as computers and in recent improvements to accommodation. ICT provision across the curriculum is just about satisfactory but it is at present limited for some subjects by the difficulties in gaining access to computers. Even so, good practice is evident in the majority of subjects and the school website is beginning to provide a bank of learning resources.
53. There are a number of significant curriculum weaknesses. The school does not provide for religious education in the 14-19 curriculum and therefore does not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is sufficiently well planned but rather variable in delivery. The PSHE programme has been used to deliver the recently introduced National Curriculum subject of citizenship but clearly does not have sufficient time to properly cover the required programme of study for the subject. The school has not pursued other strategies such as providing more curriculum time or delivering major aspects of citizenship within history and geography, nor has it established how it will assess the new subject.
54. Staffing is well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Teachers are specialists in their own subjects and are well qualified. The minor exception is in religious education where there are insufficient staff to cover the work in Years 10 or 11. The role of support staff within the school is supported by training programmes, which enable learning support assistants in SEN to perform their work well. There is good provision with foreign language assistants working in MFL who provide valuable support in the department.

55. Resources are generally satisfactory though the lack of ICT equipment has been a concern which is currently being addressed and should resolve the lack of access for some subjects. Accommodation is barely satisfactory, though it is improving with the current refurbishment in science and design and technology. However, the accommodation for modern foreign languages is scattered and this presents weaknesses for departmental teamwork. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in physical education and drama. Drama is very successful but it is lacking a studio and teaching takes place in the hall which does not have a lighting or sound system. Physical education takes place in the gym and hall, which limits an effective delivery of the subject in Years 10 and 11.

Sixth form

56. The curricular provision for the more able in the sixth form is good. They benefit from the La Swap consortium arrangements to provide a wide range of AS and A2 courses with over 30 courses to choose from. There is a fairly good range of courses for those students seeking vocational qualifications. The La Swap consortium allows the students to take Advanced and Intermediate courses in art and design, business and performing arts. Intermediate courses are available in health and social care and leisure and tourism, while students can take NVQ levels 1 and 2 in Sports and Recreation and Childcare and Education.
57. Students have sufficient opportunities to further develop their key skills in communication, use of number and ICT; they use the latter to a considerable extent for personal research and presentation of coursework.
58. Sixth form students do have opportunities to go on a range of residential and other trips, though most curriculum enhancement is specifically related to the courses they pursue. Students like being part of 'La Swap' with its more 'college-like' atmosphere and express few concerns about the lack of wider enrichment experiences outside their courses.
59. Provision for moral, social and cultural development through different subject areas, the tutorial programme and the range of enrichment opportunities, is satisfactory. However, the opportunities for spiritual development are limited. The school is in breach of statutory requirements with respect to the provision of religious education. There is no act of collective worship.
60. Staffing arrangements are good. Overall the number of teachers is in good proportion to the number of sixth form students. The expertise and experience of teachers are well suited to the demands of sixth form teaching. Teachers are deployed effectively to provide a varied curriculum.
61. Overall, the sixth form is adequately resourced with learning materials but standards of departmental accommodation are variable. In drama, facilities are inadequate, as students are taught in the school hall without access to lighting or integral sound systems. In ICT, although the number and quality of sixth form computers has improved, students are taught in a cramped space.
62. Overall, there are serious weaknesses in accommodation. The inadequacy of sixth form study facilities reflects the lack of an independent learning culture. Students also have unsatisfactory common room space. A further barrier to personal achievement is the problem encountered with computer access between the various sites. Students sometimes have difficulty in accessing computers and the internet for independent study. The state of many classrooms militates against the creation of an inspirational learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Students' welfare and safety are good. The provision of advice and guidance is good. The involvement of students through seeking, acting on and valuing their views is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good pastoral support system enables the school to make provision for the diverse needs of its students.
- The Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) is proving effective.
- The school procedures for identifying and supporting gifted and talented students, those with special educational needs and others in need of additional English support are effective.
- Given the varied quality of the school surroundings there are clear and well organised health and safety procedures.
- Sixth form pastoral staff establish positive relationships with students and advice is well informed.
- Efforts to ensure better sixth form attendance and punctuality are less effective.
- While the school endeavours to give younger students greater involvement in the school the School Council is not particularly effective.

Commentary

63. Pastoral support is a major strength of the school. It is very well organized and closely monitored, and effectively supports the constant reinforcement of positive expectations. Although a minority of students do not recognise that there is someone they can turn to for support and advice, this is not a true reflection. All teachers are committed to monitoring students' performance and there is a strict reporting process through form tutors, heads of year, and deputy heads. This enables teachers to have a very good knowledge of their students, detect changes in demeanour at an early stage, intervene whenever appropriate, and provide quality support. The behaviour improvement programme (BIP), a major development as part of the 'Excellence in the Cities' initiative is proving effective in supporting the needs of previously disaffected students in Years 7-9. The work of the school nurse, the school counsellor, learning mentors, and the school-based police officer all further enhance the quality of this support.
64. The school is developing more effective systems for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress and these are currently satisfactory, with the potential for further improvement once tutors are more involved in the monitoring and target-setting process. Another aspect of BIP is support for potentially disaffected students in Years 10-11 and the alternative curriculum arrangements have led to potentially disaffected students' achieving very well.
65. Provision for the gifted and talented is good. The school monitors those pupils identified as gifted and talented, and they achieve well. They benefit from initiatives from inside and outside the school, for example specialist network events in various subjects, and the school hosts a special "languages day." The co-ordinator for bilingual students ensures that they are carefully assessed upon entry to the school, and that their needs are ascertained. Regular and detailed monitoring tracks their progress as they move up the school. The improved SEN provision has clear monitoring procedures and uses ICT effectively to support learning.
66. Advice on options for Year 9 students is good. Great care is taken to ensure that students are guided to the most suitable courses for their talents. Careers advice and guidance are good. All students have individual interviews with Connexions advisors and have opportunities to undertake work experience.
67. There are good induction arrangements for students entering the school in Year 7 and these are valued by parents. Transition to secondary education is well managed and enables younger students to settle quickly with minimal interruption to their learning. The Year 7 camp experience effectively assists in the bonding process and is fondly recalled by older students. Students who join the school at other times are helped considerably in the settling period by strong pastoral monitoring and support.

68. The school is conscious of the need to do more to involve students in some decision-making in the school, though it recognises that the current School Council does not have much significance for most boys. Even so, students have been successful in drawing attention to the need for improvements in canteen provision, inappropriate behaviour, playground resurfacing and even the hall acoustics. Students are also involved in deciding charity fund-raising activities.
69. The school manages health and safety well. Monthly risk assessments are undertaken and there are clear procedures for maintaining a safe environment in a school with older facilities and current building work. Child protection arrangements are secure, and staff are aware of their responsibilities.

Sixth form

70. The good relationships within the sixth form are a significant factor in the support the students receive. The advice given by teachers is based on a good level of knowledge of each student. Students are kept very well informed of their progress and find that their teachers are very accessible.
71. Despite these strengths in care and support, the unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality of many sixth form students indicate that efforts by tutors and staff to ensure that students have better personal organisation and commitment are less effective.
72. The school provides good information about the courses available in the sixth form. Most students find the printed information covering sixth form subjects and courses clear, accurate and helpful.
73. Advice is well informed on further or higher education. Students are well prepared to make university applications and the school enjoys good links with London universities. Individual students speak well of the trips that have been arranged for them to visit universities, and know that tutors will be available to mix and match courses when 'A' Level results are published during the summer holidays. Good practical support is also available from visiting speakers such as the talk on student finances, which was presented during inspection week.
74. Support for the minority of pupils who decide to enter the world of employment is satisfactory, and relies on the Connexions service, which is available elsewhere in the school. Work-based opportunities are somewhat limited by the narrow range of vocational courses available.
75. The school communicates well with other schools, especially those in the consortium. Students feel that La Swap has coherence and a distinctive identity, although there are variations in the style and approach of the component schools. In discussion, students described William Ellis as easy-going and relaxed.
76. Students participate in the School Council and feel that they have a satisfactory forum for self-expression.
77. The school contributes actively to wider partnerships; especially those involving links with local businesses as part of the business education and economics courses.
78. Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are good.
79. There are unsatisfactory procedures in place for monitoring student attendance and punctuality.

Sixth form assessment and reporting

80. The assessment of students is good overall, with close attention to the requirements of examination specifications. As a result, students are clearly aware of what they must do to achieve well. Individual guidance is a strong feature of the assessment process with students generally well supported by oral feedback in lessons. Day-to-day departmental assessment procedures vary according to subject requirements, but overall students are given clear guidance on the ways in which they can improve their work.
81. There is regular reporting to parents, including parents' evenings. However, the quality of written reports is variable and the information transmitted to parents from subject departments can be thin.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views about school links and provision.
- Good quality information about student progress exists.
- Effective links are developed with the local community.
- The effective La Swap arrangements are based on very good links with other schools.

Commentary

82. Parents, and students, hold mainly positive views of the school. In their pre-inspection questionnaires there was overwhelming agreement that the school is well run, teaching is good, and that the school is popular with students.
83. Parents are provided with good quality information about their children's progress through regular meetings and well-written annual reports that contain grades and improvement targets. There is a progress review day, and other meetings which are tailored to cover more specific needs of students such as an options meeting in year nine, and careers for year eleven. The quality of the careers meeting is enhanced by the presence of a Connexions advisor.
84. Support for students with special educational needs is good, and parents are fully involved in their individual education plans. School inclusion is very effectively supported because the school works closely with parents to support the specific needs of bilingual children. There are useful contacts with outside agencies and an effective link worker provides good liaison with the homes of one of the major communities represented. Provision is also made for some students to take examinations in their home language.
85. The school is now working more closely with parents of potentially disaffected students and involves the school counsellor, and the Behaviour Improvement Programme manager. These and others contribute fully to involving parents in the education of their sons and this is having positive outcomes for standards and attendance. Parents of all students receive letters whenever the achievement of their children is celebrated, and are informed at an early stage if there are concerns.
86. There is a regular flow of information about school activities through well-written communications such as the school newsletter. Staff place great importance on their pastoral responsibilities and the school makes all reasonable efforts to be accessible for parents, though there are few opportunities to regularly seek out their views.

87. There are good links with the local community. Connections with local building companies and others have materially assisted the alternative curriculum provision for students who find school-based learning difficult. Good use is made of expert outside speakers in the delivery of personal, social and health and education, (PSHE); physical education is currently dependent on the school's use of Hampstead Heath; and advantage is taken of Central London theatres to support work in English and drama. The school association and the Old Elysians actively support the school. The Muslim community provides prayer facilities for its students.
88. The school has established very good connections with other schools and colleges. Good links exist with the majority of feeder primary schools, whilst the very good management of La Swap sixth form arrangements has stood the test of time by sustaining an enduring and cohesive consortium arrangement that offers a wide range of academic courses and promotes good achievement. Work experience placements are provided for student teachers from King's College.

Sixth form

89. Parents expressed positive views about the education their children receive in the sixth form. Parents receive an adequate level of information about the progress made by their children, although subject reports can be insubstantial.
90. Students are very positive about the sixth form. They feel that they are very well taught and that the courses provided respond to their needs. They are very pleased with the level of individual help and encouragement they receive from their teachers. Overall, students value their experience in the sixth form.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is very well led. Senior and middle management staff contribute to good leadership. Management is satisfactory and being strengthened. The governors contribute well but governance is currently unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher has made a very good start in establishing a broader management team and improving provision in key areas.
- The governors have a strong commitment and are more closely involved in the strategic development of the school.
- The leadership and management of particular areas such as modern foreign languages, ICT, SEN, teaching and learning and assessment, have been strengthened.
- The deputy headteachers work closely with the strong pastoral staff to provide good day-to-day management of the school.
- Senior and middle managers play an important part in the maintenance and development of both the joint sixth form with the girls' school and the wider 'La Swap' consortium.
- Financial management is strong with clear and accountable systems.
- Unsurprisingly, a number of the developing school management systems, although satisfactory, have yet to be firmly established with effective monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Despite the many strengths of the governors, as long as the school has a number of important statutory breaches the governance of the school is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

Commentary

91. The new headteacher provides very good leadership by enabling more staff to be involved in the leadership and management of the school and identifying and improving important areas of school provision. Despite his being in post for rather less than two years, colleagues

recognise his decisive and effective action in improving the unsatisfactory ICT provision, providing better SEN support, creating a better and potentially strong modern foreign languages team and improving the position of design and technology within the school. He has worked to establish a more open relationship with governors and strengthened the senior management team by greater delegation and accountability and identifying and promoting staff to lead new initiatives.

92. The leadership of the senior and middle managers is generally good. A particular strength is in their care and support of students and the day to day management of the school. The three deputy headteachers have responsibility for Years 7-9, Years 10-11 and the sixth form respectively and each works well with the respective heads of year. The positive impact of much of this work through different initiatives such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme can be seen in the improved attitudes and behaviour of more challenging students. Sixth form managers have also been active in developing and sustaining the local sixth form consortium through regular contact and meetings. Curriculum leadership has been more mixed in its impact, spread as it is across the deputy headteachers, and current weaknesses can in part be attributed a lack of a whole school strategy in some areas.
93. School management systems are satisfactory overall, with strengths in some areas. The last two years have seen the school look to improve the management of different areas and, while good progress has been made, there is still some way to go before the school can claim to have established generally good and effective systems. The strong pastoral systems have not resolved the student unpunctuality and unsatisfactory sixth form student attendance. The good work being done in identifying and supporting gifted and talented students, those with special educational needs or weaker language skills has largely ensured those students make good progress but best practice does not extend to the lesson planning of some subject teachers. Curriculum management is improving and can be seen in the development of ICT but there are major weaknesses in citizenship and religious education.
94. The school has a clear performance management system to monitor what is a strong and largely stable teaching force and provide effective means of identifying staff development needs and setting performance targets. The school has adequate monitoring and evaluation procedures for other aspects but, as indicated, these could be further improved in cross-curricular development, student punctuality and attendance, homework, assessment practice and post examination analyses.
95. Financial management is good. The school has clear and consistent procedures that meet the audit requirements and are effectively administered by the school business manager. The school benefits financially from its involvement in the successful sixth form consortium as well as from additional funding as a specialist languages college and involvement in the Excellence in the Cities initiative. It uses its annual funding fully as can be seen in the current development of ICT, technology and languages facilities. It strives to ensure best value and its current balance of in-house provision such as catering and site management, is balanced by outsourcing of other services such as the payroll. The table below shows a considerable surplus, though this was belated funding for sixth form provision and behaviour improvement development and was used fully for current staffing and resource development.
96. The change in school leadership has provided a good opportunity for governors to be more actively involved in the strategic development of the school. The team of very supportive and talented governors have a much stronger understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a number, including the chair of governors, maintain regular links with the headteacher and senior management team. A further strength is that over many years, the governors have well supported the high level of collaboration with local schools that have sustained the successful sixth form consortium. Despite these strengths the governance of the school is currently unsatisfactory because the governors have not ensured that the school meets its statutory duty to make effective provision for citizenship or provide religious education in Years 10-11 and ensure a daily act of collective worship.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,360,017
Total expenditure	4,163,664
Expenditure per student	4,562

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,737
Balance carried forward to the next	204,090

Sixth form

97. The senior leaders of La Swap provide a clear strategic vision and infrastructure for the development of the sixth form.
98. The sixth form management team made up of the head of sixth, the heads of year and the sixth form tutors ensure that daily administrative arrangements and systems, with the exception of attendance, work well. Students are known individually and benefit from appropriate levels of personal support from sixth form managers. However, the tutor programme does not fully underpin the work of key staff, and tutors do not have enough opportunities to make a significant contribution to student attitudes to study or their personal development.
99. In the questionnaire, an overwhelming number of students said they would recommend the sixth form. Those students joining the school in Year 12 are provided with good levels of support. Induction arrangements are good.
100. Existing strategies for monitoring and evaluating the performance of individual students at La Swap are satisfactory.
101. Funding is used in a cost-effective way to give students a good curriculum and good quality of teaching.

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 **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well, reaching and maintaining above average standards.
- Teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- Assessment is well used to track and promote students' progress.
- The English department is very well led and managed.
- English teachers form a strong and committed team.
- Marking is inconsistent. While some is detailed and helpful, a lot is perfunctory and bland.
- Targets for improvement are often not set, and when they are, teachers do not systematically check whether they have been met.

Commentary

102. The Year 9 national test results in 2003 were above average, an improvement on 2002, when they were average. The number of students reaching Level 6 or above in 2003 was well above average. GCSE results in English were below average for all schools, but just above average for boys. In English Literature, results were slightly above average for all schools, and well above average for boys. Improvement in the standards achieved has been good since the last inspection.
103. For current students, in speaking and listening, standards are above average in both Years 7 - 9 and in Years 10 and 11. The majority listen carefully and respond appropriately in class, wording their answers thoughtfully. In Year 7, there is still a strong tendency to call out and to respond instinctively, but this situation improves so that in Year 9, in a lesson about Shakespeare, all students were making intelligent, considered responses to the teacher's questions, and a majority were supporting what they had to say with well chosen quotations from the text. A similar level of attainment was seen in Year 10, where students confidently discussed the symbolism of *Lord of the Flies*. The interest and sensitivity with which students approach their reading is also shown by these examples. Students engage well with the texts they study, and reading aloud is accurate and fluent, even though - in all age groups - expression is not a strong feature. Nevertheless, reading overall is above average, and writing is at the same level. It is lively and interesting in Years 7 - 9, and students try hard to produce work which will please and hold their readers, resulting in some gripping and entertaining narratives and some moving poetry. In Years 10 and 11, written work is of increasing complexity. Words are chosen from ample reserves, and sentences, paragraphs and complete compositions are well constructed. Presentation, however, is no more than satisfactory, although good use of word processing meets this problem in some cases.
104. Students enter the school with average levels of attainment in English and the great majority achieve well, reaching above and often well above average levels as they move up the school. This good achievement is the result of students' own good motivation and the effective teaching they receive. This includes those with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented. Students with English as an additional language achieve very well because of their strong motivation and the encouraging influence of their environment.

105. With only one unsatisfactory lesson seen, teaching overall is good, with a significant proportion very good. Teachers promote students' progress particularly well with their collaborative approaches and their readiness to share their enthusiasm with their students: this results in highly positive outcomes in terms of both achievement and enjoyment. Lessons are very well planned and, as a result, they have pace, variety and structure, and are so full of interesting material that students have neither the time nor the inclination to go off task. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, this was not the case, and the teacher was so preoccupied with order that he barely started on the lesson content which would quickly have achieved it. The National Literacy Strategy is used as the basis for much of the English teaching in the school. Nevertheless, it is not completely embedded, and some of the most beneficial aspects of the approach have yet to be developed. While procedures for the regular and formal assessment of progress in English are good and well used, standards of day to day marking are inconsistent. While some marking is evaluative and developmental, some is no more than ticks and a bland or unhelpful comment ("well done" or "excellent" - often when it is not). Even where good advice is given, there is very little checking in subsequent work of whether it has been followed. Some specific objectives for improvement may be given, but this is not routine, and students are not provided with individual short term targets upon which they can build systematically and thus more effectively play a part in the acceleration of their own progress.
106. Leadership and management of very high quality are driving factors in the promotion of students' achievement. Since his appointment, the head of department has seen a significant improvement in provision. His expectations of his departmental team - which, in general, is strong and very committed - are set out clearly in well-organised subject documentation, and he sets a fine example in his own teaching. Accommodation, particularly with large classes of large students, is often cramped, but teachers try to make their rooms welcoming and interesting with good displays. Resources are good in terms of both books and hardware.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

107. The provision for the promotion of language skills throughout the school is satisfactory. Many departments see it as part of their tasks to ensure that students know subject-specific vocabulary well, and key words are emphasised, for example, in science and information and communication technology. Inaccuracies of expression in written work often go uncorrected, however. There are frequent good examples of the application of speaking skills in class and small group discussions, but individual spoken presentations by students are rare. Drama, however, very successfully promotes a wide range of oral communication.
108. The library is excellently positioned at the heart of the school to be a lively information resource for individual learning and research. This advantage is not exploited to the full, however, and about half the space provided is occupied by computers, with the book collection pushed to the back, where - from the food litter to be found there after lunch - it is used for other purposes than reading for pleasure or research. Displays for the promotion of reading are very limited. The book collection is just satisfactory, and the low level of its attractiveness is indicated by a low loan rate. Opportunities to promote reading for pleasure (especially necessary for boys) are missed.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are below average for boys.
- Achievement by students is inconsistent.
- Good teaching is leading to improved standards.
- Good leadership by the head of department, supported by a dedicated team of teachers, is contributing to improving standards.

- There is a very varied curriculum for learning languages, though the allocation of time is inadequate.
- Overall accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

109. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average compared with all students nationally. Compared with boys nationally results in French were average but in German and Spanish they were below national average. However all boys were entered for at least one examination in a modern foreign language. This is well above the national average. Where a high proportion of students are entered for examinations this often has a negative effect on results. However students did not perform as well in modern foreign languages as they did in other subjects and results have been inconsistent since the last inspection. In work seen during the inspection standards were average overall. Students enter the school with an average level of attainment so achievement overall is satisfactory. Standards of work seen are higher than results achieved in GCSE examinations. This is because the department has experienced major staffing problems over the past few years. There is now a stable and good team of teachers and this is leading to improved standards. Standards are average by the end of Year 9. There is very good achievement by high attaining students in Years 8 and 9. In Year 8 they use the main tenses, including irregular verbs, with accuracy and use a wide vocabulary to produce extended writing of good quality. In Year 9 these students have already begun to prepare for the GCSE examination. Some low attaining students, including some students with special educational needs, are underachieving because they do not concentrate well in lessons. Presentation of work for these students is sometimes unsatisfactory. Standards achieved by students in Years 10 and 11 are average in all three languages. There is some underachievement by students in Year 11 who have had non-specialist teachers in earlier years. Standards are higher in Year 10, reflecting improved teaching. Overall students develop good ICT skills. Some students lack confidence orally.
110. Teaching is good overall with examples of very good but also unsatisfactory teaching. All teachers plan their lessons well. They ensure continuity by relating learning in the lesson to previous learning. There are clear targets for all lessons. Lessons are well structured with good starter activities and effective review of learning at the end. Lessons have a clear focus, are well resourced while a good variety of activities in most lessons ensure that students maintain their concentration. Teachers have good command of the languages they teach and often use them well in lessons. In most lessons seen high expectations by the teacher and the brisk pace ensure good learning while good relationships and the effective way in which most teachers manage behaviour ensure a good working atmosphere. Achievement is not as good in a minority of lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9 where low expectations and ineffective classroom management mean that students are not well motivated. Students learn well overall because assessment of their work is thorough and regular. However in some lessons students are not clear about the progress they are making. In the best lessons teachers use National Curriculum levels and GCSE grade criteria to raise students' expectations of what they can achieve. Students' work is marked conscientiously but teachers rarely give detailed feedback to students or show them how to improve the quality of their work.
111. The leadership of the department is good. There is a clear vision for the department and for the further development of the school as a languages college. The Head of Department has worked hard to raise the profile of the department and has assembled an effective team of mutually supportive teachers. Management is satisfactory. There are well-focused departmental meetings. Documentation is clear and helpful. However the department does not use information about students' prior attainment to evaluate its own performance and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not yet fully effective. Students have very good opportunities to study a wide range of modern foreign languages but the limited time allocation is affecting standards. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The department

has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. There has been little improvement in standards but the quality of teaching has improved.

112. The school is making progress towards becoming an effective languages college. Students benefit not only from the increased opportunities for studying a wide variety of languages but also for taking part in extra-curricular activities. There are examples of good practice. A group of high attaining students in Year 9, for example, are taught geography in Spanish. The school works effectively with primary schools, offers free languages classes for adults and opportunities for the study of community languages. There is a new development plan which targets raising standards in modern foreign languages and introducing projects that will increase students' understanding of international issues.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good - a reflection of competent subject expertise.
- Effective teamwork within the department underpins the very good achievement seen, particularly that of the more competent students.
- There is insufficient use of information communication technology to assist students with their learning.
- Assessment is not effectively shared with students to ensure understanding of current performance.

Commentary

113. The attainment of students on entry to the school is broadly average. Results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests are consistently above average and particularly good at the highest levels. In GCSE examinations results are well above average and overall show excellent achievement based upon prior attainment. Mathematics is a subject where students do better than they do in their other subjects.
114. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 9 reflect recent results and students from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Students are competent in explaining their mathematics and successful work on probability was seen in books of middle ability students; however, lower ability students experienced a limited range of work with greater emphasis on number work. The work seen in Year 10 and 11 is very good particularly in the 'fast track' GCSE course where early entry students have attained outstanding results at the very highest grades. This represents very good achievement and excellent preparation for further study. Students in lower sets were able to identify number patterns, verbally explain the rule and a few were able to write this algebraically. Those with special education needs make good progress; the work is matched to their ability and the quality of classroom support is very good.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is better in Years 10 and 11 and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen in the inspection. Lessons are characterised by effective relationships, which actively supported the good behaviour seen. Thorough planning and well-focused questions helped students to do well. Presentation of work is generally weak and marking is inconsistent. The system for assessment is in a developmental stage and students are vague about current and predicted performance. Information communication technology is insufficiently used or developed. In all years teachers are following the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy. A particular strength is the way they start the lesson with a variety of tasks; this sets a positive tone to the lesson and is a welcome and anticipated aspect of the students' work. The recommended plenary activity at the end of the lesson is less well used.
116. Leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The mathematics team works cohesively and documentation has been well prepared and continues to be developed.

Strategic planning is comprehensive and issues for development have been clearly identified including raising attainment at the highest grades. The recent 'fast track' results are a testimony to an improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

117. Standards in use of mathematics and number are above average in the subjects where mathematical skills are required. The school has developed a policy but currently does not identify individual subject application. In science algebraic equations are used to derive values using speed and time. The use of graphs is a regular feature of work as is careful use of units. However, mathematical interpretation is a weakness. Graphical work in geography is regularly used and grid references are well understood. Scale drawings are well used in design technology, with clear evidence of the ability to use accurate measurement. The use of spreadsheets in information communication technology reveals the competent use of formulae and the appropriate plotting of graphs.

SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A team of well qualified teachers contribute to make teaching provision good.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning and those taking separate sciences attain above average results.
- Accommodation is variable but the new laboratories provide good facilities.
- The subject leader has worked effectively to produce improved schemes of work.
- Whilst overall teaching is good, there is a need to ensure that materials and teaching strategies are designed to meet the needs of the full ability range of pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently insist upon sufficiently high standards of written work rigorously.

Commentary

118. The standards of pupils entering the school are broadly in line with those seen nationally.
119. Results at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average. Standards have been maintained over the last few years but national standards have risen and so standards are now close to the national average. When compared to that of similar schools, students' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 11, A*-C GCSE scores in separate sciences are above national averages but, in double award science, are below those gained nationally. The proportion of students gaining A*-G grades in science is above the national figure. Most SEN and ethnic minority students perform similarly to other groups of students. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good.
120. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations, though higher-attaining students have a stronger knowledge and understanding that are above average. Students in Years 8 and 9 show good understanding of investigatory skills but some have less secure spelling, grammar and understanding of technical terms. Students' use of ICT in learning is not clearly evident in their work.
121. The achievement of students over Years 7-9 is satisfactory. Students come to the school with science standards in line with national expectations and make satisfactory progress to perform similarly in end of Year 9 tests to students in similar schools.
122. Students with special educational needs make similar progress. Progress is better to GCSE level; students make good progress but science is the weakest of the core subjects in terms of

outcomes. Improvement by students is limited by weaknesses and lack of clarity in writing and they do not always complete work from the learning materials. The attitude of most students to their work and the way they co-operate with each other and their teachers have a positive effect on learning and achievement.

123. Teaching overall is good in Years 7-9 and Years 10-11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use strategies that enable students to learn, including out of lesson support, such as revision lessons and booster classes. Where teaching shows strengths, teaching materials are well planned and explanations given to students are clear. Student management and relationships with students are usually good. Teachers show an awareness of pace of working and make good use of questioning skills. Lessons do not always conclude with a review of learning. Less effective teaching lacks sufficiently assertive pupil management, materials are insufficiently interesting and work is insufficiently clearly explained. Whilst key words are sometimes evident and used, there is insufficient emphasis by some teachers on key technical words and the explanations of concepts are often brief, leaving pupils with insufficiently well developed ideas in their books.
124. Overall leadership of the science department is good. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The data-base has improved and is used for monitoring progress. Schemes of work are in place and there is a rolling programme of further development. ICT provision remains an area for development in its use for teaching and learning. An extensive audit of current and proposed use of ICT highlights this as a planned area in the departmental development plan. Marking is inconsistent in its frequency as is quality of feedback in helping students become aware of how they can improve. Teaching has been monitored and this monitoring is beginning to improve practice. The supportive technical support team are integrated members of the department. Whilst pupils' numerical skills are good, the departmental numeracy and literacy strategies are in the early stages of development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and benefits from the good subject knowledge of teachers.
- Insufficient curriculum time in Years 7-9 limits overall progress to satisfactory, despite good teaching.
- The management of the taught ICT courses is improving and the whole school leadership of ICT is now very good.
- Good relationships between teachers and students contribute positively to learning.
- The two main computer rooms are small and cramped but ICT facilities are in the process of being substantially improved.

Commentary

125. In 2003 the results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 showed standards to be broadly average but the proportion of higher level work was well below average. The same pattern of grades was seen for GCSE in 2003 though students' results in ICT were in line with their other subjects.
126. Most students have good skill and confidence in using computers. Students' work seen during the inspection and discussions with them indicate that standards are broadly average but with a wide spread of attainment. Presentations are of satisfactory standard but students' use of graphics often lacks imagination. An exception was in a very good Year 9 lesson where students were challenged to design some eye-catching logos. The use of specific desktop publishing software is very limited. Spreadsheets are used increasingly confidently to tabulate, manipulate and display data. By the end of Year 9 students have a satisfactory understanding

of how to use a database and most can write a sequence of computer instructions for controlling equipment to the expected standard. A well planned 'band manager' project is used in Year 9 to consolidate and develop skills. Lessons seen in Years 10-11 focused on the use of databases with some higher attaining students using advanced methods to prevent the inputting of wrong data. The proportion of students working at higher level represents an improvement on the GCSE results of 2003.

127. Teaching and learning are good with four fifths of lessons rated good or better. Good use is already made at the start of lessons of new software to relay information such as learning objectives, key words and questions direct to students' computer screens and capture their interest but its use part way through lessons to challenge students is at an early stage of development. The good subject knowledge of teachers is used well in question sessions to promote learning and in supporting individual students, particularly in the more demanding database work of Years 10-11, but opportunities are often missed to challenge higher attaining students. The use of homework is inconsistent. Teachers' management of students is a strength so behaviour in lessons is good and students respond well when working independently. When problems arise, however, students rely too much on their teacher for support despite the provision of high quality help sheets. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are identified and achieve satisfactorily.
128. The headteacher has made ICT development a priority and the leadership of ICT in the school is now very good. Following a detailed review in 2003 very extensive and well-planned improvements to ICT throughout the school commenced early this year but were paused during the inspection. At the time of the inspection the quality had improved significantly in several areas and students' learning was seen to be benefiting, but access is currently still unsatisfactory for a number of subjects. Management within the ICT department is satisfactory and there is a good commitment to improvement. The two main computer rooms are too small and cramped for satisfactory working. Assessment data are recorded systematically but insufficient use is made of them to inform students of their standards and to challenge them to do better. Performance management and monitoring are in place and are used to identify the development needs of staff but are not yet used to spread the good practice seen. In Years 7-9 teaching has benefited from the aspects of the national strategy that have been introduced but not yet fully in place. The technicians provide good support.
129. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum and teaching have improved, standards have risen and technical support has increased. There is good capacity for further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

130. Students' work shows much evidence of internet research, with presentation software and spreadsheets used for coursework. There is access to computers after school. A comprehensive audit and inspection evidence show that there is a satisfactory contribution to ICT provision across the curriculum, though, as indicated, access is a problem. Modern foreign languages and music have good resources which are used well to enhance teaching. In a French lesson the teacher had used specialist software to generate stimulating exercises tailored to individual student needs. In a very good design and technology lesson Year 8 students succeeded in the challenging task of programming a robot to draw a simplified version of their names. Good practice was also seen in English, mathematics, science and history. Geography students travelled to the excellent local authority learning centre to generate interactive presentations. The school web site includes the expanding bank of learning resources being developed by talented students and others.

HUMANITIES

Geography

The provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Classroom teaching is often good.
- ICT was used effectively to support learning and research.
- Fieldwork enhances what is learnt in the classroom.
- Learning materials are not sufficiently varied to meet the needs of some students.
- Marking is regular and positive, though it does not consistently show how students can improve their work.

Commentary

131. Overall standards are below the national average. In 2003 the number of A* - C at GCSE passes was below the national average and slightly below that of other subjects.
132. Students enter the school with limited geographical skills. By the end of Year 9 standards are just below the national average. Students' achievement relative to prior attainment is satisfactory. As students progress through Years 7, 8, and 9 they make satisfactory progress in finding information from text, maps and diagrams and their skills in using computers are also developing at a similar rate. Students can in their writing, aided by either diagrams or graphs, show that they have a satisfactory understanding of the geographical processes and the impact they have on the environment. The subject does not sufficiently use a range of texts and worksheets to address the different levels of ability within groups. Students with special educational needs make some progress in working towards the targets in their Individual Education Plans but would make greater progress with additional support. Students who speak English as an additional language are making progress but further assistance is necessary for those who are learning the language. While the promotion of geographical language, helped by the display of key words, is helping students to develop their language skills there are too few opportunities for extended writing and public reading.
133. Students were below the national average at the end of Year 11, though this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to standards shown at the end of Year 9. Students make sound progress in their geographical knowledge, understanding and use of geographical skills. Students can, in their writing, show a satisfactory understanding of the vocabulary and use their skills with maps, diagrams and graphs to convey their ideas. The writing and presentational skills have greatly improved over their final two years. On the whole students listen well and many are prepared to take part in most lessons. However, the majority of students are still dependent on their teachers for their learning and allowed few opportunities to pursue independent lines of enquiry.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the classroom; however, the wider aspects of assessment for learning, monitoring and marking for purpose are less so. Teachers plan their lessons well with appropriate learning objectives which they frequently share with students. They draw on an appropriate range of resources to provide a variety of activities that stimulate students' interest and help learning. Skilful questioning and good oral assessment help many students understand their learning but others should be targeted to experience similar benefits to their learning. ICT was used sufficiently well to support learning and encourage students to use computers as a research tool. Teachers work hard but some students do not always respond with similar effort in their learning. Students generally work well in class; however they are given insufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Marking is regular with some useful comments but this does not consistently show the

students how they can further improve their work and achieve better outcomes. Similarly, the department holds information on students' progress though it is not shared with them sufficiently to encourage them to take greater responsibility for their progress.

135. Subject management is satisfactory. A new vision and further direction are needed for the department to progress. Schemes of work need to be reviewed to see if they meet present needs. A development plan needs to be written with appropriate priorities, timescale and details of who is responsible for its implementation and monitoring. The use of fieldwork enriches the curriculum and the work in the classroom. Monitoring is satisfactory but needs to be used to find and share areas of good practice. Examination success needs to be extended so that students increase their grades.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in response to good teaching.
- There is good leadership and management of a forward – looking department.
- Students' attitudes are good and contribute to good learning.
- Assessment is used well to indicate how well students have done and how they can be set targets for improvement.
- In a minority of lessons, more able students achieve less well than other students as the result of a lack of sustained challenge.

Commentary

136. Standards in history are in line with national average. The 2003 GCSE results for students in Year 11 showed a pleasing number of top grades. Overall the proportion of boys attaining an A* - C grade was close to the national average. The evidence of the inspection is that standards of students between Years 7 and 9, and between Years 10 and 11, are in line with the national average in knowledge, understanding, and historical skills. Students not only show average levels of knowledge of key events and themes, but develop the ability to analyse and evaluate a range of historical evidence. Some higher attainers do this very well; in contrast, there is a substantial minority of lower attainers who find it difficult to communicate their understanding accurately. The standard of presentation is unsatisfactory for a minority of students.
137. Achievement is good in all year groups. Students join the school with below average standards in history. They achieve well during their time in school, mainly because of good teaching and the positive attitudes towards the subject which this generates. Students with special educational needs achieve well, particularly when they benefit from the good ancillary support in the department. Students with English as an additional language, those from various ethnic groups, and the gifted and talented all share in the good achievement. However, in a minority of lessons, the achievement of the most able students is more restricted, when they are not given sufficiently challenging tasks early enough.
138. Teaching is good for students of all ages. Where teaching is good, or very good in particular lessons, it is characterised by good classroom management which keeps students working productively and making good gains in learning. Learning outcomes are set out clearly at the start of lessons and evaluated with students at the end. Marking is used well to show students how well they have done and how they can improve. Teachers use a range of resources well, and involve the students in a series of brief, well-paced tasks which keep them focused throughout the lesson. These qualities were evident, for example, in a Year 7 lesson in which

the teacher modelled the qualities of a good analytical answer successfully to help students structure their own work on medieval England. Video and pictorial sources were used constructively to help Year 9 students understand the human experience of the Holocaust. Occasionally more able students are given insufficiently challenging tasks which do not allow them to demonstrate higher level skills which would build on their already good understanding.

139. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has created an effective team of specialist teachers in a short space of time. The review and evaluation of progress are good, and areas for development have been identified appropriately. Assessment is used well to target student improvement. Teachers have adapted the literacy strategy imaginatively to promote achievement. The use of ICT has also been developed, although limited access to computing facilities continues to restrict opportunities for many students. The several strengths identified in 1999 have been maintained, for example the quality of teaching, progress and leadership. However, standards of students in Year 11 are no longer well above average. Therefore overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

- The school is not fulfilling the statutory requirement to provide RE for Years 10, 11 and Post 16.
- For Years 7-9 the quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Assessment is not taking place regularly and marking is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

140. The overall standards in Years 7 – 9 are in line with national expectations. Students' knowledge and understanding of aspects of Islam, Judaism and Christianity are appropriate for students of that age. They are learning *about* and learning *from* religion as both attainment targets are well integrated in lessons.
141. Achievement in relation to students' abilities is satisfactory overall. Thinking skills are well developed but there is little evidence of extended writing. The middle and higher ability students benefit most from the challenging and thought-provoking discussions but the needs of the less able are frequently not being met in classes with a wide range of ability. Sometimes they feel very frustrated and know that they are not progressing.
142. For the most part the quality of teaching and learning is very good with some lessons that are satisfactory and others excellent. In a Year 7 lesson when teaching was at its best students had the opportunity to reflect on the human feelings of Jesus while watching the video clip of the crucifixion. They were very quick to notice, without any prompting, the ways in which the gospel accounts of Luke and John differed from the film. The majority showed deep insight into all the aspects of the death of Jesus and were eager to ask and answer questions regarding his last words from the cross. In other lessons where there was high-level discussion, for example, on the proofs for the existence of God, without visual stimulus or support material the less able students were struggling to cope with some of the concepts.
143. Students' behaviour and attitude in lessons are very positive, they are eager to take part and respect each other's views and opinions. Discussions are always very orderly and of a high quality.
144. Leadership: the head of the department is a very good role model; he creates a very positive learning environment and has high expectations of all students. However, management is weak because several issues raised at the last inspection have not yet been addressed. For example, schemes of work are not developed so it is not possible to comment on the variety of teaching strategies used over a period of time or the extent to which the agreed syllabus is

being covered. Assessment linked to the agreed syllabus and levels is still not developed. About half the exercise books have not been marked since September and homework is not set on a regular basis. Students are not aware of the progress they are making and do not know what they need to do to improve.

145. Breach of statutory requirements for Years 10, 11 and post 16 was also an issue at the time of the last inspection and has not yet been addressed, so progress is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, since the last inspection the quality of teaching and learning has greatly improved. The attainment targets, learning *about* and learning *from* religion are skilfully integrated and there is good provision for spiritual development in most lessons.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well and this is reflected in the GCSE results which are above national average.
- Teaching is good overall with very good practice in some of the examination classes.
- The subject benefits from a very committed head of department who is well supported by specialist colleagues.
- Learning and assessment schemes in Years 7-9 are not as strong as those used in the examination classes and provide insufficient guidance and challenge to some students.
- The currently unsatisfactory resources and accommodation have seriously limited students' Design and technology experience though this is currently being resolved.

Commentary

146. GCSE results in the last two years have been a little above national average for all students with over half of boys gaining grades A*-C in one of the three design and technology courses. Against boys nationally, standards are significantly above average and this represents a substantial improvement in GCSE standards over previous years.
147. Standards in the current GCSE courses broadly reflect recent results and are above national average. In graphic products, students demonstrate good research skills in project work, with a significant number producing high quality architectural models reflecting accuracy and creativity. Students taking systems and control mostly have a secure understanding of different systems and use ICT very effectively to research and present their work to a high standard. Standards of work are more variable in Years 7-9, though broadly in line with national average, with most students having a developing understanding of a design and make process.
148. Achievement is good in Years 10-11 and for the sixth form group taking AS and A level. Students rise to the increasing demands of those courses and benefit from the good teaching and learning support. In the earlier years, students also make good progress, often from below average knowledge and skills in design and technology on entry to the school. However, the use of a common scheme of work for the exceptionally wide range of students who come into the school provides insufficient challenge for the more talented.
149. Teaching and learning are good overall, particularly in the examination courses. The three specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge that they use effectively to demonstrate techniques, explain material constraints and support students in their work. Students therefore make good progress in their understanding and skills, evident in their accurate responses and mostly well finished practical work. Students are almost always on task and most are

absorbed in their design and make activities reflecting the teachers' good class management and personal enthusiasm for their subject. The often well presented GCSE and A level project work of students uses ICT well and reflects the high expectations of teachers and their readiness to break down the design and make process into better understood and manageable activities. Marking and assessment are stronger in the GCSE and A level classes where teachers more successfully make clear the assessment criteria and help students work towards higher grades. However, staff have a less confident grasp of National Curriculum levels in Years 7-9 and make less explicit those standards to support student learning.

150. The leadership and management of design and technology are good particularly in the GCSE and sixth form courses though the work schemes and assessment practice in Years 7-9 have some weaknesses. Overall, the subject has clearly improved and this can be attributed to the positive commitment of the head of department, well supported by specialist colleagues. The now active support of the school in strengthening the subject can be seen in the current redevelopment of the unsatisfactory resources and accommodation that have previously inhibited students' learning experiences. Historically the school has never offered the valuable medium of food in design and technology, though it is exploring opportunities for new course development with the help of the nearby girls' school.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress from the start of Year 7 to Year 9.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well informed.
- The standard of work produced in Years 10 and 11 is in line with national expectations.
- Opportunities for producing images through the use of ICT are limited.
- Assessing, tracking and recording systems are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

151. Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is below national expectations. However they make reasonable progress throughout Years 7 and 8 and by Year 9 there is evidence of improvement in standards overall which are in line with national expectations. Achievement from the start of Year 7 to Year 9 is good.
152. In the 2003 GCSE examination, the number of students achieving grades A*-C was in line with the national average when compared with similar schools, but below when compared with all schools. The number of students achieving the highest grades A*-A was well below average. Students with special educational needs are well integrated into teaching groups and good use is made of learning assistants. Achievement throughout Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory.
153. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are significant weaknesses. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well informed, but there are occasions when inappropriate tasks are set for students, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Management of students is satisfactory, but there is a tendency for teachers to tolerate too much unnecessary conversation, which can interfere with concentration. Homework is not set or marked regularly and feedback is not given to students.

154. The majority of students work with reasonable concentration to acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. However, a significant minority of students in Years 10 and 11 continue to experience difficulty with basic drawing and painting skills. Others are beginning to produce very good constructions in three dimensions using card. The standard of work produced in Years 10 and 11 is in line with national expectations.
155. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Head of Department does have a very clear view of how he would like to see the department develop in the future, which is shared with other members of the department. Relationships between staff and students are good. Planning is satisfactory but closer attention to National Curriculum Levels and to the GCSE specifications is required to ensure that the needs of the students are met. Assessing, recording and tracking procedures are unsatisfactory, which impacts adversely on target setting and on the quality of feedback that is provided for students.
156. Accommodation is very good. There are three large, well-lit studios, which can be used for work in both two and three dimensions. Resources in the context of a traditional curriculum are good, but students have very limited access to computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers within the art studios.
157. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with the national average and there remain weaknesses in practical, technical and craft skills. There has also been a significant decline in the number of students achieving the highest grades A*-C in the GCSE examination. However, achievement from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11 is good overall.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching at Year 9, GCSE, and 'A' level is good; the curriculum is designed to allow access to the subject for all, including the gifted and talented and pupils with special educational needs.
- Accommodation for teaching the subject is unsatisfactory; limited purpose-built space hampers the development of group work in composition and performance and, consequently, coverage of the full breadth of study of the music National Curriculum is limited.
- Provision for information and communication technology related to music composition is good.
- The positive leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

158. Compared with similar schools, pupils progress well in music. A relevant curriculum is in place, which covers the requirements of the National Curriculum up to and including Year 9 and is attractive to the broad spectrum of pupils. At GCSE and 'A' level, pupils continue to achieve good standards in their composition work, and perform with confidence. The use of music technology is particularly impressive; a graduated series of tasks taught through all the year groups ensures that all pupils have confidence and competence in this area.
159. Overall standards in music are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 9, pupils know the meanings of key musical terms, and can apply these concepts in their musical compositions. They understand how music can be designed for particular purposes; for example, using keyboards and computer software, they compose an extract of music suitable for accompanying a short film sequence. Despite limited performance space, teachers give pupils in Years 7-9 some practical experience of aspects of world music; in one lesson seen, a Year 7 class performed an Indian Music rhythmic cycle of some complexity with enthusiasm and skill. At GCSE level, pupils prepare imaginative pieces for performance using the information and communication technology available; for example, they compose pieces for

special occasions. Several pupils recorded vocal performances with confidence at a standard in line with the national average; links with a local music theatre group give pupils access to professional vocal coaching. In 'A' level music technology pupils compose in a wide range of musical styles at a standard at least in line with the national average. Despite problems with accommodation, regular concerts are held enabling those participating in the varied programme of extra-curricular music activities provided to gain valuable performing experience.

160. The music staff have carefully considered topic areas to be taught and pupils experience a challenging programme of study. In Years 7 and 8, pupils encounter a varied range of musical styles and cultures and develop their skills in the use of computer software linked to keyboards. In Year 9 this work is continued; there is a strong emphasis on the use of popular music as the medium for further learning of musical devices and processes. Because the subject is well taught, pupils are able to explain clearly, using suitable subject-specific vocabulary, what they have learned and how they intend to develop their work. In some group tasks, however, planning and guidance are insufficiently detailed and consequently a minority of pupils have problems in focusing upon the task.
161. Subject leadership is very good and the three class music teachers have a very positive and inclusive approach to pupils and are enthusiastic, committed, well-qualified, and eager to develop their subject in school. Management is generally good and evaluation and review processes within the music department are very strong. Data on past performance of staff and pupils are readily available, and staff use this both to further develop teaching and learning and to plan future resource requirements for the subject. Music staff have built peer observation opportunities into their workload and regularly share their views on how learning and teaching are developing. Peripatetic instrumental teaching in school is strong: there is a sizeable proportion of pupils learning an instrument and teachers are sympathetic to the restrictions placed upon pupils learning instruments which are difficult to accommodate at home; for example, drum kit. Music teachers keep regularly updated details of which pupils are undertaking instrumental tuition and monitor progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education **is satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good breadth and balance in curricular opportunities, including a varied extra-curricular programme.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and relationships are good.
- A lack of a clear vision to identify effective strategies for improving standards.
- No established monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Assessment for learning is weak and is not being used to monitor progress, set targets or inform planning.

Commentary

162. Students enter the school with average standards and make satisfactory progress throughout Years 7-9. A minority of students in Year 7 and 8 reach above average standards and showed very good ball handling skills in rugby and good control skills in volleyball.
163. In Years 10-11 standards are in line with the national average and achievement is satisfactory. Students have good skills in football and have a good understanding of tactics.

164. A small number of students take GCSE in physical education. Standards amongst the present students are average and they achieve appropriately. A minority of poorly motivated Years 10 and 11 students have an unsatisfactory attitude to studying and this results in poor knowledge and under-achievement. The quality of written work is variable. Some notes are well written and provide a good source for revision, whilst other folders contain little evidence of quality or commitment. Homework is set regularly but completion rates are poor.
165. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout Years 7-11. Each lesson has an element of fitness and most emphasise skill acquisition. Whilst all lessons are planned with clear learning objectives communicated to students, this focus is frequently lost as the lesson progresses. Tasks often lack challenge and students are given limited opportunities to reflect on their learning. Occasionally, when teaching is good or better, teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of students' work, behaviour and attitude, resulting in good progress being made. There is careful attention paid to students with special educational needs and good use is made of support teachers. Gifted and talented students benefit from links with local sports clubs and from specialist coaches, particularly in basketball. Students have positive attitudes and good relationships exist amongst students and between staff and students. Assessment is weak and, though marking is satisfactory, neither is used to inform students how they can improve the standard of their work. No use is made of information and communication technology in teaching to support students' learning. Flexible use is made of off-site facilities; however inadequate indoor provision does constrain standards.
166. Leadership is satisfactory but does lack a vision that gives a clear direction to the work of the department to raise standards. The department team is committed and hard working and collectively they promote physical education in a very positive manner. Sport is popular amongst students who speak with enthusiasm about the subject. Management is satisfactory. Organisation is good but the Head of Department acknowledges that assessment is poor and should inform planning, set targets for students and monitor their progress. He also recognises the potential of increased use of computers to impact positively on standards. Formal monitoring of teaching is not yet established to ensure that best practice is shared. The department provides a good range of extra-curricular activities to include clubs and inter-school matches for more able and motivated students. Staff willingly give their time to support these activities and regard this as an important part of their professional duties.
167. Insufficient progress has been made since the last report. Teaching is still satisfactory. Standards of attainment and achievement remain at the same levels. Assessment procedures still need further refinement and more rigorous leadership is required.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

168. In addition to leisure and tourism, a number of lessons in GCSE business were sampled.
169. Very good teaching was seen in those lessons, which were characterised by good relationships and effective class management. The range of well planned activities and the teacher's good subject knowledge were used to promote very good learning. In a GCSE lesson students developed their understanding of the factors affecting profit and loss through a series of progressively more challenging exercises and were introduced to accountancy layout practice. In a foundation level lesson students made good use of ICT to produce interesting health and safety posters for their work-related learning.

Leisure and Tourism

Provision in leisure and tourism is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning enables students to achieve very well.
- Students with special educational needs are very well supported.
- Work experience and outside lessons at a city learning centre strengthen the vocational dimension of the course.

Commentary

170. Standards in the applied GCSE in leisure and tourism are broadly in line with national average and this represents very good achievement for the students who have benefited from the school's development of its work related learning provision. Very good teaching and classroom management result in very good learning. Students with a wide range of ability are achieving very well to attain the standards which are consistent with national expectations. The course is based upon a very good scheme of work. This, together with very well planned lessons, ensures that students of all abilities are challenged appropriately with a range of interesting and demanding activities. Pupils respond well in class. The nature of the course and activities, together with very supportive teaching, enables all students to work to the best of their abilities. Teachers are well informed about the special needs of some students and appropriate support is provided.
171. Pupils' portfolios are impressive and include many examples of effective self-assessment, although there was less teacher assessment in some portfolios than might be expected. They include a wide range of activities, including appropriate work experience, for which students have received a certificate. This practical experience has proved to be beneficial in helping students to understand many aspects of the course at first hand and appreciate its vocational nature. Aspects of the course take place at an external centre (The City Learning Centre), which specialises in vocational support. Teaching and support at the centre is very effective and students were using computers well to produce presentations related to a theme park which they had visited, as an integral part of the course, to collect first hand information.
172. Overall, the management of the programme is very effective and the course makes a positive contribution to the school curriculum provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning does not allow statutory requirements to be met.
- There is inadequate time allocated to cover the national curriculum programme.
- Overall teaching and learning in Year 9 lessons are satisfactory.

Commentary

173. Standards are below the national average because there is inadequate coverage of the curriculum. Citizenship is delivered through personal, social and health education. The current plan only allows for some aspects of the citizenship curriculum to be taught as a discrete subject. The work in the exercise books and files available indicates that standards are below the expectations for students of that age.
174. In lessons observed achievement overall in relation to students' abilities is satisfactory, with a minority that is unsatisfactory. The majority of students take the subject seriously and are able to discuss issues in a mature manner; but some show a lack of maturity.
175. The overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons observed is satisfactory. Citizenship is taught for half a term once a year at different times for years 7, 9 and 10. Year 8 have about twelve weeks. Year 9 citizenship was happening at the time of the inspection. In two lessons students had the opportunity to study crime and the criminal justice system. They listened attentively to each other's views and, when encouraged to draw conclusions and provide evidence, they were able to do so.
176. There is a handbook and development plan. Schemes of work are in the process of being developed. Different types of assessment are planned but there is no evidence yet of a detailed record of students' progress or target setting. There is no audit of how other subjects might contribute to the delivery of citizenship.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

177. Provision for PSHE is satisfactory. Overall planning is good but teachers do not have a uniform approach to make effective use of that planning in the classroom.
178. The teaching seen during the inspection was variable in quality and overall satisfactory.
179. Where the teaching is good or better teachers are successful at developing listening skills and managing a wide range of ability in such a way that all achieve at an appropriate level. Where teaching is unsatisfactory teachers have insufficiently high expectations, do not manage the wide range of abilities successfully and consequently do not ensure effective learning. Year 11 do not have PSHE.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, ten 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 2003.

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	%gaining A-E		%gaining A-B		Average Points Score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art	7	85.7	98.6	28.6	50.2	65.7	87.7
Art History	6	83.3	na	0	na	63.3	na
Biology	13	92.3	96.4	15.3	38.4	58.4	78.3
Business VCE	10	100	87.3	40	13.9	84	57.3

Chemistry	19	94.7	97.6	57.9	48	82.1	84.6
Design	11	100	97.8	0	33.1	61.8	76.6
Economics	25	88	98.9	12	47.1	59.2	85.2
English	43	97.6	99.5	48.8	44.3	86.9	85.3
French	16	100	98.8	37.5	47.3	82.5	85
Geography	22	100	98.7	31.8	41.3	84.5	82.5
German	3	100	98.4	66.7	45.8	100	84.6
History	30	93.3	99	16.7	41.7	66.6	82.8
IT	8	100	95.6	12.5	24	67.5	68.6
Maths	14	100	96.7	50	55.6	85.7	88.4
Media Studies	15	100	na	20	na	74.6	na
Music	6	83.3	98.8	0	40.7	36.6	82.4
Philosophy	21	90.4	na	38.1	na	72.3	na
Physics	9	66.7	96.7	44.4	44.9	66.6	82.4
Politics	27	92.6	na	48.1	na	82.9	na
Spanish	7	85.7	98.3	57.1	48.6	88.5	85.6

Level 3 GCE AS level

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
Art	10	50	80.1	20	23.7	20	29.9
Biology	1	100	65.2	0	11.1	20	20.6
Chemistry	3	0	72.7	0	13.9	0	24.1
Design	2	0	74.9	0	15.1	0	25.3
Economics	7	71.4	73.6	14.3	20.1	22.9	26.4
English	7	57.1	85.9	14.3	19.1	17.1	30.2
French	2	0	78.2	0	18.9	0	27.6
Geography	3	66.7	74.3	0	19.8	23.3	26.5
History	12	66.7	80.7	0	19.5	17.5	28.6
IT	6	33.3	67	0	10.9	8.3	21.4
Maths	3	0	61.9	0	17.1	0	22.1
Media Studies	2	100	86.4	0	23.8	40	32
Music	5	40	86.5	0	21.4	8	30.7
Other Social Sciences	18	50	69.7	5.6	16.7	14.4	24.1
Physics	6	66.7	68.6	0	14.4	16.7	22.7
Reigious Studies	1	100	80.2	100	22.6	50	29.8
Spanish	2	50	78.5	0	17.7	20	27.3

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No. in final year	%gaining qualification		%gaining merit		%gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art & Design	16	100	84.9	75	28	12.5	7.5

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, and often excellent.
- Students are very engaged, and learn very well.
- Standards are above average.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good.

Commentary

180. The proportion of students gaining higher grades in English at AS and A levels across the La Swap consortium is higher than average. A similar picture was observed during the inspection, where groups of 16 (AS) and 17 (A) from all consortium schools were seen, and samples of their written work were examined. A class of 13 students taking GCSE (mature) was also seen and their work scrutinised. Standards here were well below average for 16+ students.
181. Textual work in both A and AS courses is particularly good, with students showing a mature and sensitive understanding of authors' intentions, critical appreciation of a rich range of writing, and a good understanding of the wide variety of ways in which language may carry meaning. They talk confidently, putting forward well argued views in a poised and structured way. Their knowledge of the texts studied is thorough and secure.
182. Students work hard - although it has to be said that the lateness of numbers of them to lessons can only damage their achievement. When present, and in work done outside the classroom, they show increasing understanding of the demands made upon them. They learn how to balance analysis and response, and become more confident and independent in their learning - as a result of their own enthusiasm, and also of the well-structured and lively teaching, which provides them with the necessary skills.
183. A powerful influence upon their achievement is the way in which students and teachers work together. The collaborative style of teachers means that each lesson is a shared and mutually enjoyed experience. This was observed in a Year 13 lesson, where students who already had a broad knowledge of Keats were able to share the teacher's enthusiasm. Another strong feature of teaching is the planning and structure of lessons. In an outstanding lesson on *Dr Faustus*, enormous efforts had been made to provide students with a variety of approaches to meet a very challenging demand: to teach a page of the text. This was highly effective whole class teaching, resulting in very well supported, purposeful independent learning.

184. The GCSE (mature) group entered the sixth form having achieved lower than average standards in the examination taken in Year 11. They make good progress, however, and although standards remain low, they are receiving very powerful support from excellent teaching, which seeks to boost confidence, while at the same time maintaining pressure and challenge. Whatever task is set, the teacher ensures that structures, frameworks and instructions are in place which will support, prompt, encourage and reassure.
185. Marking is very good. It is painstaking and detailed, and always incorporates good advice and suggestions for development. Sixth form English is very well led by the head of department, and teaching is well managed through clear and detailed schemes of work. Good progress has been made since the last inspection

Language and literacy across the curriculum

186. Language and literacy across the curriculum are promoted well. In all subjects in the sixth form, teachers take pains to develop the correct subject-specific vocabulary, and to teach appropriate ways of reporting and responding to examination questions. Written work is carefully marked, and most teachers pay due attention to spelling and grammatical errors where these occur. Students' communication skills are well developed in the sixth form.

Modern foreign languages

187. French was the focus of the inspection but German was sampled. Very few students have entered A-level examination in German over the past few years but results have generally been above average. In the lesson seen students made good progress due to good planning and the challenging work set by the teacher.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use French in a very challenging way in lessons.
- Students' work is effectively marked.
- Some weaker students do not develop effective oral skills.

Commentary

188. Results in A-level examinations in 2003 were below average both for the proportion of students achieving a pass grade and for those achieving A-C. Boys' performance was marginally below that of girls. However the majority of students achieved well in relation to predictions. These results were in line with a consistent trend of good achievement since the last inspection.
189. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in Year 12 are at an average level and cover the full range of ability. Most students are achieving well, having made an effective transition to A-level work. They have a clearer understanding of a wider range of tenses, including the future perfect and the subjunctive. High attaining students write fluently and are learning to vary style and structure to write appropriately in different contexts, such as presenting arguments or writing descriptions. They have good oral confidence and take part in discussions, often responding effectively to points of view put forward by other students. Low attaining students, however, lack oral confidence and find it difficult to respond at even the most basic level.

190. Teaching is good overall and leads to good learning. Teachers have a very good command of French and use it in a challenging way in lessons so that students develop good listening skills. Good relationships in lessons ensure that the working atmosphere remains positive and that students feel confident to join in lessons. Students are very appreciative of the support they receive from teachers in and out of lessons. Teachers have a good understanding of grade criteria and use this well when marking students' work to indicate strengths and weaknesses and to set targets for improvement. Work is well targeted to provide an appropriate level of challenge for all students. Students are, for example, given a wide range of authentic reading material which effectively develops their reading skills. However, teachers are not doing enough to develop oral confidence for low attaining students.
191. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear sense of direction for the subject based on raising standards. The two teachers work well together. Students' progress is carefully monitored and they receive effective support from teachers. As a result few students have left the course in the past few years. There are no specific policies relating to sixth form French and schemes of work need to be more detailed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of the subject.
- The most competent students reach high standards.
- Continuation by more students beyond AS level is an issue for improvement.
- Teaching styles do not sufficiently encourage independent learning through open discussion.
- Students do not use computer technology enough to support their learning.

Commentary

192. The most recent results at A2 level were below national averages at A-B grades, and broadly in line at A-E grades. The department exercise an inclusive recruitment policy at A-level and many students are attracted from neighbouring schools. Students' overall needs are well met, including those with modest GCSE grades and particularly those able to pursue their studies to Further Mathematics.
193. Standards of work are now above average overall and enhanced particularly by very able students who are doing well in the further mathematics course. Current standards are an improvement on the most recent pattern of events and reflect the good progress being made by students. Written work of students in Year 13 indicates full coverage of the course content. Presentation of work however is poor and note-taking is inconsistent; this weakens its value for revision purposes. Competent work was seen in books using the binomial theorem and functions, which were well explained, applied and clearly understood. Students similarly have a secure grasp of pure and statistical mathematics, making effective use of this knowledge in further work. Limited evidence of the use of computers was seen in lessons or in students' work.
194. Teaching is good; it is well planned with good subject knowledge and explanations begin from first principles. Teachers are well respected, the additional support they give is well received and as a result the climate for learning is positive. Students in a very good Year 13 further mathematics lesson displayed a swift grasp of coordinate systems and their equations with very clear use of prior learning. Their ability was extremely high. Students in Year 12 expressed concerns about their ability to translate class skills to examination work, which suggests a degree of self-assessment. However the style of teaching rarely gave sufficient

opportunities for students to challenge, openly reason and thus inspire debate. Nevertheless the majority of students agreed that their choice to study mathematics was an appropriate one and recognised its value in support of their other studies.

195. The leadership and management are good with a competent team of well-qualified and experienced teachers. Outcomes, particularly the need to encourage more students to continue with their studies beyond AS level, are critically analysed. Improvement since the last inspection is the further mathematics provision, which remains a strength of the department. A full range of courses is offered to meet the differing abilities and career intentions of students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

196. There is no specific policy for mathematics across the sixth form, though individual subjects help students improve their technical language and higher-level analytical and evaluative skills in the range of numerical work required for Advanced level work. This is particularly seen and identified by students in physics, chemistry, biology, product design, economics and geography

SCIENCE

In addition to biology, A-level physics and chemistry were also sampled.

A level chemistry - Students enjoy the particular course and are making satisfactory progress and achieving in line with expectations.

A level physics - There was good teaching in the lesson seen, though erratic attendance is affecting the progress of some students.

Biology

Provision for biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers with good subject knowledge use it effectively to help pupils learn.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning which enable them to make progress and achieve well.
- Coursework production is well managed, enabling pupils to reach higher grades.
- Students are encouraged to become independent learners.
- Monitoring of student files and notes could be more rigorous.
- ICT could be used more effectively for teaching and learning.

Commentary

197. Over the last few years, across the La Swap consortium, biology A – C grades have risen from well below to above national averages. A – E grades have risen to marginally above national figures.
198. Standards of students on entry to the sixth form are below the average of sixth forms. Current Year 12 students are working above their expected grades, as are Year 13 students who are working at levels in line with national average and are showing good achievement.
199. Students in Year 13 show good understanding of principles of intensive and sustainable agricultural practices, identifying key aspects in discussions. Appreciation of human impact on species and ecosystems is of above average standard. Able students have well-organised and high quality work on kidney function and genetics. Ecological studies show effective use of statistical techniques.

200. Students in Year 12 show good recall of work on circulation and able students relate structural differences to function. Understanding of stem and root structure showed more limited recall of average to below average standard. Folders of more able students show good notes on enzymes. Students of lower ability, with poorly developed notes, showed insecurity in understanding of the action of enzymes.
201. Overall teaching is good. Where teaching showed strengths the lesson was well planned – as in a lesson about farming practices – guiding students to research areas of work before the lesson. Students took responsibility during the lesson and showed skills in argument and response to others' views. The teacher helped to move the discussion forward and discussions were consolidated effectively. Where teaching showed room for improvement, delivery of material was lacking in enthusiasm and students were given insufficient briefing to allow them to make best use of practical work.
202. A database is used to monitor progress in relation to expected grades. Students are provided with information sheets, review sheets and exemplar tests to aid and monitor progress. Some of this work is marked but the use of interim assessments with feedback to students on progress and how to improve is not well developed. The quality of student folders is weak in some instances and monitoring of notes is insufficiently rigorous. Students are aware of target grades but some are uncertain of their current position. Coursework in Year 12 and 13 is typically of a high standard, well marked with feed-back to students.
203. Pupil attitudes are very good and almost all complete the course. They form challenging questions, make suggestions that help learning and remain on task without prompting. Attendance is good, showing a good attitude to their lessons.
204. Students have their own textbooks for individual study. Coursework projects develop research skills and persistence. Preparation for class discussions and presentations develops study skills. The relaxed and open working relationships between students and teachers gives students the opportunity to suggest approaches to learning and negotiate strategies with teachers, which helps to develop mature approaches to learning.
205. The department is well managed. The curriculum is enhanced by good use of "The Mill" for a study skill residential course and there is a residential field trip. Visits to university departments are planned. Teachers have been observed and there is liaison within the La Swap consortium. Resources are satisfactory. ICT is insufficiently used for teaching and learning, partly due to poor provision of equipment but also influenced by teacher initiative and confidence. However the school web-site and biology pages are beginning to be used for pupil/teacher information exchange. The use of routine assessment data to monitor and guide pupil achievement overall could be more complete.
206. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and students continue to make good progress against their target grades.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching seen during the inspection was very good.
- Standards in AS and A-level examinations are inconsistent; there was a decline in 2003 and results were below average.
- The number and quality of computers for use by sixth form students have improved recently but data projection facilities are still limited within the department.
- Accommodation for sixth form ICT lessons is unsatisfactory.

- The availability and presentation of performance data in the department needs improvement.

Commentary

207. There has been some inconsistency in examination results and standards in examinations in 2003 declined. At A-level in 2002 the higher AB grades attained were below average but the overall pass rate was some way above average. Results declined in 2003 at A-level; there were no higher AB grades but all candidates passed the examination. In both cases this represented satisfactory achievement for the students involved. In 2002 AS level results were above average and all students attained a pass grade. This represented good achievement for students. In 2003 there were no higher AB grades at AS level and the overall pass rate was below average.
208. As a result of teaching which is good and often very good, learning is often very good. Students are making good and often very good progress in relation to their abilities. Current standards of work seen in lessons and in students' work stored on the computer network reflect a very wide range of ability but were above national average overall. This represents good achievement for many individuals. In an A-level class, students were creating databases for use by a specific business or community client. The majority had conducted thorough research, as a result of clear guidance from teachers. This was generally enabling them to respond effectively to clients' needs, although there was a significant variation in the level of additional guidance which was needed by different students. In the best examples students had a very clear idea of what they needed to do to meet the most stringent demands of clients, while paying attention to ease of use and the quality of the design of "user input forms". In some cases weaker students were still unclear about the precise implications of the commitment which they had made to clients. In Year 12 there was also evidence of a wide range of ability but, once again, overall, students were achieving well as they created a challenging spreadsheet for an insurance company to calculate premiums for a wide range of potential clients. Students saw this as a particularly pertinent issue which improved their motivation. Teachers were working hard to ensure that the level of challenge and response was appropriate for all students. In addition more stringent procedures are now in place to help ensure that there is greater consistency of effort and application in the production of coursework in response to last year's results. Marking and assessment procedures are clear, meeting examination requirements and keeping students generally well informed about progress and what is needed to improve further.
209. Evidence indicates that the leadership and management of ICT courses in the sixth form are generally good, although some aspects of departmental record keeping, particularly the presentation of subject performance analysis data, need to be clearer and more readily available. Much management and teaching time and effort have to be put into making best use of unsatisfactory accommodation. Rooms are small and cramped making it difficult to arrange equipment appropriately. The quality of projection facilities is very variable in sixth form teaching rooms. Post 16 ICT was not a feature of the last inspection report so comparisons are not possible.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

210. The use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in the sixth form is satisfactory in many subjects. However there is considerable variation between departments. The use of ICT in music is very good and all the more effective because students have had opportunities to pursue ICT based activities in the school since Year 7. The business education department makes very good use of computers. They are used extensively by staff and students for research as well as to make up-to-date learning resources available on all courses. Students' coursework is word-processed and good use is made of spreadsheets for data analysis and the presentation of business and economics information. In the modern foreign languages department their own dedicated ICT suite is well used to good effect to promote language skills and to develop an understanding of French literature, culture and current affairs. However, in sixth form biology the use of ICT for teaching is minimal and there is only limited use by students. The use of ICT in advanced level courses in maths and art is unsatisfactory.

HUMANITIES

In addition to history, two other humanities were sampled.

A level philosophy - In the one lesson observed, a Year 12 lesson, students showed below average standards of knowledge and understanding. However, philosophy has a good take-up and has recently achieved good examination results at A Level.

A level politics - In the one Year 13 lesson observed during the inspection, the teaching was good, and succeeded in involving the students in active debate about the sensitive issue of racial and ethnic politics, so that they achieved well.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good cooperation among the schools participating in the joint provision.
- Teaching of the history units in William Ellis School is good.
- A minority of students do not develop sufficiently as active, independent learners.
- Students have positive attitudes towards the subject, which has a good take-up by students.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and sometimes restricts the quality of learning.

Commentary

211. The 2003 Advanced Level results showed a good pass rate, but the percentage of students gaining the higher A – B grades was well below the national average, and represented a decline on the previous year's results. The evidence of the inspection is that standards attained in the units taught at William Ellis are average in relation to the expectations of nineteen year-olds nationally. There are several high attaining students who demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the range of British and European topics. They appreciate the complexity of themes such as the movement for Irish independence and are able to use a range of source material constructively. However, a minority of students lack sufficient contextual knowledge and lack confidence in putting across their ideas or working independently of the teacher.
212. Achievement is good. Most students build well on skills learned lower down the school: they develop sound analytical skills when evaluating a range of historical evidence and make good progress in developing their understanding of broader themes in the various study units. A minority of students make less progress in developing their understanding of concepts such as change and continuity, or in developing their capacity as independent and effective learners.
213. Teaching is good overall. Relationships in lessons are good, and in the best lessons teachers succeed in drawing out student understanding of complex issues such as the changing nature of Italian Fascism through effective use of evidence. Where the teaching is less effective in promoting good learning, discussion is not managed effectively either to involve sufficient students or to focus debate sufficiently. Sometimes teachers' expectations are not sufficiently challenging, for example when basic preparation tasks are done in lessons at the expense of more challenging and appropriate activities. However, in the majority of lessons activities are well structured, students are involved well and respond positively to good questioning, and resources are used effectively to motivate students and increase their understanding.
214. Leadership and management are good. The head of department at William Ellis School has evaluated progress and has a clear perception of how the subject can be further developed. The department has coped well with curriculum changes and the subject has a high take-up

amongst participating schools. Students' attitudes towards the subject are positive. Assessment is good, and is used well to inform progress. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, particularly for large classes, and classroom organisation is not conducive to promoting interactive teaching and learning. Although examination results were higher in 1999, the nature of the student take-up was very different then, and there is too little evidence to allow for a judgement on improvement since the previous inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

A level design and technology was sampled in the inspection.

The Year 13 lesson was very well taught and students were working well. There was a high level of commitment reflected in the high proportion of students who continued their project work in school at the weekend.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are well informed and provide good advice and support for students.
- Teaching methods are appropriate to the nature of the set tasks.
- Students have positive attitudes and work in a disciplined manner.
- Students work within a narrow model of the curriculum that places undue emphasis on traditional skills.
- There is limited opportunity for producing images through the use of ICT.

Commentary

215. In the GCE AS level examination in 2002 attainment by boys was in line with national expectations when compared with similar schools, but below when compared with all schools. Results in the Vocational GNVQ Intermediate Course were well above the national average in both 2002 and 2003. In the GCE A-level examination in 2003, results were well above the national average when compared with similar schools and above when compared with all schools.
216. The majority of students in Year 12 make good progress. They build successfully on those skills that they have acquired in Years 10 and 11. They apply themselves readily to the task of acquiring new knowledge and developing a deeper understanding of art as a means of communicating ideas and expressing feelings. The GNVQ Intermediate students work in a disciplined and organised manner and are producing interesting objects and images. Most respond well to the tasks that are set and produce work of a standard that is above national expectations. Achievement is good throughout Year 12.
217. Year 13 students apply themselves readily to the task of improving and building upon their knowledge and understanding and developing a range of skills within the context of a highly traditional model of the curriculum. Within these constraints, however, most are successful in producing work of a reasonable standard. A small minority are beginning to make good use of photography and ICT as means of carrying out research and for creating images suitable for development. The standard of work produced is in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory.

218. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are some good features. Teachers are well informed and familiar with the GCE A-level examination and the GNVQ Intermediate specifications, which ensures that they are able to offer informed advice and support for their students. They encourage students to carry out independent research and record this information in their visual diaries. Although good verbal feedback is given during lessons, there is a need for greater rigour in the written records that are kept regarding students' progress.
219. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Head of Department has a clear vision for the way that he would like to see the department develop in the future. Formal assessing, recording and tracking procedures lack rigour at present and are insufficient in ensuring that students are provided with accurate feedback.
220. Accommodation is very good. There are now three large multi-purpose studios in which two and three-dimensional work can be carried out. Resources are good in the context of a highly traditional model of the curriculum, but there are few opportunities for the use of ICT in the production of images and objects. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and attainment remains above the national average at GCE A-level for similar schools.

Drama

Provision for drama is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good progress through the course.
- The quality of teaching is excellent.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the subject.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good
- Extra-curricular provision is good.
- Accommodation and resources for the subject remain poor.

Commentary

221. Courses for AS and A-level have been introduced since the last inspection. Students have already taken Drama at GCSE level. The AS course was first examined in 2003 and A-level assessment will take place in 2004. The AS results are above the national average, with boys and girls achieving similar levels. Students' attainment on entry is consistent with the national average. Good progress means that, by the end of Year 12 and as they approach the final assessment in Year 13, most are achieving above national expectation.
222. Lesson observations and the examination of students' work during the inspection confirm that in both Year 12 and Year 13 attainment is above national standards. Students perform with imagination and make creative use of voice and movement in the presentation of a wide range of challenging texts from contemporary plays to Greek tragedy. They are able to work both independently and collaboratively to explore character and motivation. Higher attaining students show a strong awareness of dramatic pace and the use of space in practical sessions. Written coursework has proved comparatively weaker at AS than attainment in the practical parts of the course. Even so, most students produce good written assignments, showing developed understanding of both modern and classical theatre.
223. The teaching of drama is excellent. Work is very well planned and closely matched to the requirements of the syllabus. The teacher has excellent subject knowledge and high expectations that students will be independent and resourceful in their approach to all aspects of the subject. In practical sessions, the teacher intervened with challenging questions to extend students' initial ideas about staging and development of character. For example, in a

lesson on 'The Trojan Women' by Euripides, the teacher built on the students' ideas about Hecuba's position in the scene by showing how her 'self-absorption' would cause her to stand well forward.

224. Subject leadership and management are very good. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject. The schemes of work match the demands of the examination syllabus and take account of different learning needs within group work. Assessment of practical work and written coursework is very thorough and sets clear targets for improvement linked to the achievement of higher grades. The number of students who pursue further study of drama in higher education provides further confirmation of the standards achieved.
225. Accommodation and resources are inadequate and have not improved since the last inspection. Teaching takes place in the main school hall without access to lighting or integral sound systems. This is the one area of weakness in a subject which is very popular and challenges students to achieve high standards.

Media studies

Provision for media studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress through the course.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards the subject.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good
- Use of ICT is good.
- The inspection identified no significant areas for improvement.

Commentary

226. Media Studies at AS and A2 have maintained the high standards achieved in the subject at the time of the last inspection. The results are above the national average. Girls and boys achieve similar levels in both Year 12 and Year 13. Students' attainment on entry to the course is in line with national expectation. A minority have taken Media Studies at GCSE while the majority have previous experience of media through their English GCSE course. Higher grades in English are expected for those students pursuing this route to AS level. Results are above national standards for AS and A2 and confirm that students make good progress at both levels.
227. Observation of students' work confirms that standards are good. In discussion and in their writing, students demonstrate very good understanding of the main concepts of the subject, for example representation and genre. They use specialist terms with accuracy and confidence and can apply them to a range of different visual material. Their understanding of film technique, for example the effects achieved by different camera angles and lighting, is very good. They are able to apply this to their own digitally produced film sequences. Their practical work is good and they confidently use computers, both for written tasks and for editing their own work on screen. Students' understanding of how films change over time to reflect different cultural and social attitudes is very well developed in Year 13. At a wider level, their awareness of social, political and financial issues affecting media production is also good. Written coursework provides further evidence of this good level of understanding and shows perceptive analysis of media texts and the cultural values they represent.
228. The teaching of Media Studies is very good. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and keeps up to date with recent developments. Lessons are well planned to meet the requirements of the syllabus. Marking and assessment are constructive in helping students understand the level they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Theory is always

related to detailed scrutiny of media texts. This ensures that the relevance and purpose of technical terms and abstract concepts is accessible to students. There is a positive working atmosphere in lessons based on very good relationships and attitudes to learning. This enables students of all abilities to make very good progress.

229. The subject is led and managed very well. Good planning underpins the very good teaching in Year 12 and Year 13. Students gain experience of an appropriate range of media and teaching approaches. Resources, including the use of computers, support very good provision currently, with plans for further improvement firmly in place. Good systems are established for monitoring and reviewing individual students' progress and for setting individual targets.

BUSINESS

Business and Economics

Provision for business and economics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is very good and some is excellent.
- Achievement in business and economics courses is at least good and often very good.
- Links with business and the community are used to very good effect to enhance teaching and learning.
- The department is very well led and managed; teachers work very effectively as a team to promote consistency across all subjects.

Commentary

230. Advanced level results for students who were taught business and economics courses at William Ellis School are good. In the double option advanced vocational business course (AVCE), results improved significantly in 2003. They were above average for the higher AB grades and all students attained at least a pass grade. Students made particularly good progress to achieve these results. Results in the single option AVCE course were also good. In the A-level economics course, results were just below average for the higher AB grades in 2002 but all students passed the examination. In 2003 the percentage attaining the higher grades fell significantly. However, the AS economics results improved in 2003 and were above average.
231. Because of teaching which is good overall and often very good, learning and standards seen in the department in lessons and samples of students' work were good overall. In the AVCE courses standards were never less than satisfactory and sometimes good in both Years 12 and 13. Students were developing a good understanding of business theory, which the majority were able to relate effectively to a wide range of business types in all sectors of the economy. Much of the evidence for this was in students' portfolios, which, at the insistence of teachers, are very well compiled and presented, with good attention to detail. Students' work is assessed very thoroughly. Marking usually consists of detailed diagnostic comments, which help students to review and improve their work effectively. Because of diligent attention to detail, teachers ensure that students are well aware of the assessment criteria, which helps to ensure rigour in the preparation of coursework. Lessons are well managed and pace is usually good. In a minority of lessons where teaching was satisfactory student participation was limited to answering questions. Opportunities were missed to encourage students to play a more active role through group- work, discussion and presentations. Teaching in economics, where groups were smaller, was very good and sometimes excellent. Learning matched the teaching. The pace in lessons was very good, particularly during student-centred group work featuring presentations and peer evaluation, which ensured that all students were fully involved in very effective learning experiences.

232. Business and community links are a strength of the department and they are used well to enhance teaching and learning, while giving both students and teachers a context in which to work. Leadership and management are both very good. Because the department works well as a team, there is a great deal of collaboration with regard to students' work, resources and assessment. The thoroughness of departmental documentation, including assessment practice, and thorough assessment records is indicative of the way the department is organised. New members of the team are well supported. The very effective work of the department is facilitated by a well-resourced base room which is close to most teaching rooms. There was no reference to sixth form business and economics in the last inspection report. However there has been a significant improvement in recent years. The department has grown and it makes a significant contribution to the post 16 curriculum within the local consortium.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

