

INSPECTION REPORT

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL

Barnet

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101358

Headteacher: Dr J Marincowitz

Lead inspector: Yvonne Barclay

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th September 2004

Inspection number: 268882

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Grammar (selective)
School category: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 11 - 18
Gender of pupils: Male
Number on roll: 1,166

School address: Queen's Road
Barnet
Hertfordshire
Postcode: EN5 4DQ

Telephone number: (020) 8441 4646
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Barrie Martin

Date of previous 7th December 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Founded in 1573, Queen Elizabeth's is a selective, foundation school providing education for boys aged 11 – 18. There are 1166 on roll of which 270 are in the sixth form. Both the school and the sixth form are larger than the national average. The school is very popular and oversubscribed. Boys sit entrance tests to join the school in Year 7 with some places being allocated on musical ability. Only boys from Year 11 at Queen Elizabeth's are accepted into the sixth form. The school was awarded music specialist college status in 2004, is a Beacon school, has Investors in People status and gained three successive DfES Achievement Awards.

The Mission of Queen Elizabeth's is "to produce boys who are confident, able and responsible. The primary responsibility for education and training rests with the family, and the School offers itself as a partner in that undertaking". There is a wide cultural diversity with over half of the boys coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. They come from a wide geographical area of north London. The number of boys with special educational needs is very low. The percentage eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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35090	Chris Snudden	Team inspector	English; Post-16 English
11548	David Lee	Team inspector	Post-16 Mathematics
32788	Nick Asker	Team inspector	11 – 16 Mathematics
31385	Neil Gillespie	Team inspector	Science; Post-16 Chemistry; Post-16 Biology
15929	David Sheppard	Team inspector	Art and Design
2971	Kathleen Hooper	Team inspector	Design and technology; Post-16 Design and technology; Citizenship
31295	John Bennett	Team inspector	Geography; Post-16 Geography
22849	Ronald Catlow	Team inspector	History; Post-16 History
2048	Doug Masterton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; Post-16 Information and communication technology; Post-16 Physics
31112	Mike Simm	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages; Post-16 German
20747	Maureen Hanke	Team inspector	Music; Post-16 Music
11526	Mike Hodkinson	Team inspector	Physical education; Post-16 Business education; Economics
32108	Gordon Douglas	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Queen Elizabeth's is an excellent school that provides a very good quality of education. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and his deputies ensures that all boys, whatever their ability, from all minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs, achieve the very highest results in public examinations. The ethos of the school is excellent. Overall, teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Teaching is invariably good but sometimes excellent. **With average income and outstanding results, the school provides excellent value for money.**

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Boys' excellent attitudes and behaviour are very significant in enabling them to gain the very best results.
- Excellent standards because teachers, and boys themselves, have very high expectations about what boys can achieve.
- The school's mission "to produce boys who are confident, able and responsible" is fully met.
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher, his deputies and the governors.
- Teachers use their expert subject knowledge very well to extend boys' knowledge and understanding and to enable them to study effectively on their own.
- Boys derive great benefit from the school's excellent provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- The support provided by administrative and grounds staff is outstanding.
- The harmonious nature of the culturally diverse community. Queen Elizabeth's is an inclusive school.
- There are some inconsistencies at middle management level and in sharing good practice to sustain excellence.
- The school should regularly seek and listen to the views of boys and their parents.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Results have risen in both key stages and in the sixth form. The school has fully addressed the issues identified in the 1998 Ofsted report. Queen Elizabeth's has achieved specialist music college status. The school has been successful in meeting the challenge of raising already very high comprehensive school standards to those of an excellent grammar school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A*	A*	A*	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	n/a	n/a	A*	

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

Standards are exceptionally high and achievement is excellent. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are within the top five per cent of schools nationally at the end of Year 9. Boys are three terms ahead of boys in other schools at the end

of Year 9. Standards at the end of Year 11 are also outstanding. GCSE examination results are now within the highest five per cent of selective schools. Boys at Queen Elizabeth's out-perform girls from selective schools at GCSE. Sixth form boys also perform exceptionally well. Standards in GCE A-level examinations in 2003 were in the top five per cent nationally. All boys achieved a pass and over 90 per cent achieved the top grades of A or B.

Boys' attitudes and behaviour are excellent and contribute significantly to their success at the school. For boys at Queen Elizabeth's, it is 'cool to do well'. Exclusion is not an issue at this school. Boys' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Boys attend regularly and are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good for all boys, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 11 and excellent in the sixth form. Examples of excellence in teaching were seen in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form. The school has made outstanding provision to enrich boys' learning outside lessons. Boys are provided with very good support and guidance. Parents are very supportive and involved in their children's education. Very good links with other schools, higher education and the community enhance provision. The only weakness is the lack of provision for drama in English.

Queen Elizabeth's welcomes boys at age 11 and develops them by the age of 18 into mature, educated, responsible and highly motivated young men. From Queen Elizabeth's, they invariably progress to the best universities with the range of qualities and qualifications they require to be able to play an active and productive role in the diverse culture and international society where they will live and work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school by the headteacher is excellent. Management is very good. The headteacher has introduced significant changes to what was a very good comprehensive school so that it has become an excellent grammar school. The governors provide outstanding support to the school and through their contribution to strategic planning. The headteacher and his deputies provide exemplary role models for other staff and boys. The school evaluates its work very well and uses the results of such evaluations to inform planning, though, at times, the consistent implementation of priorities and the sharing of excellent and very good practice is not rigorous enough. The school has been extremely successful in establishing a harmonious community. The budget is managed very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school. They are particularly pleased with the results achieved by their sons, the quality of teaching and the leadership by the headteacher. Boys are equally positive. However, both boys and their parents express a concern that their views are not regularly sought and listened to. Inspectors agree that the schools' processes to systematically consult with boys and their parents, although satisfactory, require improvement.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO ARE:

- Sustain and spread excellence across the school; in particular, improve all departmental planning and secure the development of more innovative approaches to teaching to make learning rigorous and enjoyable.
- Introduce processes to systematically consult with boys and parents.
- Ensure that the English curriculum fully meets National Curriculum requirements through the provision of drama to meet statutory requirements.

THE SIXTH FORM AT QUEEN ELIZABETH'S SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the sixth form is excellent. It has made very good progress since the last inspection and provides excellent value for money. Only boys from Year 11 at Queen Elizabeth's are accepted. Standards are exceptionally high with boys achieving the very highest grades in public examinations. The curriculum provides an excellent range of courses and an extensive extra-curricular and enrichment programme. Almost all boys go on to university, a very large percentage to the most prestigious ones. Sixth formers have a high degree of self-confidence in their role as senior boys. They are proud to take on responsibilities, having rightly gained the respect of the younger boys. Through the opportunities provided for them, they become self-assured, mature, articulate and confident young men. They recognise that their school challenges them to succeed and this they respect. The boys believe wholeheartedly in the school ethos and value highly what the school provides for them.

The main strengths and weaknesses

- Exceptional standards and achievement with many boys gaining the very highest grades.
- Sixth form boys are excellent ambassadors and role models for younger boys.
- The leadership and governance of the sixth form is excellent.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form are excellent and a strength of the school.

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 boys achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English is excellent leading to very high standards and achievement. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their teaching is very good.
	Provision in German is very good . Standards are very high due to the excellent linguistic expertise and cultural knowledge of teachers.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is excellent . Standards are excellent and significantly above national expectation. Teaching is excellent which leads to excellent learning.
Science	Provision in biology is excellent . Examination results are well above national expectations and the excellent teaching inspires very high achievement by the boys.
	Provision in chemistry is very good . Examination results are well above national expectations; teaching is very good.
	Provision in physics is excellent . The opportunities to study the subject are many and results are outstanding.
Information and communication technology	Provision for ICT is excellent . There are two distinct routes for study at A-level and results are very good.
Humanities	Provision in geography is very good . The teaching of this subject is very good. There has been a significant improvement in field work. Provision in history is very good . The teaching of history is good. Some of the work done

by boys is excellent.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing

Provision in design and technology is **good**. Boys have very good practical skills. Their very high levels of literacy and skills of analysis enable them to achieve very well in public examinations.

Visual and performing arts and media	Provision for music is excellent . Standards are excellent; the subject knowledge and experience of the staff are excellent.
Business	Provision in business studies is very good . Standards are very high. Teaching and learning are very good. Provision in economics is very good . Standards are very good. Teaching and learning are very good.

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'.

Accounts, sociology, politics and art and design were sampled. Standards, teaching and learning in accounts are all very good. In Year 12 art and design, standards are good and, in Year 13, are excellent. Teaching and learning in Year 12 are very good and in Year 13 excellent. Standards in Year 12 sociology are very high and in Year 13 politics are excellent. Teaching and learning in sociology and politics are very good.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Sixth form induction starts in Year 10 with boys being guided and assessed for their capacity and potential to study subjects post-16. Good induction into the sixth form means that boys quickly adapt to their new roles and responsibilities, and their increased workload. Staff carefully guide the boys through their courses and university applications, so that they can obtain the maximum benefit from their time in the sixth form.

Sixth form boys are given an increased level of responsibility, for example, they act as prefects or house captains. This means that they come into closer contact with senior management and are able to discuss issues with them. Sixth form boys command considerable respect and, through their exercise of authority, promote very good order in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The leadership of the sixth form is excellent. Strategic direction and a clear sense of purpose come from the headteacher and his deputies. The new sixth form team is developing well and day-to-day management and administration are very good. The quality of the leadership and management of individual subjects is very good. Many of the sixth form systems follow the pattern of those of the whole school, for example, monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Governance of the sixth form is excellent. The school fully meets statutory requirements and progress since the last inspection has been very good. Results and standards have consistently improved from a very high level to the school now being in the top five per cent of selective schools nationally. Financial planning for the sixth form is exemplary and finances are extremely well managed. The school ensures that the income and expenditure of the main school and the sixth form is in balance. **As a result, the sixth form is cost effective and provides excellent value for money.**

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Boys recognise that a significant strength of the school is the exceptionally high standards it achieves. They appreciate that they are helped to study independently, worthwhile homework is set, they are taught very well and expected to work hard. Some boys and their families express disquiet that the boys have not been able to follow courses they would have wanted to meet their career aspiration. They also feel that the boys are not well-informed about careers and that staff do not treat them fairly and with respect. Inspection evidence does not fully support these views.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Standards achieved in national tests and examinations at age 14 and 16 are exceptionally high. The boys' achievement, judged by their progress from their attainment on entry to Queen Elizabeth's, is excellent. Throughout the school, boys with special educational needs achieve very well. Standards in the sixth form are excellent, as is achievement. Standards in lessons seen were not quite as high in Years 9 to 11 as in the sixth form.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards at 14 and 16 in national tests and examinations are excellent compared to national standards and compared to similar selective schools.
- Achievement is excellent irrespective of cultural background.
- Boys at Queen Elizabeth's outperform girls from selective schools.
- Standards and achievement in the sixth form are excellent.

COMMENTARY

1. The intake to Queen Elizabeth's is selective, and boys join the school with higher than average standards of attainment in Year 7. Almost half of the boys speak a language that is not English at home; this proportion is very high, but only a few boys have special educational needs (SEN). Test results at the age of 14 indicate that standards are excellent compared to all schools nationally and in similar selective schools. In 2003, English, mathematics and science results at Year 9 were in the top five per cent of all schools. In mathematics and in science, a very high proportion gained the very high Level 8. Improvements in results in recent years have outstripped the improvements made by other schools nationally.
2. Provisional results indicate that there was further improvement in 2004 and that higher percentages of Year 9 boys gained the top levels in their national tests. In English and science, over 80 per cent gained a result well above the national average. In mathematics, 80 per cent gained the highest Level 8. These results, as in the previous year, show that the progress boys make from Years 7 to 9 is in the top five per cent of grammar schools. Value added indicators, which calculate how boys are progressing from the age of 11 to 14, indicate that they are doing significantly better than would be predicted from their primary school results. Boys are a year ahead of boys in other schools at the end of Year 9, with boys from diverse cultural backgrounds gaining excellent results and achieving equally well. Boys with special educational needs achieve very well and make very good progress. Improvements in results in recent years have outstripped the improvements made by boys with special educational needs in other schools nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	43.5 (44.8)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	49.1 (49.2)	35.4 (37.4)
science	43.6 (44.8)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 180 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Changes have been made to the way points scores are calculated. Although the table appears to indicate a fall from 2003, in real terms, standards at the end of Year 9 improved.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are outstanding. GCSE examination results are within the highest five per cent of selective schools. In 2003, almost three quarters of boys achieved the top grades at GCSE. Most boys achieved the very highest grades at GCSE in English, mathematics and science. Over 80 per cent achieved the highest grades of A or A* in English and mathematics. All boys achieved A or A* in biology and chemistry.
- In 2004, provisional figures indicate that the percentage of boys gaining A* grades rose to 44 per cent with 121 boys gaining an A* in mathematics and 146 an A* in double science. In 2004, eighty per cent of boys gained five or more A* or A grades, an increase from the previous year when 74 per cent gained A* and A grades. Boys at Queen Elizabeth's outperform girls from selective schools, at GCSE. The progress they make from Year 9 to Year 11 is exceptionally high.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	100 (99)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	100 (99)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil; best eight subjects	57.4 (55.2)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 181 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards seen in classes, only two weeks into the academic year, were not quite as high as test and examination results might indicate. However, a wide range of boys' work seen during the inspection confirms the exceptionally high standards. The boys are prepared very thoroughly for external tests and examinations. Underpinning the outstanding progress boys are making are excellent standards of literacy and numeracy, and the effective application and extension of these skills in all subjects. Boys' grasp of appropriate use of computers and communications technology is very good. The school is successful in its determination that all boys will succeed academically. The level of achievement of those who are particularly gifted and talented is excellent. The results of boys who speak a language that is not English when at home are equally exceptional. The achievement of boys with special educational needs is very good and their attainment is very high. As a result, there are no significant variations in the achievement of different groups of boys. Standards of attainment and levels of achievement have improved since the last inspection.

SIXTH FORM

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	100 (99.2)	97.1 (92.6)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	91.3 (84.0)	42.1 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	409.0 (387.8)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 127 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

7. Standards in the sixth form are excellent. Queen Elizabeth's boys continue from Year 11 into the sixth form having been advised on the courses teachers predict will enable them to gain the highest grades. As a result, the attainment range is not as wide as sixth forms nationally. In 2003, the school was in the top five per cent nationally for AS and A-level performance with an average that is just above the equivalent of two A's and a B grade at A-level. All boys achieved a pass and over 90 per cent achieved the top grades of A or B. Average points scores are now based on the new university system and so comparisons are difficult. Nevertheless, analysis of performance in 2003 shows that, taken as a whole, the average point score per candidate rose from 387.8 to 409, which is equivalent to an improvement of one full grade.
8. Standards of attainment and levels of achievement have continued to improve since the last inspection when standards achieved by boys were in the top 30 per cent nationally. The A-level results, in 2003, ranked the school among the best grammar and independent schools in the country. Results at A-level continue to rise annually. Provisional results for 2004 indicate a further increase in the number of A grades awarded. All boys passed with over 90 per cent gaining the very highest grades. Boys with special educational needs gain very good results and make very good progress because of the strategies used to support them.
9. These exceptional standards are achieved as a result of a number of factors. These include:
 - the high proportion of very good and excellent teaching;
 - the excellent subject knowledge of teachers, particularly in English, mathematics, modern languages and the sciences;
 - the exemplary attitudes of the boys; and
 - the distinctive school culture that prioritises achievement and involvement, at the same time seeking to maximise boys' all-round potential and development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Boys' attitudes and behaviour are excellent and make a significant difference to their success at the school. For boys at Queen Elizabeth's, it is 'cool to do well'. Exclusion is not an issue at this school. Boys' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Boys attend regularly and are punctual.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Boys' enthusiasm for learning is exceptional.
- Relationships between boys and with adults are excellent; this helps to create a harmonious environment in which boys from very different cultural backgrounds achieve equally well.

- Boys play a full and active part in school life; they take responsibilities seriously and, particularly in the sixth form, make a very significant and important contribution to the running of the school.

COMMENTARY

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002 - 2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.0	School data	0.2
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

- The school quite rightly enjoys an excellent reputation. Boys know when they enter Queen Elizabeth's that expectations are extremely high. Boys respond incredibly positively. Their behaviour is exemplary. They respect their school and care for it well. Queen Elizabeth's is very unusual because of the absence of litter and graffiti. Throughout the school, relationships between boys and with their teachers are based on mutual respect and an admiration that boys have for their teachers' expertise. This continues, into the sixth form, even when the talents or potential ability of a boy may exceed that of his teacher. This is a considerable strength of the school.
- Boys want to learn, have a genuine interest in the subjects they are studying, achieve extremely well, gain much from the extensive extra-curricular provision and give much back to their school, of which they are proud. They show a rapid growth in their maturity and this assists them in making the most of the subject expertise of their teachers, enabling them to gain very high grades in their public examinations. Their natural competitiveness supports their personal desire to complete work to the very best of their ability. Boys not only reach, but often surpass, their own goals. In science, their adherence and approach to very safe working practices allows them to experience first hand what teachers in other schools usually demonstrate to pupils of their age.
- Boys show great self-discipline and are very responsible. During the inspection, boys of all ages were polite and considerate. Analysis of the boys' questionnaires showed that around one-third of them knew of incidents of bullying or racist abuse and a quarter were dissatisfied with standards of behaviour. The inspection team explored these issues with many boys during the inspection. The general response was one of surprise at the findings of the questionnaires. All agreed that instances of bullying were very rare and, if they did occur, they were dealt with immediately and effectively. Inspectors agree with the positive picture. The rate of exclusion is extremely low and is consistent with the school's inclusive ethos.

EXCLUSIONS

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
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White – British	382	5	0
White – any other White background	109	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	279	4	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	25	4	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	15	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7	1	0
Black or Black British – African	11	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	10	0	0
Chinese	93	1	0
Any other ethnic group	208	10	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	27	0	0

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

13. Excellent provision for boys' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a significant contribution to boys' increasing maturity. Assemblies and a developing appreciation of, for example, art and music make a significant contribution to boys' spiritual awareness. Their moral and social development is effectively nurtured and boys have numerous opportunities to think about and demonstrate their concern for others, for example, through their silent reflection when remembering the children and their teachers who were killed in Beslan, Russia. Boys respond very well to the many opportunities that are provided to explore the culture and religious beliefs of others, most of which are represented within Queen Elizabeth's.
14. The school comprehensively meets its Mission to *"produce boys who are confident, able and responsible"*. The distinctive ethos of the school is typified by the harmonious nature of this culturally diverse community. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, a video of a reggae concert dedicated to the meeting of two world leaders was used very effectively. From this, the boys understood the power of music in promoting world peace and racial harmony.

SIXTH FORM

15. The promotion of excellent attitudes and behaviour in Years 7 to 11 continues into the sixth form and significantly enhances the success and all-round development of boys still further.
16. Boys in the sixth form have a high degree of pride in their role as senior boys at the school, taking on and rising to their responsibilities, having rightfully gained respect from the younger boys. They have the maturity and sense of responsibility to recognise that, although prefect duty can be a burden on their time, the positive gains far outweigh this. Sixth form boys acknowledge the experience they gain in terms of time management, a sense of challenge, people management skills and the development of self-confidence. They know that it is their responsibility to exploit the full range of opportunities they are offered at Queen Elizabeth's. They are excellent ambassadors and role models to younger boys, so much so that younger boys aspire to be prefects later in their school career. The sixth formers add significantly to the care and guidance provided by the school.

17. Sixth form boys have a high profile in the school and value highly what the school provides for them. Through the opportunities provided for them, boys become self-assured, mature, articulate and confident young men.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good because teaching and learning, the curriculum and assessment, and support and guidance are very effective and promote excellent achievement. The school has made outstanding provision to enrich boys' learning outside lessons. Parents are very supportive and involved in their sons' education. Very good links with other schools, higher education and the community enhance provision. The only weakness is the lack of drama within the English curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 11 and excellent in the sixth form. Examples of excellence in teaching were seen in both key stages and in the sixth form. Nevertheless, a variety of different learning approaches need to be developed. Assessment is very good in Years 7 to 11 and excellent in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective use of teachers' subject expertise and their high expectations, which enable boys to achieve very high grades in tests and examinations.
- Skilful questioning that requires boys to think more deeply about what is being learnt and that probes deeper understanding. Teachers invariably refuse to accept the first response.
- Homework that supports and extends learning very well.
- Boys' very good analytical skills and high literacy levels.
- The infrequent use of innovative teaching approaches results in boys too often experiencing one style of teaching throughout the day. As a result, some learning opportunities are missed.

COMMENTARY

18. Teaching is very good overall, with only one aspect of teaching requiring development. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is now very good or excellent in over half the lessons compared with just over 40 per cent at the time of the last inspection. There are now more examples of outstanding practice. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is minimal.

19. When teaching is excellent:
- the lesson is well planned to challenge each boy;
 - the lesson is stimulating with difficult ideas taught in an inspiring and highly effective way;
 - skilful questioning demands precise recall and probes deeper understanding;
 - teachers employ a variety of strategies and methods to engage boys fully and sustain this through a brisk pace with very high expectations about what each boy will achieve;
 - boys are encouraged to be both independent and collaborative learners;
 - gifted and talented boys are effectively learning well beyond the expectation for the highest level of the course they are studying; and
 - the lesson ends with boys knowing what they have learnt.
20. For example, in a Year 11 music lesson, the teacher used two talented boys to inspire the class through their performance of Indian music. This enabled the whole class to gain a greater depth of knowledge and understanding and reach levels well beyond the top grades at GCSE.
21. In the relatively few lessons graded less than good:
- the lesson was not planned;
 - the work set was too easy for the boys; and
 - teaching was predictable and failed to capture the boys' interest and enthusiasm.
22. Where lessons encourage boys to discuss and work together, knowing that the teacher will check their thinking, the pace of learning increases and boys are enthusiastic. Teachers ensure that boys are thoroughly prepared for external examinations, and results show how very successful teachers are in teaching for examination success. Nevertheless, in a significant proportion of lessons, teachers use only one teaching style, which although effective, at times, results in boys not enthusiastically engaging in the lesson, because as they report, the lesson is predictable and dull. Inspectors agree with boys and their parents that learning could more often be enjoyable as well as academically rigorous.
23. Boys with special educational needs receive very good teaching and they achieve very well. In effective lessons, teachers adapt their methods and resources so that boys make very good progress. For example, in English, a boy with special educational needs, who faltered when reading aloud to the class, was able to succeed when the teacher provided imaginative illustrations of the characters.
24. Assessment is very good. Boys are tested each half term to assess the progress they are making towards their public examinations, and this is very effective in grouping boys so that teachers can better target lessons to meet their ability. Boys talk appreciatively about the availability of teachers, and of the procedures for review and target setting. The quality of marking is generally good and sometimes excellent. However, for example, in history, marking does not always provide boys with clear guidance on the standard of their work and what precisely they need to do to improve. Year 9 boys receive detailed feedback on the levels they are achieving in their independent study on using and applying mathematics. Thorough marking highlights their errors and they are given worked 'model' examples to clarify their understanding. In design and technology, although boys are given useful verbal feedback and know what their results are, assessments are not handed on to the next teacher who will be teaching them. The very

effective use of homework to consolidate and extend boys' learning makes a significant contribution to their progress and achievement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 180 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
15 (8%)	86 (48%)	55 (31%)	22 (12%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

SIXTH FORM

25. Teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form are excellent. In over 70 per cent of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching with only eight per cent of lessons satisfactory. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and prepare boys thoroughly for their public examinations.
26. Consistently very high quality teaching inspires boys to strive for excellence and leads to outstanding levels of achievement. An important strength in teaching is the way that independent learning is encouraged throughout the school but is further developed in the sixth form. Boys are highly motivated and make every effort to carry out tasks to the very best of their abilities. They have excellent literacy skills which help them to develop their ideas; they are keen to 'soak up' knowledge to achieve the very highest standards.
27. Assessment is central to this extremely successful teaching and learning. Rigorous assessment informs teachers of the steps required to ensure improvement, both in terms of their planning for subsequent lessons and informing boys of the progress they are making and what they need to do to achieve the top grades. Detailed feedback is given to boys in class, through individual discussion as well as through the comprehensive and accurate marking of work. Nevertheless, there is some inconsistent implementation of the extremely effective assessment and marking practices, for example, when assessing and marking in physics and business education.

THE CURRICULUM

The largely academic curriculum provides very well for the particular needs and the interests and aptitudes of boys. Provision for gifted and talented boys, and for spiritual, moral, social, cultural, including multicultural, development and music, is excellent. Provision for careers education is very good. All boys have equal access to the curriculum; teaching staff subject expertise is excellent and resources are very good. Accommodation is satisfactory, although some rooms are drab.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Extra-curricular and enrichment provision is excellent.
- The sixth form curriculum provision is excellent.
- Sixth form boys are very well prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- The statutory requirement to teach drama within English is not met.
- Some classrooms are drab and uninspiring.

COMMENTARY

28. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities to suit the needs and aptitudes of all boys. An exceptionally high number of boys continue their education to the end of Year 13. Those that leave at the end of Year 11 or Year 12 do so to enter employment or continue their education at other centres. The curriculum was judged to be good at the last inspection and very good in the sixth form. The deficiencies identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a religion and society course for Years 7 to 9, and GCSE short courses in ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11 for all boys. Recently, the school has achieved specialist music college status, which will extend musical opportunities. Boys with special educational needs, and those who speak a language that is not English at home, have full access to all parts of the curriculum. However, the requirement to teach drama within the English curriculum is not met.
29. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum includes a very good programme for the development of boys' personal, social, health and religious education. In Years 10 and 11, there is a very good range of academic courses, including the opportunity to study three sciences. A rigorous setting policy enables boys of the same abilities to be taught together, and is very significant in them achieving academic success. Some boys spoke of how moving down sets did cause them to question their capabilities, but that overall, they were happy with the system and felt well supported by teachers when changing sets.
30. The curriculum provision for boys with special educational needs is very good. It is planned well to provide a broad range of opportunities and adapted to meet specific learning requirements. Boys with special educational needs have very good access to the curriculum.
31. Extra-curricular and enrichment provision is excellent. The school provides an extensive programme of opportunities for boys to extend their learning, through clubs, clinics, visits, visitors, competitions, CCF, orchestras and through sports. Activities are open to boys of all abilities and participation is very high with boys making the most of these additional opportunities. Nineteen Year 7 and 8 boys attended a lunchtime explorers' club and enthusiastically researched the geographical reasons for the Boscastle flood. Boys were seen practising at lunch time in circuit training, weights, water polo and basketball, where sixth form boys undertook the responsibility of organising the coaching under the supervision of a member of staff. Additionally, large numbers of boys access other sports, particularly rugby after school. In music, sixth form boys accompany ensembles, for example, a very large four-part male voice choir meets twice a week, successfully rehearsing for a performance of Taverner's "The Lamb" to an exceptional standard during the lunchtime. Talented musicians particularly appreciate the additional learning opportunities provided through the school string orchestra to hone their performing and playing techniques. Boys in Year 7 are keen to take the examination in public speaking and over 70 Year 7 boys attended the chess club, with a member of the Barnet Chess Club and mathematics teachers as coaches, linking mathematical thinking to chess.
32. Staffing is extremely well matched to the needs of boys' study; this is a major factor in the success of boys in tests and public examinations. The significant movement of staff in the last two years, many for promotion, has been managed very effectively. Teachers new to the school speak glowingly of the excellent induction and support they receive. Support staff make an excellent contribution to boys' learning in a range of ways,

including support for practical work in lessons, through the care of the sports and physical education (PE) facilities and in providing high quality administrative support to teachers. Resources for learning are very good and include a significant investment in interactive whiteboards to enable improvements in teaching and learning.

33. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. Governors have agreed a very necessary building and refurbishment plan that will replace the swimming pool and hall. There is very good enrichment of the school environment through the display of boys' art works. However, some classrooms are drab and uninspiring and do not provide a stimulating learning environment.

SIXTH FORM

34. The sixth form provides an excellent range of courses closely matched to meet the needs of the very able boys moving from the main school. The boys also follow a general studies course, which may be replaced by a critical thinking course. The school meets its statutory duty for the provision of religious education through the general studies programme. Additionally, all boys undertake a tutorial programme based on a modular personal, health and social education programme (PHSE) in Year 12 and in Year 13. They are guided through their UCAS application. In both years, the school complies with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship through this programme.
35. Provision for careers education and guidance is very good. Guests visit the school to talk about careers and there is a well thought out Careers Education and Guidance Policy. This helps to achieve each boy's best possible university place and to prepare him for the important decisions he will have to make when he has left Queen Elizabeth's and an understanding of how 'each steers his own destiny'.
36. As in the main school, the curriculum for sixth form boys is enriched by many opportunities outside the classroom. Sport fosters the qualities of leadership and co-operation as well as the drive to succeed in fair competition. All sixth form boys have to use the supervised independent study facilities between lessons as well as having to attend assemblies, enrichment activities, games or undertake voluntary service.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Standards of care and welfare throughout the school are very good. Support and guidance based on monitoring are also very good. The involvement of boys through consultation is satisfactory.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Care and welfare procedures are very efficiently organised.
- Tutoring arrangements give boys focused individual attention.
- Involvement of senior boys through consultation is good.
- There are no systematic structures for seeking the views of boys across the school.

COMMENTARY

37. Academic and support staff work closely together to ensure the wellbeing of the boys entrusted to their care. Policies and procedures for important areas such as child

protection, health and safety and first aid are very clearly laid out, well known to staff and effectively implemented. As a result, standards of care are consistently high. Well-kept computerised records covering incidents such as illness or accidents mean that boys' individual welfare can be carefully monitored. The school's daily routines run smoothly, and the school trusts its prefects to play a major part in this. They make a significant contribution, displaying considerable maturity and common sense in the way they deal with younger boys. Good induction procedures enable Year 7 boys to settle in as quickly as possible, and the prefects successfully carry out a key role here, too.

38. Bespoke tutoring has been specifically designed to meet boys' individual needs, and the system works very well. Frequent discussions and target setting mean that tutors keep a close eye on how boys are doing and can take steps to remedy concerns before they become problems. For boys with particular needs, mentoring supplements this process sensitively. The carefully constructed and comprehensive programme for careers education is very good. From an early age, boys are encouraged and empowered to consider all their options and to choose the best path for them. The school goes to a lot of trouble to make a wealth of information available to the boys. In particular, it capitalises on the services of recent school-leavers, the old boys' association and the expertise of parents and governors who willingly share insights into their professions with the boys.
39. Subject teachers and form tutors are always more than happy to listen to boys' concerns and ideas on an individual basis and do all they can to address them. The school is genuinely interested in what boys think and values their contribution to its life immensely. This was evident, for example, from the consultation meeting between boys' representatives and the school caterers held during the inspection. Nonetheless, there are no structured channels of communication upwards, whereby boys can regularly make their views on a range of issues known to the senior management. Consequently, the perception of a substantial minority of boys is that the school does not listen to their views. Inspectors agree that the schools' processes to systematically consult with boys, although satisfactory, require improvement.

SIXTH FORM

40. Good induction into the sixth form means that boys quickly adapt to their new roles, responsibilities and their increased workload. Teachers guide the boys assiduously through their courses, activities and university applications, so that they can do their best and get the best out of their time in the sixth form.
41. Some boys and their families feel, however, that they have not been able to follow the courses they would have wanted, they are not well informed about careers and that staff do not treat them fairly and with respect. Inspection evidence does not fully support these views. Regular interviews with tutors are held to review each boy's progress. Careful attention is paid to each boy's selection of academic courses. Subject teachers assess a boy's potential to study the subject to Alevel during Years 10 and 11 and make recommendations on the basis of subject proficiency and results from tests. Boys confirm they were encouraged to take their strongest subjects. They recognise that not everyone gets their first choice and understand why.
42. Boys in the sixth form have good opportunities to express their views on a range of school matters. This is because their increased level of responsibility, for example, as prefects or house captains, means that they come into closer contact with senior management and are able to discuss issues with them. They are also able to raise concerns on behalf of younger boys, if they wish.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

Partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are also very good.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Written information for parents is of a very high quality.
- Parents wholeheartedly support what the school does for their sons.
- Involvement with the community and with other schools adds significantly to boys' all-round development.
- The views of parents are not systematically sought.

COMMENTARY

43. Parents enjoy a wide range of helpful and well-presented information throughout their sons' school careers. Newsletters, curriculum booklets and the prospectus are all comprehensive and supportive. The school website is especially useful, offering instant access to data such as coursework deadlines or homework timetables. Systems for reporting to parents are very good. The developing 'Parent Gateway' is a promising innovation, making sections of their sons' records available to parents online. Autumn term reviews mean that parents know quickly if their sons are having difficulties, whilst end of year profiles generally make it very clear how well boys are doing and what they need to do to improve. Parents are properly informed about the provision for boys with special educational needs and the communication between home and school is very good. The school has identified the need to ensure greater consistency across the curriculum in the quality of the profiles, and is working to achieve this.

44. Parents are fully committed to their sons' success and do everything in their power to help them reach their full potential. They totally uphold the school's ethos and efforts on behalf of their boys. This makes them very willing to support the school in practical ways, for example, by helping through the Friends of Queen Elizabeth's, or in the careers department. Some parents justifiably feel that the school could do more to seek their views. Although the school listens carefully to individual suggestions and responds promptly and thoroughly to complaints, it does not canvass the opinions of its parent body on a regular basis.
45. Work experience and voluntary service allow the boys to make a worthwhile contribution to the local community and to learn more about themselves at the same time. Each week, many go out to help in schools, hospitals, charities, places of worship and local businesses. They start to develop an understanding of how to be a good citizen. Through music and sport, too, boys work and compete with other schools and enjoy the responsibility of representing their own. Queen Elizabeth's does what it can to support other schools in the local and wider community, and to involve its boys in playing their part.

SIXTH FORM

46. Parents are kept well informed of their sons' development in the sixth form. They are fully involved in the university application process and can easily access the very clear guidance on the school's website to support their sons with their applications. The school has fostered an extensive network of links with a wide range of universities and colleges. This is very helpful in enabling boys to make informed choices about the next stage in their education. Visits to, and visitors from, these institutions give boys a realistic idea of what university life and work will entail.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is excellent and its management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher and his deputies is outstanding and that of other key staff is very good. The management of the school is very good. The school makes excellent use of evaluation information to confirm strengths and identify weaknesses. Governance of the school is also excellent. One statutory requirement, to teach drama in English, is not met but its omission does not have a significant adverse effect on boys' achievement.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and his deputies ensures that the highest possible standards are achieved. He is visionary and constantly strives for improvement.
- The quality of leadership and management of other staff with key roles is very good.
- The excellent support of governors and their effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities is extremely beneficial to the school.
- The day-to-day management of the school is very effective.
- Rigorous self-review and the use of performance information make significant contributions to improving standards and achievement.
- The management of the sixth form is very good and skilfully ensures boys maintain a balance between academic excellence and personal commitment and development.
- The school and sixth form offer exceptional value for money.

- There are inconsistencies in the way middle managers implement policy and share best practice.

COMMENTARY

47. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school. This vision is based firmly on creating the very best school in the state sector, and producing 'young men who are confident, able and responsible'. Dedicated to excellence, the headteacher has adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy towards underachievement. Rigorous self-evaluation and the use of performance information are at the heart of the drive for continual improvement. The overwhelming view of parents, and that of a very large proportion of boys, is that the school is very well led.
48. The senior management team exercise outstanding leadership. Their lead on making effective use of assessment information, tracking boys' achievement to evaluate individual performance, and the review of departments, contributes very significantly to the school's exceptionally high standards. Line management is effective. Key subject leaders strive hard to achieve the exacting standards set down in the school improvement plan. Subject leadership is excellent in English, mathematics, science and music, and very good in most others. In design and technology, it is satisfactory. The leadership of special educational needs is very good. The management of external agencies, for example, those supporting boys with special educational needs, is very good. Performance management is fully implemented and the issues for staff development feature in the schools' improvement plan. This plan is comprehensive and covers a four-year period. It contains appropriate goals and drives departmental planning, which is generally good, but there are inconsistencies, for example, in lesson planning and assessment practice. The systematic sharing of excellent and very good practice, evident in areas of the school, has yet to be fully achieved.
49. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are totally committed to the drive for continual improvement and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They subscribe to the school's mission to produce young men who are confident, able and responsible and actively set out to "raise the spirit of boys and staff" by creating the best possible learning and working environment. Governors have dealt successfully with issues raised during the last inspection and, apart from the lack of drama within English, fulfil their responsibilities completely. They have established a major building programme to replace the ageing swimming pool and refurbish the main hall as a venue for high quality musical events.
50. A considerable strength of the school is the way it manages its financial resources. The finance committee monitors the budget regularly and ensures that expenditure is targeted according to the priorities in the school improvement plan. In this way, the school allocates its resources to have maximum impact on boys' achievement. All spending decisions are evaluated for their effectiveness and best value principles are applied. As a result, the school is cost effective and gives excellent value for money.

SIXTH FORM

51. The leadership of the sixth form is excellent. The strategic direction and a clear sense of purpose come from the headteacher and his deputies. The sixth form management team has recently been restructured; they carry out day-to-day management very well.

52. The Queen Elizabeth's sixth form has a distinctive culture and prioritises achievement and involvement by seeking to maximise boys' all-round potential development. The school applies rigorous entry requirements for the sixth form.
53. Governance of the sixth form is excellent. Governors are actively involved, for example, by providing mock interviews and work experience as well as supporting university placements and admissions. Progress since the last inspection has been very good. Results have consistently improved from a very high level to the school being in the top five per cent of selective schools nationally. Financial planning for the sixth form is exemplary and finances are extremely well managed. The school ensures that the income and expenditure of the main school and the sixth form is in balance. As a result, it is cost effective and provides excellent value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,218,606
Total expenditure	4,234,146
Expenditure per pupil	3,628

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20,154
Balance carried forward to the next	4,614

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

The provision for work-related learning is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The Young Enterprise Programme.
- Boys are motivated to learn, enterprising and are keen to take responsibility.
- The school has established good links with local industry and business.
- Work experience is well established.

COMMENTARY

54. The effectiveness of the programme for work-related learning is good. The school has a well thought-out range of opportunities for boys to increase their knowledge and understanding about work and to develop the skills and attitudes needed in the workplace. Boys are given opportunities to develop their teamwork and business-decision making skills, for example, in Year 9, through running a 'mini-enterprise'. In the sixth form, boys are involved in Young Enterprise, supported by advisers from the local business community. The school has won national Young Enterprise competitions. Boys are enthusiastic about setting up their own company and selling their 50 pence shares for their 'Hidden Planet' computer game. 'Shares 4 schools' and 'Proshare' are additional opportunities for boys to improve their financial literacy.
55. A visit to Prague provides the chance for Year 12 boys to improve their understanding of European business through a tour of the Skoda plant and visits to other international companies. All boys in Year 11 complete a two-week work experience placement, where possible, linked to their possible future careers. The Occupational Shell Programme provides an excellent opportunity for guests to visit the school to talk to boys to provide them with insights into the world of work. Most boys are clear about the careers they want to follow and show a high commitment to achieving these.

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

The quality of provision is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Results at 14 and at GCSE are well above the national average.
- The achievement of boys is excellent; they read and write to a very high standard and can analyse a demanding range of texts.
- Teaching is invariably very good and a significant proportion is excellent, with teachers knowing their subject extremely well.
- Boys' excellent standards of literacy underpin very high standards of achievement in English.
- The department knows that there is a lack of opportunity for drama and that this must be addressed.

COMMENTARY

56. Boys' attainment in English when they enter the school is well above average. Standards in tests in 2003, at the end of Year 9, were very high when compared to all schools and to similar selective schools; over two thirds of boys achieved the highest levels in English. This reflects excellent achievement. At the end of Year 11, all boys achieved grades A* to C in GCSE English language and literature examinations with the vast majority achieving an A* or A grade in both. These excellent standards are the result of highly effective teaching and learning.
57. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms the very high achievement of all boys. They achieve better than expected, with highly skilled teaching that is exploiting their innate ability. The very good language and literacy skills of boys are reinforced and further developed by highly effective teaching, with every pupil able to identify stylistic features in reading and analyse text with great insight. Writing is well organised and extended by high expectations of accuracy and precision so they write imaginatively in a range of styles. Exceptional skills of speaking and listening are a strength that underpins their achievements. The teaching and learning encourages all boys to explore their ideas orally, rehearse their thinking and articulate their thoughts using ambitious vocabulary.
58. Teaching and learning are very good from Years 7 to 11. Teachers know their subject extremely well, have high expectations and excellent relationships with the boys; this leads to learning that is productive and enjoyable for all boys. Lessons are well planned, have good pace and are often very challenging. For example, in Year 11, the brilliant teaching of "An Inspector Calls" is characterised by the teacher instantly using demanding questioning to promote recall, and then a skilled and humorous debate about the possible interpretations of the play, which had the boys utterly absorbed. Most lessons were very good and some were excellent. This high degree of consistency in the

quality of teaching and learning helps to explain the very high achievements of boys in the subject.

EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

English lesson for Year 9 boys identifying the key features of writing a newspaper article.

The teacher's structured plan for the lesson and swift management of the class enabled all boys to reach a secure understanding of the features of writing for a newspaper extremely quickly. The lesson began with a fast-paced 'word warm up' which revised some key spelling patterns and extended the boys' vocabulary. It served also to put the boys into a state of complete readiness for some efficient and detailed teaching about newspapers. Boys engaged in some exciting debate about the content of newspapers and then congregated at the back of the class to study the work of previous Year 9 boys, whose articles were expertly word-processed and displayed along the back wall of the classroom. This brilliant strategy to revise the key features of the layout and language of newspaper writing resulted in some quick and very perceptive analysis of the writing by the boys, as well as reinforcing the very high expectations of the standard of work required.

59. Leadership and management are very good. Regular meetings, clearly defined responsibilities, and a well-constructed, comprehensive departmental handbook with clear guidance and high expectations characterise the very professional and supportive working of the department. The strategic planning for the continued improvement of the department identifies very clear actions linked to the whole school priorities for development. For example, the recent focus on assessment is having a significant impact as every boy can articulate his strengths and weaknesses in English and has specific targets for improvement. This is very good practice. The department knows that the absence of drama must be addressed. The substantial programme of extra-curricular activities, including drama club, an English clinic, poetry writing competitions and public speaking, provide very good enrichment for the boys.
60. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Very high standards have been further improved. The issue raised (concerning the implementation of a whole school policy for spelling and the consistent correction of spelling errors) has been addressed and there is now good practice in the teaching and correction of spelling across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. Boys have very good skills of literacy and language when they enter the school in Year 7. By Year 9 these are excellent. These high level skills are further extended across the curriculum, so that by the end of Year 9 most can read very analytically and write accurately in a range of different styles. There is good practice of literacy skills being exploited and extended in art, business studies, English, geography and science. Spelling is well taught, and reinforced through key words, as are the features of specific types of writing. For example, in a Year 9 geography lesson, boys were taught the features of persuasive writing in order to study tourist guides for Belize.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards in French and German are very high.
- Teachers know their subject very well and provide a very good model of spoken language.
- Very good planning and well-sequenced learning activities lead to very good achievement.
- Marking rarely includes comments explaining what boys need to do to improve.

COMMENTARY

62. In 2003 and 2004, GCSE results in French and German were very high and above the average for selective schools. Almost all boys gained a grade A* to C and well over half of them were awarded A* or A. Standards in Year 9 are very high with almost all boys achieving between Levels 6 and 8, which represents very good achievement.
63. After one year's study, boys are one or two years ahead of national expectations. By the end of Year 9, all boys can use varied language to describe past, present and future activities; the highest attainers produce longer spoken and written accounts with a high level of accuracy. By the end of Year 11, all boys understand and produce complex language. The most able use rich and well-chosen vocabulary to convey mature and interesting ideas and opinions. One boy, writing in German about environmental issues, humorously and imaginatively considered the advantages of living under water.
64. Teaching and learning are very good. Because teachers usually speak in French or German, boys make very good progress in understanding and producing spoken language and quickly develop good accents. Very good planning, good starter activities and a brisk pace result in boys working hard to extend their accuracy and range of language. The presentation of work is excellent and many boys make very good use of ICT to present their work. A very good ICT module develops Year 9 boys' computer skills and enhances their language learning. Boys learn how to improve their language skills by using GCSE revision websites. Stimulating, high quality displays in classrooms and corridors exemplify excellent work and support learning. Regular homework consolidates and extends learning very well. The marking and correction of written work are very thorough. Comments are encouraging, but rarely guide boys on how to improve. Plenary sessions are too brief to involve boys adequately in evaluating their learning. Teachers plan extended learning outcomes for the very able, but these boys often achieve only the planned outcomes for all boys.
65. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leaders have a clear vision for languages and lead by example. They prioritise the achievement of high standards through effective teaching and high quality resources. Schemes of work are thorough, clear, identify opportunities for the development of cross-curricular skills and support lesson planning very well. French and German are separate departments but they work together as a strong and highly committed team. Boys describe their language teachers as exceptionally supportive and approachable. A feature of this is the very good programme of extra-curricular activities and visits abroad. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The departments have addressed most identified issues fully. However, in a small number of classes, there is still over-use of English. Although the sharing of good practice occurs frequently by informal means, there is still some unevenness of practice.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Exceptional results in public tests and examinations.
- Boys display extremely positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers' expert subject knowledge enables excellent learning to take place.
- Excellent use of correct mathematical vocabulary by teachers and boys.
- Very good leadership and management by the head of department.
- Opportunities for boys to take part in extra-curricular mathematical activities.
- Lack of variety in teaching methods gives little opportunity for boys to experience practical activities.

COMMENTARY

66. Standards on entry to the school are above the national average. Standards are excellent in all public tests and examinations, with the results for mathematics being in the top five per cent of all secondary schools nationally and in similar schools, at both Key Stage 3 and GCSE in 2003. The Key Stage 3 results for 2003 are exceptional, with all boys achieving a National Curriculum level 7 or above. Over two thirds of boys achieved National Curriculum Level 8, the highest level. All boys achieved A* to C grades at GCSE in 2003, with just over half gaining an A* grade. The trend shows that mathematics results are rising steadily and are significantly above the national trend. The unconfirmed results for 2004 show similar outstanding results.
67. Achievement in mathematics is excellent. Boys consistently complete work at a level well above the national norm. Year 10 boys, in a higher ability group, are able to use their understanding of independent and mutually exclusive events to solve probability problems, a skill identified to be exceptional performance in the National Curriculum. The lowest ability boys, in Year 11, are able to solve quadratic equations by sketching their curves, a National Curriculum Level 8 skill. Year 8 boys are able to use Pythagorus' Theorem to solve problems, a National Curriculum Level 7 skill. Boys of all ages make especially good progress in algebra. Attitudes to learning are excellent, with boys keen to do well. Boys are polite, quick to settle and engage in their work. As a result, they make excellent progress. Boys with special educational needs, and those from different ethnic backgrounds, make similar progress to other boys. Boys are able to work independently, and respect and value the contributions of other boys to their lessons.
68. Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers make very good use of questioning, allowing boys to explain their reasoning. Mathematical vocabulary is used precisely by teachers and boys, for example, a Year 8 boy defined the equals sign as 'having the same value as'. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, and the confidence shown by boys to check their own understanding, ensure that misconceptions are quickly resolved. The pace in lessons is good, helping to maintain boys' engagement. Assessment procedures are very thorough and are used to inform teachers about the progress of their pupils. Sharing and evaluating learning objectives with boys is not consistently undertaken by all teachers and has yet to become an established practice within the department. Homework is set regularly and assessed by all teachers; this helps to further

reinforce boys' learning. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities for the boys, including participation in local and national competitions. Staff offer specific 'clinics' outside of normal lessons to help boys who feel they need extra support. In lessons, the predominant style of teaching gives little opportunity for practical work or group discussions. As a result, some learning opportunities are missed.

69. Leadership and management are excellent. The subject leader has a clear vision of how the excellent standards in the subject will be maintained. She provides a good role model, having developed a strong sense of team membership within the department. All share the common purpose of improvement. Good use is made of setting, especially in Year 11, where a small lower ability group are able to follow a different GCSE syllabus. Progress since the last inspection has been good.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

70. Standards of numeracy seen in other subjects are excellent. In science and geography, for example, boys have an easy facility with number, algebra and graphical methods, and are able to apply these also across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards in external examinations are well above average.
- Stimulating, enthusiastic teaching inspires boys to reach the highest grades.
- Teachers' expert knowledge facilitates greater learning.
- Excellent leadership empowers a team of highly effective teachers.

COMMENTARY

71. Boys enter the school with above average level of attainment in science. The Year 9 test results, in 2003, were in the top five per cent nationally and very high in comparison with results in similar schools. The trend has risen over three years. By the end of Year 11, results in 2003 were similarly outstanding in comparison with all schools nationally and with other selective schools. Dual award GCSE science results in 2003 were well above average and rose further in 2004. The performance of boys in the separate science GCSE examinations was outstanding with all boys who were entered gaining grades A* or A in biology and chemistry.
72. The standards of boys' work in lessons confirm these very high standards. Boys make rapid progress because they are very effectively challenged to produce work that extends their understanding beyond examination requirements. Teaching inspires boys to think deeply and research widely. Boys are highly motivated and are keen to learn science and gain the very highest results. They always work safely. Their excellent literacy and very good numeracy skills assist their scientific learning very well. Boys from different ethnic groups and those with special educational needs achieve equally well.
73. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well planned. Teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging. Teachers are experts in their

subject and inspire boys to make excellent progress. Excellent relationships in classrooms motivate boys. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively, for example, to illustrate complex technical ideas. Assessment practice is excellent. Effective and regular monitoring of progress is used very well to inform both the boys and their teachers of the steps needed to improve learning.

74. Leadership and management are excellent. The head of department has a clear vision for the future. He leads by example, working tirelessly to improve standards. Planning is excellent and work is very well structured. Self-evaluation is rigorous, leading to very good staff development, particularly for new staff. Technicians provide excellent support. Since the last inspection, the department has improved very significantly.

Example of outstanding practice

In a biology lesson with a high ability Year 8 group, demanding and inspiring teaching led boys to carry out experiments, to observe, and to analyse their results to an exceptional standard.

An excellent starter challenged boys to think independently about the path of a cheese and pickle sandwich as it travels through the digestive system. The teacher used wonderful body language to bring the subject to life – wide eyes portraying amazement, hand gestures that drew vivid pictures in the boys' minds. Each stage was carefully planned to allow boys to use and develop a wide range of skills, including literacy, working collaboratively and handling laboratory equipment safely. Boys studied a video of the function of the kidney (not normally seen until Year 10) and were challenged to make intelligent comparisons between the passage of molecules in the kidney and the gut. Boys were in awe of the teacher as his enthusiasm and energy filled the room. The boys' perfect behaviour and attitude throughout the investigation meant no one was in any danger. The digestion experiment was carried out to a very high standard and boys achieved exceedingly well, far beyond national expectations. Every minute was filled with activity due to cleverly designed worksheets. Throughout this exciting lesson, boys analysed each other's work and gave constructive feedback. They were pleased with their achievements, and sad when the lesson ended.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- A rich cross-curricular experience in Years 7 to 9 allows boys to reach high standards.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 meets national requirements but does not fully realise the potential for boys' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Standards in the short GCSE course are high.

COMMENTARY

75. By the end of Year 9, boys' standards in ICT are very good. Teacher assessment reported in 2004 that all boys reached Level 6 or better, an improvement on the previous year. Observation of lessons and boys' work supports this. These standards are much higher than national averages. All boys in Year 11 are entered for a short course in GCSE ICT. Almost all gained grade C or better, nearly 90 per cent gained grades A* to B and 57 per cent gained A* or A. This is significantly higher than the results for 2003 in selective schools. This is a very good standard. Work seen at all ages reflects these standards with some outstanding examples of project work for GCSE, most of which had been undertaken by boys when in Year 9. Standards of work in class, and examples of work done in other subjects, are very good.
76. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good and boys make rapid progress as they use and apply ICT in their subjects. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. At 14, boys demonstrate very good competency in using computers and have worked creatively with a range of applications. They can use word processing software skilfully for all forms of writing and illustration. Boys have built data bases in Microsoft Access that have been designed to test hypotheses. Data has been collected and analysed using Boolean query operators. GCSE coursework has inspired many boys to raise significantly the quality and visual impact of their work. Boys' course work shows that they work hard, sometimes with remarkable application, but the demands of the short course GCSE do not greatly stretch the intellect of the boys; their full potential for achievement by age 16 is not realised.
77. The teaching of ICT in Years 7 to 9 could only be sampled during the inspection. Lessons that were observed were good and in one case outstanding.

Example of outstanding practice

The popularity of chess at Queen Elizabeth's Boys School is the inspiration for work in Year 8 where boys are taught to use the industry design software Pro Desktop to design chessboard pieces.

Using this software requires boys to think three dimensionally with planes, extrusions and shapes represented on a two dimensional screen. The functionality of the software is complex. In this lesson, the teacher skilfully combined basic teaching techniques to bring about a lesson where boys were delighting in their achievement, and progressed rapidly to a point where they could begin some creative design. The techniques used included the use of a software tutorial for boys to teach themselves the aspects of the software functionality as the design progressed. Good questioning of individual boys effectively challenged their thinking, their rate of working and progress. Classroom display provided inspiration for the standards expected. By the end, all boys had designed the 3D base for a chess piece with chamfered edges, which included a hole for the 'body' to be inserted with different surface textures being reviewed. Learning had been rapid and very enjoyable. Boys understood what they had to do next.

78. In Years 10 and 11, boys have only 12 lessons each year. The teaching in the sampled lesson was satisfactory. Boys are expected to undertake additional work outside lessons, but the restricted access to teachers and the limited syllabus of the short course GCSE restricts achievement. Teachers carefully assess and mark boys' work offering constructive feedback.
79. Leadership and management are good. The arrangements for leadership and management for Years 7 to 9, with support from school senior managers, has led to a robust co-ordination of the delivery of the national programme of study across a number of subjects. The breadth of applications used meet National Curriculum requirements. The teachers making a contribution have been guided and supported to make accurate assessments of standards in ICT and the school can report its high standards with some confidence. In Years 10 and 11, leadership has secured compliance with the National Curriculum and enabled large numbers of boys to acquire a valued qualification. At the time of the inspection, new responsibilities had just been implemented with a designated ICT co-ordinator for the school. Resources for learning ICT are placed on the school network. Boys working at home, using the Internet, can now access this securely. There is also an 'open all hours' culture for boys needing access to computers when in school and who may need to get additional help from their teachers.
80. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and includes:
- the consolidation of ICT within subjects in Years 7 to 9;
 - the introduction of the short GCSE course for all boys; and
 - increased access to computers and the establishment of the resources network.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

81. Boys show a very good level of competence in the way in which they use ICT to support their work in other subjects. For example, in Year 8 music, boys compose a simple piece of music and score it using two music publishing systems. This helps them to evaluate and compare the two systems giving practical insight into the impact of ICT on music publishing. Some teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Results in teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE level are very good and the achievement of boys is very good.
- Teaching is very good, in particular teachers' subject knowledge and the rigorous use of questioning.
- An excellent scheme of work is in place. This underpins the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The quality of monitoring of boys' progress and of feedback to boys is very good. Boys have clear information on how to improve.

- Leadership and management of the department are both excellent.

COMMENTARY

82. On entry to the school, boys' attainment is well above the national average. Boys make very good progress in Years 7 to 9 and achieve very highly by the end of Year 9. In 2004, almost all of boys gained Level 6 or higher, with almost a third gaining the highest Level 8. Attainment and standards in Years 7 to 9, which were good at the last inspection, have improved over the last three years.
83. Results at GCSE are well above the national average and that for similar schools. Overall, there has been improvement over the last three years. In 2004, 61 per cent of boys gained A or A*. Attainment and achievement are both very good in Years 10 and 11.
84. Teaching and learning are very good. A strong learning ethos pervades lessons and this, coupled with very good, respectful relationships between staff and boys, creates a very effective climate for working. Teachers set high standards and boys respond enthusiastically. Boys willingly contribute to class discussion and work together constructively.
85. Much of the teaching is traditional in its approach, but this is appropriate for the needs of the boys and they respond very well. A very good range of skills is covered and the use of appropriate geographical terms is emphasised, leading to boys rapidly developing high order skills in the use of geographical language. A particular feature of most lessons is the excellent material presented on interactive whiteboards, which always displays clear lesson objectives, engages boys and enhances learning. Both staff and boys use ICT effectively in lessons. Boys use ICT extensively in their work; this includes use of the Internet for research.
86. Where teaching is very good, teachers use question and answer techniques with great rigour, demanding the highest standards from boys; the lesson is challenging and delivered at pace, but teacher monitoring ensures that no boy is left behind; the interactive whiteboard is used skilfully. Where lessons are good or satisfactory, the pace of the lesson tends to be driven by the lesson plan rather than the learning needs of the boys, with insufficient checking that all boys are making good progress.
87. Assessment methods and their use are excellent. Objective measures of boys' potential are used extensively. All staff know the potential of each boy and all boys know the level at which they are currently performing, their targets and what to do to improve.
88. Leadership and management are both excellent and there is a very strong commitment to the further improvement of very high standards. The vision of the head of department is reflected in the excellent scheme of work. This underpins the effectiveness of the teaching and is a key driver of the department's success in raising standards. Monitoring and evaluation of boys' progress and provision of appropriate professional development for staff is very good.
89. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Standards have risen, an extensive programme of fieldwork and extra-curricular activities has been put in place and

interactive whiteboards have been installed. All these have made a strong positive impact on learning. Boys' use of ICT has been widened and increased.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The quality of teaching is good and this is reflected in boys' achievement.
- Specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Boys are very positive and enthusiastic about their work.
- Assessment is being used well to inform planning.
- There is a need to extend the learning styles used.
- The use of computers is underdeveloped.

COMMENTARY

90. Overall standards are well above the national average and in some cases excellent. In 2003, at GCSE, the number of A* to C grades was well above the national average with 60 per cent gaining A and A*. Boys who come from a minority ethnic background do as well and in some cases better than other children of similar ability.
91. Boys enter the school with varied historical skills but very soon make good progress. By the end of Year 9, standards are above those gained nationally. Boys' achievement relative to prior attainment is good. They achieve well because of their positive attitudes, good peer support and the teaching they receive. Boys have a very good knowledge and understanding of events over time. Boys in all years handle source material very well and are very clear about interpretation and bias. Boys can analyse very well and discuss historical issues, often supplemented by their personal reading. Higher ability boys can write well on a given topic and the quality, which is sometimes excellent, can be seen in their extended writing.
92. Boys are working at well above the national average by the end of Year 11. Boys' achievement relative to standards at the end of Year 9 is good. Most boys are confident in the use of source material and this greatly helps them in their understanding of developments over time. They have developed very good note taking skills and use these to inform their written observations; their presentation skills are well developed, particularly with in-depth longer studies.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Teachers have a very good command of their subject. Where lesson planning was available, it was good with objectives often shared with boys. Whilst lessons draw on a range of activities and resources, teachers need to extend those they use. Skilful questioning and oral assessment helps boys to understand and reinforce their learning. However, ICT is underused and does not support learning sufficiently. There were good examples of learning independently, but the subject did not provide a sufficient range of work to address the different levels of ability in some groups. The very small number of boys with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress. Homework is set regularly and is sometimes used in subsequent

lessons to check progress. However, marking does not always provide boys with clear guidance on the standard of their work and what precisely they need to do to improve.

94. Subject leadership and management are good. Schemes of work are under review and the use of historical visits extends what is learnt in the classroom. Whilst the accommodation is good, and often well resourced, there is a need to celebrate more boys' work by displays. Monitoring is in place and is having some positive effect. All the issues from the last report have been successfully dealt with and good progress made.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Leadership and management are excellent.
- Teachers use an excellent range of learning strategies.
- The progress boys make is at least good and most of the time, very good.
- Boys are able to work harmoniously with each other and their teacher.
- ICT is used extremely effectively to develop boys' understanding.
- An inconsistency of approach means not all teachers meet the excellent practice of the best, particularly in relation to assessment, marking and oral questioning.

COMMENTARY

95. Boys enter the school with knowledge and understanding of religious education above expectations for their age. At the end of Year 9, their attainment is well above that expected in relation to the Barnet LEA Agreed Syllabus and their age. By the end of Year 11, at GCSE, attainment is very high. In 2003, of those entered for the GCSE short course, almost all gained A* and A. In 2004, all boys were entered and 92 per cent gained A* to B grades.
96. In lessons and work seen, boys' achievement in relation to their prior knowledge and understanding is very good by the end of Year 9. High achievement is supported by teaching that is at least good and at times excellent, the excellent attitudes of the boys and the work ethos of the school. Boys in Years 7 to 9 develop a very good working knowledge of many of the world religions such as Christianity and Hinduism. They can use religious language in a very meaningful way and have a very good grasp of many religious concepts such as symbols. They write well and are very confident in discussions. Boys make good use of ICT in their work.
97. By the end of Year 11, boys' achievement relative to their standards at the end of Year 9 shows very good progress. They display a very good understanding of issues, such as the creation or evolution debate. The boys are very good at linking religious principles with life experiences, and can make judgments and develop attitudes in an analytical way. They can argue well from their own viewpoints with very good justifications. Good use is made of research work and the boys can write well on any given religious subject. There are no differences in the standards achieved by boys of different ethnic backgrounds and a great strength within religious education is the harmonious and collaborative atmosphere established within lessons, which greatly enhances their social development.

98. Teaching and learning are very good. All lessons are very well planned and a good range of activities is employed to support learning. Expectations are high and boys are enthusiastic and very positive about their learning. The management of boys is very good. Homework is set regularly and there is a very effective assessment policy. However, all teachers need to consistently apply this policy and aspire to meet the best practice of the department in terms of assessment, marking and ensuring the highest standards are always achieved through oral questioning. Teachers make very good use of ICT, for example, the exemplary use of interactive whiteboards, to support boys' learning. Teaching makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and multicultural awareness.
99. Leadership and management are excellent. The new head of department has a clear vision for the department and has made considerable advances since his appointment. Statutory requirements are met in all years. The range of accommodation and resources is good, although poor acoustics in a number of classrooms do adversely affect some lessons. Progress since the last inspection has been very good.

Example of outstanding practice

Excellent planning and delivery of a Year 9 lesson addressing 'Questions of Meaning' – evidence for belief in God (GCSE short course).

Excellent planning, using a variety of activities delivered at a challenging and rigorous pace, characterised this lesson. Throughout, boys were fully engaged, interested and intellectually stretched. They met the lesson's key aims of knowing and understanding what a miracle is; that miracles are suggested by some to provide evidence for the existence of God; identifying and considering their own and different viewpoints about miracles. Activities used included the teacher reading a reflection script, the boys reflecting and considering what they heard and being sensitively debriefed. The class then considered what a miracle is and discussed examples. This was reinforced using a 'fact or opinion' sorting activity. In pairs, the boys researched miracles from the Christian gospels and undertook an imaginative, persuasive writing task. As a plenary, in small groups, they decided whether statements of events were a miracle, luck or coincidence, before discussing 'why do people interpret things in different ways'. Exemplary use was made of the interactive whiteboard to establish activities, reinforce learning points and enable smooth transitions between quick-fire tasks.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are very high in public examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Boys gain good practical skills and good understanding of materials and processes.
- Teachers support boys' learning well, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The curriculum is narrow and boys' understanding of design, new materials and new technologies is limited.

COMMENTARY

100. By the end of Year 9, boys achieve well because they have very good skills and knowledge, when working with resistant materials. They use a range of small and large equipment very competently and understand technical processes. Their understanding of design is not as good as their understanding of manufacturing processes, and this limits standards. Nevertheless, some boys' ability to analyse and evaluate their work is outstanding. All boys are very well integrated in lessons.
101. By the end of Year 11, results in public examinations are well above national standards. Considering their capability, boys achieve well. Their supporting coursework is very well presented and demonstrates high order literacy skills and an ability to research and analyse problems in considerable detail. The products they make are of a very high quality. However, they are often predictable and lack imagination.
102. Teaching and learning are good. In some lessons, teaching and learning are very good. In occasional lessons, there is insufficient planning and the pace of learning is slow. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they are very familiar with the requirements of public examinations. As a result, boys become very competent when working with a range of materials and equipment. Boys' behaviour is exemplary because teachers have high expectations and treat them with respect. Boys apply themselves very well, especially when they are excited by the work. Year 8 boys worked extremely competently and safely on a central lathe and on the brazing hearth to fashion metal. Year 10 boys collaborated very effectively in teams on a packaging problem for crackers. They are capable of very high levels of independent study. Boys often complete substantial pieces of work at home, making excellent use of ICT. Assessment supports boys' learning very well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, although they are very clear about how to improve their work, some older boys recognise that their time is not always well used in lessons. In Years 7 to 9, opportunities are missed to make use of assessment data to identify ways of improving teachers' practice.
103. Teachers' lesson planning is often limited and generalised. There is too little reference to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. As a result, there is insufficient evidence of designs being amended and modified in response to developments in the manufacturing. Boys often spend too long listening to teachers' explanations instead of being involved in practical activities. This is because teachers use a limited range of practical activities and resources to develop boys' understanding of design, new materials and new technologies. This slows down the pace of boys' learning. The use of ICT in lessons is poor, due to the limited capacity of the computers in the department and the lack of

software. Units of work using computer-aided-design software are very well taught by teachers in the ICT department. However, they are not sufficiently well integrated into design and technology lessons.

104. The curriculum is narrow. Boys work only with resistant materials. The schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 are very prescriptive and the level of challenge for the most able boys is limited. The accommodation, though adequate in terms of space, is dated and drab and does not reflect the subject as modern, exciting and forward looking. The range of resources is barely satisfactory.
105. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The very high pass rate at examination level has been maintained. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Both leadership and management have been severely limited by the lack of a head of department, and a full time member of staff, for over a year. A new head of department has been appointed from the beginning of this term. He has vision and a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the department. There is, therefore, very good potential for improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

ART AND DESIGN

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are exceptionally high at both key stages, compared to all schools and compared to selective schools nationally.
- Teaching is consistently good, with some very good and outstanding features; guidance to boys is excellent.
- Behaviour is excellent and there are high levels of commitment to work.
- The department is well organised and very effectively led.
- For a few boys, in some Year 9 lessons, concentration wanes because there is too little variety in the teaching approach.

COMMENTARY

106. In 2003, 78 per cent of boys achieved the very highest level at age 14. This percentage has grown steadily over the past four years. Over that period, all boys have achieved standards above what is expected nationally for boys of this age. Responses in lessons were consistently good, and there were some outstanding contributions. Final pieces of work, completed over longer periods of time, and enhanced by studies undertaken as homework, are often excellent. For example, Year 7 boys refine their ideas into mandala designs which reflect some excellent colour choices and juxtapositions in completed patterns. Boys give perceptive analyses of visual images and use art vocabulary well to describe their work. A Year 8 pupil spoke of “achieving a gradient of tone”.
107. At GCSE, boys achieve the highest grades. Over the past four years, all gained grades A* to C, and in 2003, every boy gained grade B or higher, with 11 gaining A*. Responses to stimuli are often sophisticated, and during the inspection, some were excellent. A Year 10 boy, responding to the theme of “Journeys”, spoke of “life’s natural

journey” in which he related the movement of atomic particles, planetary movements, and ripples on water. In a Year 11 photography lesson, responding to the theme of “Inner Spaces”, a boy used computer software to remove sections from a self-portrait, and replace them with a series of miniature self-portraits reflecting a range of different emotions. Critical and contextual analysis is very strong. Following a visit to the National Portrait Gallery, a Year 11 boy wrote a perceptive and moving analysis of Sassoferrato’s “The Virgin in Prayer” which blended his personal emotional response with a careful technical analysis of the effects gained by colour combinations and brushwork techniques.

108. In Years 7 to 9, boys achieve well, gradually increasing their experience of established artists and cultural movements and allowing it to influence their own ideas. They develop work further as homework, but also voluntarily, extending their interests in their own time. At times, a few boys, particularly in Year 9, find it difficult to maintain the level of concentration expected of them, and this reduces what they achieve in the lessons. Boys choosing the GCSE courses develop their thinking at a fast rate. They use spider diagrams during lesson discussions to record and develop ideas, and have a very good idea of the standards of work they are achieving, and how to improve further. Throughout the school, there are high levels of commitment to work and a willingness to offer constructive criticism to other boys in the class.
109. Teaching is consistently good, and there are some excellent features. Questioning is managed well, teacher demonstrations are clear and interesting, and teachers make sure that all boys understand the tasks set. Because classes are managed well, relationships are good and teachers are ready to encourage and praise, boys feel able to discuss their work with sensitivity and spirituality. In the great majority of cases, they maintain concentration on tasks well. Very good teaching supports learning in the GCSE courses. Teachers approach their work as fellow artists, and use their excellent knowledge of art and their first-hand experience as practitioners to very good effect. Introductions to lessons are informed and illustrated with a broad range of examples of work by established artists and cultural traditions. They pay close attention to the needs of individual boys, using assessments carefully to shape the next steps in the work. Because they are so well supported by this approach, the boys’ learning is purposeful, and they have clear ideas of how their work might be developed and refined.
110. The department is well organised and very effectively led. The head of department sets clear priorities for development and supports the rest of the team well as they successfully achieve improvements. The recent focus for development has been the review and restructuring of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, to achieve greater levels of continuity and facilitate progression to GCSE. The management of this development has been excellent. The head of department formally monitors the work of the department, and there is also a strong emphasis on informal sharing of ideas; this builds a strong team spirit and involves all members of the department in maintaining the very high standards. The development of excellent assessment procedures is a further example of effective leadership.
111. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. However, the department should introduce more variety in the learning activities in the few classes where there is occasional concentration loss, and plan to develop technological resources to enable large scale projections to resource the teaching and learning.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards at Key Stage 4 are excellent.
- Teaching throughout the main school is very good with aspects of excellence.
- Subject knowledge and expertise of the staff are excellent.
- The curriculum provision is excellent.
- Leadership of the department is very good.
- Progress since the last inspection is very good with aspects of excellence.
- Teachers need to clarify to the boys the relationship between unit objectives, lesson objectives, and end of unit assessments.
- Teachers need to identify and share features of excellent practice with all members of the team.

COMMENTARY

112. Since 2001, the numbers of boys opting for GCSE music have steadily increased with all boys gaining an A* to B grade in 2003. In 2004, all boys gained grades A* or A. This represents excellent achievement.
113. In Years 7 to 9, standards are very good. By the end of Year 9, attainment is in line with that expected of boys for their age, and the majority of boys are working at the higher end of national expectations and some are beyond. The higher achieving boys are able to compose with confidence, experimenting securely with harmony and rhythm. They can invent musical ideas, sustain them throughout a composition and develop them to produce different moods and images, for example, when composing film music. This represents very good achievement because the standards of composition for the majority of boys on entering the school are slightly below that expected of boys for their age. Performing and instrumental skills for Year 7 are broadly in line with those expected of boys for their age; about half of the year group arrive at school with no instrumental or performing ability. By the beginning of Year 8, however, all boys are able to read one line of written music in the treble and the bass and play it on the keyboard, others can play both parts together and add chords as directed. At the end of Year 9, the performance ability of those who do not receive instrumental lessons is securely in line with national expectations whilst those who do have instrumental lessons is well above expectations.
114. Teaching and learning are very good and in some lessons, they are excellent. Lessons are conducted in a purposeful atmosphere and boys are keen to learn. In lessons, the listening-based activity very effectively reinforces the main learning and the instrumental section successfully enables boys to gain direct experience of the teaching point through analysis and playing musical examples. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result, boys learn much more about music than is required for national tests and examinations. Boys have an outstanding subject vocabulary and everyone is expected to remember and use previous knowledge and understanding each lesson. Teachers ensure boys receive individual attention and when this strategy is combined with individual questioning, learning is very good.
115. Some lessons are excellent. In these, the activities are well paced and supported by individual questioning. Boys collaborate effectively to support each other's learning through their own high level of musical skills, knowledge and understanding.

Example of outstanding practice

In a year 10 lesson on Indian music, two boys lead the lesson in partnership with the teacher. One boy is a tabla player and the other a harmonium player (grade 6).

The tabla player explains and demonstrates the instrument to the class whilst the teacher writes key words on the board. He pauses from time to time in his discourse and the teacher gently reiterates his main thoughts, pointing to the key words and reminding everyone about careful spelling. The boy speaks gently but firmly with a measured pace, unfolding a carefully prepared text from memory. The group is unfamiliar with these instruments and everyone listens with great respect. At the end of the factual presentation, the boy plays tinal and the group join in the mnemonics. The harmonium player repeats the same activity. Again, the mood and the spirit of the instrument and its music are conveyed by the quality of the speaking voice and the excellent musicianship of the performers. The class is totally engrossed. His presentation ends with the raga and a seamless move into the alap. A class discussion follows about the mood of the music and leads to the harmonium player explaining a little about his music making and gharana (the extended family). The instrument has been passed to him from his grandmother. The group has gained a very rare and special insight into his life and into another culture through its music and musicians. The class, now with a higher level of understanding and appreciation of the musical style and genre, listen to a final combined performance of tabla and harmonium that brilliantly exploits

116. Leadership and management are very good. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Staff are aware of the most talented boys and the department has a policy of designing individual appropriate challenges for these youngsters. The school has been awarded specialist music college status and school plans identify appropriately the development of innovative approaches to teaching and learning. However, the use of ICT is still insufficiently developed, a priority identified in the previous inspection. Years 7 to 9 assessment requires improvement. The relationship between unit objectives, weekly lesson objectives and summative assessment criteria confuses boys.
117. An outstanding feature of the department is its programme of extra-curricular activity and standard of instrumental playing. The range of the bands and ensembles, as yet, do not reflect the cultural diversity represented in the school, but the quality of the rehearsals and performances is outstanding.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Excellent extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities.
- Very high participation rates.
- Inconsistent lesson planning.

COMMENTARY

118. Standards at the end of Year 9 are good. Year 8 boys demonstrated a broad range of skills in a health-related fitness lesson where a number of exercises were used to test their fitness level. In Year 9 rugby, boys demonstrated their basic passing and handling skills; the majority made good progress.
119. At the end of Year 11, standards are good. The practice of discussing and questioning the boys to evaluate performance to bring about improvements in technique is good. Boys in Year 10 swimming exhibited satisfactory technique in the use of methods of rescue and understood their importance. Standards in Years 10 and 11 in rugby are very good.
120. Achievement in Years 7 to 11 is good; the majority of the boys achieve at least as well as those in similar schools and make good progress. Achievement was most marked in a Year 8 basketball lesson because the teachers set high expectations and used expert coaching interventions. No significant differences in the achievement of, and provision for, boys from different ethnic groups were seen.
121. Standards of teaching and learning are very good. Teaching methods are imaginative and lead to a high level of interest from the boys. Organisation, control and instructions are clear and efficient, with standards of discipline firm but fair. An important strength is

in a determination of all teachers that boys take on the responsibility for organising their own learning through leadership in lessons. This effectively enables boys to develop as learners. Their PE and games log book record these activities very well, and boys know the level they are working at and their targets. Boys organise and manage inter-house competitions. Participation rates are very high. Extra-curricular and enrichment provision is excellent. The department organises an excellent fixture programme throughout the year. Activities are open to boys of all abilities.

122. Leadership and management of PE and games are very good. The positive working relationship between the head of PE and the head of games is shown by the rising standards. The proposed introduction of GCSE and the Junior Sports Leaders Award shows careful departmental planning. The department handbook is a useful working document containing a wide range of information; however, it lacks the guidance needed to ensure consistent practice on planning lessons and assessment. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection.
123. Overall, PE accommodation and facilities are good. The dedicated weights room is an excellent and safe resource. All outdoor areas, including the extensive playing fields and the tennis areas, are in very good condition, and are all well used to support learning. The school benefits substantially from having an excellent groundsman on site.
124. The department and the school are proud of the manner in which the school competes at a very high level in many sports. However, they also believe that sport should be for all and have successfully widened participation in PE and games to many more boys since the last inspection, whilst still maintaining the excellent standards of competitive sport for which the school has a long tradition and a deserved reputation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- It is very good in Years 7 to 9, but inconsistently taught in Years 10 and 11.
- Boys display very high levels of independence and behave responsibly.
- Boys participate very responsibly in school and community activities.
- Boys are developing a very clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- The school cannot ensure boys in Years 10 and 11 receive their entitlement.

COMMENTARY

125. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average. Boys have very good levels of knowledge and understanding about the democratic processes involved in living in a community. This is principally gained from three sources. There are explicit lessons in religion and society, through the excellent extra-curricular provision and through tutorials each day. In addition, the ethos of the school promotes a strong climate of responsible action. By the end of Year 11, boys have continued to develop their skills and knowledge. For example, they learn about a range of human dilemmas in English, ethical decision

making as a result of scientific developments, and they debate and reason a wide range of controversial issues across the curriculum. Boys take increasing responsibility within extra-curricular activities, as form captains, librarians and members of sports teams. Boys take part in the very good links with the local community. However, there is no school council and boys do not have any means of directly affecting their school community. Boys in the sixth form have considerable responsibility for running the school. However, they do not debate citizenship issues as a rule in tutorials and work in general studies is not always held in high regard in comparison with their chosen subjects.

126. Teaching and learning are good. The teaching of citizenship lessons in Years 7 and 8 is very good. The planning is very detailed and well focused. Opportunities are provided to address all three strands of the curriculum. The work on tribes was very effective because boys were developing a clear understanding of how groups develop an identity. They explained their reasoning in a very particular way when they represented the views of their groups to the rest of the class. Boys' learning is much enhanced by very good use of interactive whiteboards. The work is assessed at the end of Year 9 and reported to parents. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is less well focused. Very few teachers identify citizenship explicitly and it is not assessed. The membership of extra-curricular activities is not monitored.

127. Leadership and management are good. The teacher in charge of citizenship is well informed about the subject and has briefed all staff. The priorities for developing citizenship are appropriate and recognise the need to review the programme in Years 10 and 11. The school's audit shows a wide range of opportunities for boys to develop a very good understanding of citizenship. However, the analysis of the extent of involvement of each pupil is assumed to take place during individual tutorial sessions. The assessment of boys at the end of Year 11 is, therefore, inconsistent. The school has no way of ensuring that boys have equal access to the citizenship curriculum.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	7	100	62.9	85.7	10.9	51.4	19.7
Business Studies	4	100	75.6	75.0	15.4	50.0	25.5
Chemistry	5	80.0	70.5	60.0	12.4	40.0	22.9
Design and Technology	4	100	70.7	25.0	11.8	42.5	22.8
Economics	4	100	71.8	75.0	18.1	47.5	25.2
English Literature	3	100	83.8	66.7	16.3	53.3	28.6
French	5	100	79.7	60.0	21.0	44.0	28.6
General Studies	84	97.6	71.6	73.8	16.2	50.2	24.6
Geography	12	100	72.5	58.3	16.4	49.2	24.8
History	7	100	79.3	85.7	16.5	54.3	27.2
Information and communication technology	5	100	65.8	40.0	10.2	38.0	20.8
Mathematics	23	73.9	58.7	21.7	15.8	28.3	20.7
Music	1	100	83.5	100	18.8	60.0	28.9

Other Languages	3	100	77.8	100	40.0	56.7	34.0
Other Social Studies	8	100	65.7	62.5	12.4	51.3	21.6
Physics	5	100	64.8	60.0	11.6	42.0	20.5
Sociology	3	66.7	68.4	33.3	13.7	33.3	23.1
Vocational Studies	3	100	62.2	100	12.2	53.3	20.6

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	8	100	97.7	100	41.5	120	81.9
Biology	27	100	95.6	63.0	34.6	97.0	75.2
Business Studies	22	100	98.7	90.9	34.9	109.1	79.1
Chemistry	28	100	97.0	89.3	45.4	108.6	82.3
Design and Technology	22	100	97.1	72.7	29.5	98.2	74.1
Economics	20	100	98.9	100	50.7	117.0	87.4
English Literature	10	100	99.2	100	46.1	118.0	86.2
French	8	100	98.7	100	52.7	117.5	88.2
Geography	13	100	98.5	76.9	39.5	100	80.9
German	6	100	98.4	100	47.5	113.3	84.6
History	32	100	98.9	100	40.8	115.6	82.8
Information and communication technology	9	100	95.4	88.9	24.0	111.1	69.0
Mathematics	44	100	96.1	97.7	53.3	114.1	87.2
Music	5	100	98.4	100	37.8	120.0	79.7
Other Languages	14	100	96.5	92.9	65.9	111.4	93.2
Other Social Studies	28	100	96.1	100	36.6	115.7	77.1
Physics	32	100	96.4	96.9	42.9	115.0	80.6
Sociology	7	100	97.6	100	38.0	114.3	79.3
Vocational Studies	9	100	93.7	55.6	25.9	91.1	68.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English literature is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Results at AS and A-level are excellent.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and exceptionally high expectations underpin the outstanding levels of achievement.
- Teaching is very rigorous and highly challenging with boys enjoying a high level of intellectual debate with their teacher.

COMMENTARY

129. Standards in GCE AS and A-level examinations are excellent with all boys achieving at least a B grade at A-level and 90 per cent achieving an A grade in 2003. Results have been very high every year since the last inspection and continue to improve. Retention rates and attendance are very high.
130. The work seen in lessons and boys' files confirms these very high standards. Achievement is excellent in English literature with boys' critical analysis reaching an exceptionally high standard. Teachers expect boys to supplement lessons with extensive wider reading and research; this is having a significant impact on their outstanding achievements.
131. Teaching and learning are at least very good, with one excellent lesson seen during the inspection. All teachers are very confident in their knowledge of their subject. This enables them to plan challenging lessons that engage boys in high level debate and criticism.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 13 lesson exploring the changing state of the character of King Lear.

What was so impressive about this lesson was the speed with which the teacher got the boys to analyse the development of the character of King Lear. They reached a level of analysis far beyond that needed for A-level, even at the highest grade. In fact, it was at undergraduate level. Every single boy contributed because within minutes he had asked each a question to recap the play. Instinctively, he made very effective use of the skills of analysis of the most articulate boys, to improve the precision and skills of perception, of the rest of the class. The result was that all boys were then able to argue confidently with each other and ultimately challenged the hypotheses offered by the teacher. They had hypotheses of their own! They rapidly took each other's ideas and built on these to argue even more convincingly with their teacher! Because the lesson was so relentlessly driven by the teacher, the boys could not have failed to achieve what he had planned for them.

132. Lessons are rich and demanding and the boys genuinely enjoy the lively debate with their teacher. Very good feedback through discussion and detailed marking of essays contributes to the improvement of boys' writing. Interpretation and evaluation skills are highly developed and reinforced through the reading of some demanding texts. Boys' writing is always evaluative and analytical. They demonstrate an extensive understanding of the structure and themes of texts. In Year 12, boys hone their skills of critical analysis and learn to apply these skills in writing effective criticism.

133. The leadership and management of the department are very good. Teachers are well qualified to teach AS and A-level literature and the head of department has encouraged them to continue to develop their own scholarship through professional development in order to maintain very high standards of teaching and learning. Good use of performance data has also contributed to the continued improvement in standards. The scope of the provision, however, is limited to English literature; the language GCE AS and A-level courses have not been considered.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

134. Boys' skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are very high in all their subjects. These levels of literacy and language skills are exploited and reinforced consistently across the curriculum. By the time they enter Year 12, research skills are well above average and this is crucial to their excellent achievement. Subjects demand the ability to express ideas coherently and accurately and reinforce the precise use of technical terminology. Note-taking skills are highly developed and essay writing communicates ideas and opinions with great clarity. Subjects provide good opportunities for a range of debate and presentation.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

GERMAN

Provision in German is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are very high.
- The teachers demonstrate excellent linguistic expertise and cultural knowledge.
- The curriculum prepares boys very well for the highest A-level performance.
- Excellent opportunities for visits abroad significantly enhance boys' learning.

COMMENTARY

135. Standards in German are very high. In 2003 and 2004, all boys gained grades A or B at A-level, and almost all gained A or B at AS level. Their results exceeded expectations based on their GCSE performance. One student gained an Advanced Extension Award Distinction in 2004.

136. By the end of Year 13, boys are able to convey insights, judgements and argue a case convincingly in speech or in writing. In conversation, they handle the unpredictable skilfully and readily take the initiative. They show a very good understanding of complex language from a wide range of sources, including spoken language at native speed. An essay on foreigners in Germany was well structured, displayed wide and varied language, including idiom and specialised vocabulary, and read very fluently. The content was balanced, well argued and mature, and included insightful comparison with the writer's own family situation in England.

137. Teaching and learning are very good, and one lesson seen during the inspection was outstanding. Because teachers and boys speak entirely or mainly in German, boys

quickly develop the capacity to make highly fluent, extended spoken contributions. Teachers maintain pace and challenge and routinely inject humour. As a result, boys enjoy their lessons, contribute willingly and work hard. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, planning and command of spoken German prepare boys thoroughly and rigorously for the requirements of A-level, resulting in impressive progress between GCSE and A-level.

138. Leadership and management are very good. The head of German is an excellent role model and has created a strong team ethos. Boys interviewed during the inspection attributed their success to the dedication and commitment of their teachers. The curriculum is very well planned. Teachers have brought together a very good range of resources to support language learning and knowledge of civilisation, culture and current affairs. A foreign language assistant provides valuable individual spoken practice for boys. The department provides excellent extra-curricular opportunities, through theatre and cinema visits and travel abroad. A particularly outstanding opportunity is the annual exchange, which includes work experience. The department has maintained previous very high standards and has addressed successfully the management issues from the last inspection.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 13 German lesson demonstrated impressive spontaneous discussion of current news items.

The boys and the teacher each brought to the lesson pre-prepared notes on a current news item which had captured their interest. One student reported a news item about the increasing suicide rate amongst young men. The group discussed possible reasons, developing and defending hypotheses. The teacher continually prompted then withdrew, so that much of the discussion was between the boys themselves. Discussion became heated when she posited a potential link with the increasingly high achievement of girls and women. This was a real discussion and the atmosphere was charged: the exchanges were rapid and cogent. The boys' language and knowledge were equal to the task: a testament to the hard work of their teachers in Year 12 in building up their language skills and their knowledge of German and international current affairs. The teacher introduced her presentation, skilfully using the overhead projector to maximise the boys' rather than her contribution, revealing first a picture of a polar bear and then gradually various key statistics about different countries, causing the boys to discuss speculatively which news item she had chosen (the prime minister's recent speech on the environment), and to discuss the implications of the statistics revealed. There was much humour and banter. A Japanese student in the group, confronted with the issue of disposable chopsticks in Japan, jokingly protested he was the victim of racism. A car-owning boy responded to accusations of pollutionism. In the plenary session, boys thoughtfully considered what they had learned about differences in national attitudes to environmental issues.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are excellent and achievement is very high.
- Boys' excellent attitudes and commitment to high standards are significant factors in their achievement.
- The variety of boys' learning approaches is limited.
- The department need to broaden the contexts in which mathematics is applied.

COMMENTARY

139. In 2003, A-level results were very high and improved on those in 2002, which were also very high. The unconfirmed 2004 results continue to be impressive with 96 per cent gaining an A or B grade and all boys achieving a pass grade. This represents excellent achievement as predicted by their performance in GCSE examinations. The achievement of those boys following further mathematics is also high.
140. These standards are reflected in the work seen in lessons and boys' files. Boys take a real pride in their work and organise their notes systematically. Boys in Year 12 are already building quickly and effectively on their GCSE experience. In a very good Year 12 lesson, boys were deepening their knowledge of the use of binomial theorem to model the bimodal situations. In a Year 13 lesson, boys made very good progress with their understanding of volumes generated by rotating curves because of the excellent teaching that had prepared them most effectively for this topic.
141. Boys attain these exceptionally high standards because of very good, knowledgeable and often excellent teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and this is transmitted to the boys. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships and collaborative learning. Boys, in their turn, are generous in their praise of teachers' commitment and level of support, both in and out of the classroom. This, together with the excellent attitudes of boys, leads to very good and often excellent achievement. Boys from different cultural backgrounds achieve similar high standards to their peers.
142. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the requirements of the courses is outstanding. Teaching is highly rigorous and, although teaching is predominantly didactic, it delivers impressive results and standards. The excellent learning that occurs is underpinned by the attention that is paid to the teaching of mathematical principles. As a result, boys approach tasks with confidence and successfully build their knowledge and understanding. Teachers have very high expectation for the boys and set exacting targets for them to achieve. However, not all the teaching seen was of this very high standard. Too few occasions are created for boys to widen their learning approaches through more open-ended tasks and independent research. Teachers do not always challenge boys about the methods used and why these work. Boys are well informed of their progress through the regular assessment of their work and discussion in class.
143. The outstanding leadership and management of mathematics are major factors in promoting these very high standards. Teachers are enthusiastic and work well as a team. Their considerable experience and expertise could be more effectively used to plan and deliver higher quality lessons. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

144. Boys' mathematical knowledge and skills are highly developed and sufficient for the needs of their chosen courses. For example, in A-level chemistry, boys apply their knowledge of algebra to solve quite complex equations. In A-level accounts, boys created a balance sheet to show the inflow and outflow of money for a business and used it to decide the cost effectiveness of purchasing a specialist piece of equipment.

SCIENCE

BIOLOGY

Provision in biology is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards in external examinations are excellent.
- Enthusiastic teaching inspires boys to reach the highest grades.
- Teachers' expertise leads to rapidly rising standards.

COMMENTARY

145. Boys enter the sixth form with well above average attainment levels in science. In 2003, A-level results were well above average and very high in comparison with results in similar schools. There has been a rising trend in standards over the past three years with many boys gaining the grades necessary to read medicine or dentistry at university. Cambridge University tutors have written to the school congratulating them on the calibre of the boys who have entered scientific essay competitions.
146. The standards of boys' work observed in lessons confirm those reached in examinations. Boys consistently work at an outstanding level of achievement. Boys in Year 13 have an excellent understanding of biological concepts, which they apply well to new situations. Progress is rapid in lessons as boys are challenged to reach very high standards. Boys in Year 12 cope extremely well with the demands of their AS level work and are using more advanced ideas very effectively. Boys have exemplary command of technical biological terms and are able to express themselves eloquently during discussions.
147. Teaching and learning are very good. The work in lessons is invariably very well planned. Teachers provide excellent support by encouraging and engaging all boys. Assessment practice is exemplary. Teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging. Teachers use their expertise to extremely good effect, for example, in enabling lively debate. Very good accommodation and resources help raise standards. The technician provides excellent support.
148. Leadership and management are excellent. The curriculum leader is inspirational in his efforts to raise standards and improve biology teaching. Boys are encouraged to participate in the annual scientific conservation expeditions and in 2003 six students joined Operation Wallacea as eco-tourists in Honduras. Planning is excellent. Self-evaluation is rigorous. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

CHEMISTRY

Provision in chemistry is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards in external examinations are well above average.
- Stimulating teaching enables boys to reach the highest grades.
- Teachers' expertise is used very effectively to enable boys to learn very well.

COMMENTARY

149. Boys enter the sixth form with well above average attainment levels in science. In 2003, A-level results were well above average and very high in comparison with those in similar schools. There has been a rising trend in results over the past three years. Many boys reach the standard necessary to read medicine or dentistry at university.
150. The standards of boys' work observed in lessons confirm those reached in examinations. Boys in Year 13 have an excellent understanding of chemical concepts, which they apply very well. Boys make rapid progress in lessons because they are challenged to reach very high standards, often beyond the requirements of the examination. Boys are highly motivated, want to achieve their very best and work safely. They have an excellent command of technical chemical language and are able to express themselves extremely well in lessons, for example, when they answer questions.
151. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well planned and teachers provide excellent support and encouragement to all boys. Boys' progress is regularly monitored and teachers use assessment information very effectively to determine the steps needed to improve learning still further. Teachers use their expertise very well. The technician provides excellent support.
152. Leadership and management are very good. The curriculum leader has a clear vision for the future and has established an excellent base for making further improvements. Advanced Extension awards extend the provision in A-level science. Planning is excellent and work in chemistry is very well structured. Progress since the previous inspection is very good.

PHYSICS

Provision in physics is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards at A-level are excellent.
- A large numbers of boys enter university helped by their success in physics.
- The standard of teaching is very good.

COMMENTARY

153. A-level results are excellent. In 2003, all passed, and all but one of these boys were awarded grades A and B. In the most recent 2004 examinations, the results were equally good. A very small number of boys study physics in the sixth form for just one year gaining an AS qualification; they achieve well. These results represent very good achievement by the boys who readily sustain their learning of this subject with its abstract theories and high mathematical content. Even in Year 12, boys are able to relate ideas of the distance and time measurements of an object moving in a complex pattern to the derived and highly abstract concept of directed velocity. They quickly acquire the ability to represent such motion graphically with displacement time diagrams and to theoretically construct and interpret the associated pattern of changes in velocity. Boys in Year 13 can easily manipulate the abstract and geometrically related concepts of magnetic field, electric current and force. Intellectually, they are able to progress quickly to a consideration of the theoretically similar but conceptually different behaviour of an electron beam.
154. The standard of teaching is very good. Teachers have a very high level of knowledge that is valued and respected by boys. Teaching methods used are effective and take boys to levels of understanding beyond those required by the syllabus. The teachers make good use of practical experience and demonstrations on which the theoretical models may be built. Mathematical formulation is carefully taught and there is rigorous coverage of the syllabus at the required depth. Boys' learning is very good: they work assiduously. Their work and progress is assessed through homework and module tests. Marking and assessment guides boys' progress but is not done consistently by teachers, and some value for learning is lost. In general, expert teaching and boys' mature responsibility for their own learning deliver the very high examination grades.
155. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Boys are offered additional challenges through entry for the Physics Olympiad and for the Advanced Extension Award. Progress since the previous inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in ICT is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Expert teachers are able to develop the potential of sixth form boys.
- A-level courses provided by the school allow boys to realise very good A-level results.
- Coursework is outstanding.

- Learning is very good and boys have an excellent attitude towards their work.

COMMENTARY

156. A-level standards are very good. In 2003, eight boys were entered for A-level computing: all passed and seven obtained grades A or B. In 2004, numbers increased to 12. All boys passed, with seven at the highest two grades. Nationally, only about 11 per cent of A-level boys gain high grades. In 2004, 15 boys entered the AVCE single award in information and communication technology. All passed: 13 achieved grades A and B and this may be compared with the 28 per cent of boys nationally who have reached this level in previous years. Some boys study A-level for only one year taking an AS qualification. In the cohorts of 18-year-old boys leaving school in 2002 and 2003, there were four and five boys respectively. All passed at AS level, with four of the nine gaining good grades. The standard of work seen in lessons corroborates the examination results; course work is often outstanding.
157. The achievement of boys in the sixth form is very good. Previous and present sixth formers had all begun their formal study of information and communication technology without the advantage of any GCSE qualification in the subject. Their results indicate the very good progress made.
158. The teaching offered to boys is very good. Teaching staff bring to their work varied experience and expert subject knowledge. They establish a very effective professional relationship with boys who are rigorously challenged. Boys have confidence in their teachers and work hard. Boys' work is assessed and marked carefully. This information is used constantly to provide feedback, support and to challenge the boys. The nature of extended course work in information and communication technology and computing provides the opportunity for very effective guidance and opportunities for recovery if there are difficulties on the path to learning. In this way, individual learning needs are met.
159. Learning is very good and boys have an excellent attitude towards their work. Boys set themselves extended targets for their coursework. In computing, they undertake demanding projects to develop software systems for real life contexts with applications as diverse as supporting a driving school, managing music tuition or specifying Intranet portals. Boys studying vocational A-level learn to work as a team, each contributing tasks and systems to a group project managed as a simulation of contemporary employment practice. In both courses, boys develop the programming and analytical skills that they need.

Example of outstanding practice

A project undertaken for the vocational A-level examination led one student to design and implement a system to produce and update school sport league tables semi-automatically following the input of new results on a weekly basis.

Based on a carefully designed and configured development in Microsoft Excel, the system generates attractive tabular and graphical displays. Every stage in the conception, planning, development and delivery of the system was documented to a very high standard using a consistently applied publication style. The finished result was an inspirational model for course work.

Two boys studying for A-level computing had, separately, both developed systems to support the teaching of music. One project provided for boys, studying for music theory examinations, to undertake multiple choice tests on aspects of music theory. Questions are marked and test results produced for the teacher. The second project was more ambitious. The system produced allows individual boys to be registered and is a means for their teacher to record their progress in the performance of scales and set pieces. The system also supported the administration associated with boys entering music graded examinations, including fees. Both applications

had required the boys to learn advanced programming skills as neither was based on the adaptation of existing commercial software. The quality, rigour and appearance of the course work portfolios were of the very highest standard.

160. Very good leadership of information and communication technology has led to the development of the two different A-level choices for boys. The number of boys now gaining A-level success is significant. The management of teaching and resources is very good and effective. Since the last inspection, improvement has been very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

161. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. ICT is used well by boys to support their learning. For example, in art and design, the Internet provides access for viewing gallery collections across the world and in modern foreign languages, for access to authentic resources. The development of on-line access will open up the prospect of 'any time anywhere learning' for the boys.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A and AS level results are very good and have shown significant improvement since 2001.
- Teaching is very good. It is characterised by rigorous and demanding use of question and answer techniques, very effective use of assessment and good use of ICT.
- An excellent scheme of work underpins the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Monitoring of progress and feedback to boys is very good.
- Fieldwork has been revised, leading to dramatic improvement in results at AS and A-level.
- Leadership and management are excellent.

COMMENTARY

162. Boys enter the sixth form with levels of attainment above national expectations. AS and A-level results show that boys make rapid progress, and attainment is very high. In 2003, 38 per cent gained grade A and 77 per cent gained an A or B grade. In 2004, at A-level, 76 per cent of boys gained A grades and 88 per cent were at A or B grade. At AS level, 81 per cent gained A grade and all were at A or B grade. The 2004 results represent very good improvement since 2002.

163. Teaching and learning are very good. A strong learning ethos pervades lessons and this, coupled with mutually respectful relationships between staff and boys, creates a very effective climate for learning. Teachers set high standards in the level and pace of lessons and boys respond enthusiastically. Boys willingly contribute to class discussion and work constructively together. Assessment is excellent.

164. Teaching methods are varied and require the use of high-level subject knowledge and understanding by the boys. A very good range of skills is covered and the use of appropriate geographical terms is emphasised. This leads to boys improving their already high order skills in the use of geographical language. A particular feature of most lessons is the excellent material presented on interactive whiteboards, which engages boys and enhances learning. Both staff and boys use ICT effectively in lessons. Boys use ICT extensively, especially through the Internet for research.
165. One lesson seen was good and all others were very good or excellent. When teaching is excellent, the teacher:
- uses question and answer techniques with rigour;
 - demands the highest standards from boys;
 - delivers at pace a challenging lesson;
 - uses continuous monitoring to ensure no boy is left behind;
 - employs peer marking, often using an examination mark scheme; and
 - uses the interactive whiteboard skilfully.
166. Leadership and management are excellent and there is a strong commitment to raise standards further. The vision of the head of department is reflected in the excellent scheme of work. The programme of fieldwork has been revised, leading to dramatic improvement in results in the fieldwork-based examination paper at both A- and AS level. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The teaching of history is good and at times very good.
- Some of the work done by boys is excellent.
- Boys are very positive about their work.
- The relationships between the teachers and boys are very good.

COMMENTARY

167. In the 2003 A-level examination, the number gaining A and B grades was well above what boys gained nationally and the national average. Inspection evidence shows that standards achieved, both in lessons and in the boys' work, is above that expected nationally, with some boys producing excellent work. Very able boys have developed very good knowledge and understanding of the British history they are studying. They appreciate from their reading the complexity of the themes being studied and display an ability to use a range of source material constructively. Most boys have the contextual knowledge that engenders confidence to put across their ideas in both discussions and their writing. They confidently work independently and organise their work very well.
168. Achievement is good. Boys have built on the knowledge and skills they have acquired earlier in the school. In particular, very good analytical skills are developed. They also benefit from evaluating a range of historical evidence and made very good progress in developing an understanding of the themes they have studied. Expectations are high because most boys are positive about the subject and are clear about the future direction of their studies.

169. Teaching is good, with some that is very good. The lessons appear to be planned, but no evidence of planning was offered during the inspection. The relationships between the teachers and the boys are very good. They inspire the boys to read at length and are able to manage discussions well. On the whole, the balance between teacher and boys' involvement is satisfactory. Boys respond positively to good questioning and they use the resources they are given very effectively to increase their understanding. Teachers encourage the boys to write well with some excellent outcomes.
170. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a clear perception of the direction in which the subject needs to go. The curriculum is well suited to boys' current and future needs. Assessment is good and is used well to inform progress. The accommodation is good, but rooms are not always inspiring learning environments. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Examination results at the end of Years 12 and 13 are well above average in comparison with similar schools.
- Boys' understanding of design, new and smart materials and new technologies limits the quality of outcomes.

COMMENTARY

171. By the end of Years 12 and 13, boys' grades are very high in comparison with other schools and they achieve well. Boys, who start the course with high grades at the end of Year 11, achieve similarly high grades by the end of Years 12 and 13. Of the 22 boys who took the Advanced level course at the end of Year 13 in 2003, 72 per cent gained A or B grades. Whilst not quite as high as the school's own averages, the points score of 42.5 for AS and 98.2 for A-level examinations are well above the national averages of 22.8 and 74.1 respectively.
172. Boys' achievement is good. They work with clients on design problems such as household storage and issues relating to small businesses. Their level of research and analysis is very high. The quality of both written and practical work is very high. The scope of the problems that they have identified is very well addressed. Boys can identify huge gains in their knowledge and in their ability to work with materials and equipment. Although boys make very good use of ICT to present their work, some have very limited knowledge of computer-aided design and manufacture and control. They are content with the course and appreciate the guidance they receive from teachers.
173. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide high levels of information. Boys have very high levels of literacy and numeracy, a good understanding of scientific principles and very well developed study skills. Teachers are extremely supportive and ensure very high success in examinations. Feedback is detailed and boys are very clear about how

to improve their work. As a result, they learn well. Nevertheless, teachers place insufficient emphasis on design, the use of new and smart materials and new technologies. The range of ICT in the department is limited in terms of its capacity and the range of software available. The accommodation is dated and unexciting. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

MUSIC

Provision in music is **excellent**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are excellent.
- Teaching is excellent.
- Subject knowledge and expertise of the staff is excellent.
- Leadership of the department is very good.
- Progress since the last inspection is very good.

COMMENTARY

174. At the last inspection, standards were above the national average for schools of a similar type. Since 2002, all boys taking GCE A-level have gained A or B grades. In 2003, whereas a fifth of all boys nationally gained A grades, all boys at Queen Elizabeth's achieved a grade A. Standards have therefore risen and the music department has an excellent record of examination results. The numbers of boys sitting A-level has fluctuated and, although there are three boys in the current Year 13, there are eight boys in Year 12, which represents the most significant increase since 2000. There is no significant variation in the standards attained by boys from different ethnic groups.
175. The observation of lessons and of other work during the inspection confirmed that standards in music are excellent. The school has improved upon its level of success at the time of the last inspection and enables boys to build on their GCSE results, which are all A* to B. Boys have an excellent knowledge and understanding of this subject and demonstrate excellent musicianship when discussing or performing music. They are able to direct ensembles, paying attention to expressive qualities and interpretation.
176. Teaching and learning are excellent. Lessons are conducted in a purposeful atmosphere and boys are all very keen to learn. All lessons start with a short activity to revise key words and ideas. The middle part of the lesson is a listening-based activity that further re-enforces the main learning. Lessons are completed with an instrumental section in which boys gain direct experience of the teaching point through analysis and playing musical examples. Due to the high expectations of teachers, parts of the lessons are inspirational and boys learn much more about music than is required for national examinations.
177. A lesson on the techniques of J S Bach chorales enabled a depth of insight at the level of an undergraduate. In a composition lesson, the teacher expertly explained and modelled a range of ideas using the work of a boy; this enabled excellent learning. All boys have

an outstanding subject vocabulary and everyone is expected to remember and apply previous knowledge and understanding each lesson. Boys are regularly reminded of important examination techniques and receive individual attention and individual questioning. Teaching notes are of an exceptional standard. Teachers are able to turn individual answers into excellent teaching points from which the whole class can gain deep insights into the area of study. Boys confidently perform their composing ideas and support each other's learning very well through class discussion.

178. The department has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Teachers are aware of talented boys and provide bespoke challenge for these boys. An outstanding feature of the department is its programme of extra-curricular activity and standard of instrumental playing. The range of the bands and ensembles as yet do not reflect the cultural diversity represented in the school but the quality of rehearsals and performances is outstanding. Talented sixth form boys expertly score-read in several parts to accompany the larger groups such as string orchestra and choir, enabling staff to focus on the standard of the playing and singing.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

BUSINESS STUDIES AND ECONOMICS

Provision in business studies is **very good**. Provision in economics is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Very good standards in business studies and economics, well above national standards.
- Very good teaching and learning by specialist teachers.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Excellent extra-curricular and enrichment programmes.
- Unattractive working environment.

COMMENTARY

179. Standards in business studies are very good. In 2003, at A-level, all the boys achieved A or B grades. At AS level, 75 per cent achieved grades A or B. The 2003 results were excellent in relation to national standards. Results for 2004 were equally as good.
180. Year 13 boys are able to discuss and answer questions on asset and market-led marketing to a high standard. Boys have a very good grasp of the importance of effective communication in business, and make very good presentations of their work. Achievement in business studies is very good. The work set by teachers effectively challenges the boys and supports high achievement. All the boys make substantial gains in their learning.
181. Standards in economics are very good. In 2003, all boys gained an A or B grade at A-level. Seventy five per cent gained grade A or B at AS level. These represented an excellent set of results at almost twice the national average.
182. Year 12 boys achieve a very good standard of understanding of Utility Analysis and understand the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility. The majority of boys are able to engage in detailed discussion with the teacher, and successfully answer very challenging

questions. Year 13 boys are very confident in their discussion on the internal and external growth of firms and have a very good understanding of the various forms of integration. Achievement in economics is very good. This was illustrated by the boys in a Year 12 economics lesson, who, as a result of very effective teaching, were reaching a high standard in their knowledge of Supply Analysis.

183. Teaching and learning in business studies and economics are very good. Teachers have very good specialist subject knowledge. They plan effectively, have clear lesson objectives and use appropriate teaching strategies to bring the best out of the boys. A crucial feature in the quality of teaching is the very good targeted and high level questioning. All teachers challenge and expect the boys to think very carefully before accepting answers. In a Year 13 business studies lesson, very good use was made of case studies, and recent live business examples to illustrate the lesson content and support effective learning. A very good example, in Year 12 economics, was a lesson where the teacher pushed the boys to consider carefully aspects of Realistic Market Systems.
184. The very high standards set in both subjects are directly the result of very high quality teaching by specialist teachers, and the self-motivation and hard work of the boys.
185. Provision for business studies and economics is very good. The department continues to bring about improvements and will shortly be introducing more e-learning opportunities. These will build on the already extensive strategies by which boys develop very good independent learning skills. The department has been very successful in providing a number of boys with the necessary high grades to achieve a place at the top universities to study business and economics-related subjects.
186. Leadership and management of business studies and economics are undertaken by the same head of department and are very good. Leadership is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards. Excellent extra-curricular and enrichment activities support business and economics, for example, the very successful Young Enterprise. Teachers access a wide range of business, industry and community links to support and enhance the learning. Teaching rooms used for business studies and economics appear drab with little use made of display material or the boys' work to provide a stimulating business and economics environment. Progress since the last inspection in both business and economics has been good.

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

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