

INSPECTION REPORT

REIGATE SCHOOL

Reigate

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125257

Headteacher: Mr J. Cain

Reporting inspector: Mrs S. Browning
1510

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th January 2002

Inspection number: 188411

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11-16

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Pendleton Road
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Surrey

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G. Johnson

Date of previous inspection: 22nd April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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6620	Barry Juxon	Team inspector	Mathematics	Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English Drama English as an additional language	
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31693	Tim Hanafin	Team inspector	Art and design	Accommodation Resources

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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30317	Elizabeth Barthaud	Team inspector	History Business education	
31536	Chris Gill	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
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31192	James Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education	
14633	Jean Bannister	Team inspector	Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Reigate is a mixed comprehensive school with 1000 students aged 11+ to 16 and is about the same size as other secondary schools nationally. The full range of attainment is represented on entry to the school. The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs, at 14.3 per cent, is below the national average. The percentage of students with statements of special educational need, 1.8 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of students receiving free school meals, at 10.5 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of students from ethnic minority groups and those speaking English as an additional language, at 2.4 per cent, is a bit higher than in most schools. The school serves a wide catchment area. The full range of socio-economic backgrounds is represented.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Reigate is an outstandingly effective school. Students are excellently guided and supported in achieving above average standards of attainment. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Students' attitudes to learning are major contributing features of the established and successful teaching and learning partnership. Behaviour, personal development and relationships are all very good. Attendance levels are above the national average. The curriculum provides a very good range of learning opportunities enriched by excellent extra-curricular provision. Given the high quality of leadership, the cost of educating each student, the high standards achieved, the very good teaching and learning and the skill with which continued improvement is applied, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average. GCSE results in 2001 were above the national average and well above the results in similar schools.
- Very good teaching leads to very good learning.
- The breadth of the curriculum with its excellent range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities is particularly good. Provision for students' moral and social development is very good.
- The school is extremely well led by the headteacher, his deputy and other senior managers supported by a most effective governing body.
- The good behaviour, students' attitudes to learning and their personal development are all major strengths of the school. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The way in which the school cares for and supports students is a great strength. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and parental links are very good.

What could be improved

- This is an outstandingly effective school; there are no significant weaknesses.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

The strengths of this outstandingly effective school far outweigh its minor shortcoming.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has responded most effectively to the issues raised in the last inspection in April 1996. External examination results have improved consistently over the past 5 years. The latest school GCSE results for 2001 show a higher number of students obtaining A* and A grades and fewer achieving lower grades. The monitoring, evaluation and use of assessment are implemented well and inform standards, teaching, learning and the curriculum. Very good systems are in place and standards have risen as a result. The extensive refurbishment of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and facilities has made a substantial contribution to the outstanding improvement in the quality of learning in ICT. The roles of those in middle management are well defined and are developing appropriately. Students are suitably challenged, consistently reflecting the improvements seen in attainment.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	B	B	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The above table shows that GCSE results in 2001 were above those obtained nationally and were well above those obtained by schools in similar circumstances. In the 2001 national tests for 14-year-olds, overall the attainment was above average in English, mathematics and science. These results were also above average in comparison with schools in similar circumstances and have been steadily rising above the national trend. Students join Year 7 with levels of attainment that are average overall, although students represent the full range of attainment when they come to school. GCSE results are improving faster than the national trend. Most recent school GCSE results (2001) show improvement in the percentage of students achieving A* and A grades. The school successfully exceeded its targets. The school's results were within the range of the top 40 per cent of schools nationally. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good overall and improve as students progress through the school.

In lessons and in work seen, good standards are achieved, with students achieving well in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Those students who are gifted and talented and more able students achieve well and are suitably challenged. Students with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs also make good progress.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The atmosphere is that of a community where everyone works very hard and achieves well. Students are keen and are interested in what they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The behaviour is very good throughout the school, in lessons and at all other times. Students are polite and friendly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students show maturity and responsibility. They make very good use of the many opportunities provided to demonstrate initiative. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Very good. Above average levels of attendance.

Good behaviour was highlighted in the last inspection and this has been sustained so that it is now a major strength of the school. Students' attitudes are a positive contributory factor to the standards achieved; students are well motivated.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching is very good. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. English, mathematics and science are well taught. Particular strengths in teaching are that teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects, they plan and deliver challenging and interesting lessons and use effective methods. Teachers encourage discussion and student participation, enabling students to increase their confidence and work independently. Learning objectives are shared and are reinforced throughout lessons. The school meets the needs of all students well. Students are clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. They respond to the challenge they receive and, as a consequence, learn very effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum covers the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Students have benefited from a broadening of the curriculum; in Years 10 and 11 GCSE and GNVQ courses are offered. Extra-curricular provision is excellent.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. The school makes very good provision for students with special educational needs. They are fully integrated, confident and achieve well.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. There are few students whose language competence impedes their learning, however provision for them is very good.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall. Spiritual provision is satisfactory and cultural provision is good. Moral and social provision is very good.
How well the school cares for its students	The care and support provided is outstanding. No effort is spared to ensure that the students can feel secure and supported. Excellent systems have been introduced to monitor and assess the students' personal development and their academic work.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a very good range of learning opportunities. Short courses in ICT and religious education are also offered. There are very good links with the local community and local businesses. The school's personal and social education programme is very effective in supporting students' personal development. Parents are strongly supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior managers and governors create an excellent learning environment. Subjects are very well managed and carefully monitored through the use of departmental reviews. The skills of the finance officer and administrative and support staff are key factors in the school's effectiveness. The implementation of the school's aims, values and policies are central to its success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are exceptionally well informed, have considerable expertise and are proactive in their role. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Very good structures secure effective monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning. Very good action is taken to bring about school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial control and the strategic use of resources are very good. The use of resources is informed by clear long-term planning. There is an appropriate number of teaching and non-teaching staff. The expanding accommodation is very good, attractive and well maintained. Resources are good.

The headteacher has contributed immensely to the success of the school and leads the school extremely well. The senior management team is strong, effective and cohesive. They work most efficiently together. The school applies the principles of best value very well. With two major building programmes completed and a third imminent, the school has ensured that it has kept pace with the growing school population.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects students to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • Students make good progress at school. • The teaching is good. • The good range of activities outside lessons. • Students like school. • The school helps students to be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant concerns were identified.

The inspection confirms the parents' positive views of the school. A few parents felt that the success of the drama department was not recognised or praised sufficiently. The successes of the drama department were found to be well reported and celebrated. Some parents would like less homework set. Homework is set regularly and a balanced programme is in place. It is up to both students and teachers to ensure that the balance is retained.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. The full range of attainment is represented on entry to the school. In the 2001 national tests for 14-year-olds, overall attainment was above average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools as measured by the percentage of students eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs, these results were also above national averages. The trend in the school's average point score for all core subjects was above the national trend. The school results for the 2001 national tests show that the percentage of students achieving the higher Levels 6 or above in English and mathematics improved and results for science remained the same. The higher Level 6 or above results were above the national average for mathematics and science and were very close to the national average for English. More students achieved the higher Levels (Levels 7 and 8) for their age group than nationally in English, mathematics and science. The school exceeded the challenging targets it set for student achievement in 2001. Results reflect the school's focus on raising attainment and the value added by the school. Teacher assessments in the foundation subjects show improvement on the previous year. Comparative data is not available for art and design, music and physical education. In religious education by Year 9, attainment is broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus.
2. GCSE results overall in 2001 were above average in comparison to those obtained nationally and were well above average in comparison with schools in similar circumstances. The school's results were within the range of the top 40 per cent of schools nationally. In 2001, the percentage of students who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C was close to the national average and for A* to G they were well above the national average. Results at this level are improving faster than the national trend. Most recent school GCSE results (2001) show improvement in the percentage of those students achieving A* grades. The school was very close to its target of 60 per cent of students gaining 4+ A*-C grades. Considerable improvements were seen in mathematics and science overall. In relation to their levels of attainment when joining their courses, students make good progress and advances in all subjects. Significant strengths are evident in the GCSE overall point score in art and design, drama, English literature, French and physical education. Students achieved an average point score in English language, combined science, design and technology, geography, Spanish and mathematics. They achieved below the average point score in business studies and history. The overall trends indicate generally improving performance for students at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 in comparison with all schools since 1997.
3. The standards achieved are directly related to the quality of teaching and progressively challenging activities presented to students. The consistently improving achievement in GCSE examinations can be traced to the school's skilled focus and work in the analysis of the students' attainment and by identifying and acting upon any reasons for fluctuations or dips in standards. The senior management team is very focused on taking action regarding areas that require further improvement. Manageable but realistic targets are speedily set for improvement. All departments undertake a rigorous review of subject performance including teaching, learning and the curriculum. For example, schemes of work and syllabuses have been reviewed. The school appealed to the examiners in the case of the English results and the outcome of this was most

successful. This level of reflection on and response to attainment is part of the self-improvement and accountability culture of the school.

4. There are no significant differences or fluctuations in the attainment of boys and girls. By the end of Year 9 in the national tests in English, mathematics and science over the last three years, boys achieved better than girls. Overall, in 2001 girls achieved better than boys in GCSE, reflecting the national pattern. Of the top ten students achieving GCSE A*-A grades, 2 of these were boys. Of this particular group a large number of boys were identified on entry as being of lower attainment, their results reflected this.
5. In lessons and in work seen, good standards are achieved in the majority of subjects. Standards are satisfactory in religious education throughout the school and in design and technology at the end of Year 9. In physical education standards are slightly above expectations for students at the end of Year 9. Students achieve well in relation to their prior levels of attainment. The attainment of students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language (EAL) is good. Few students are at the early stages of language acquisition. Informed by the performance and previous experience of students, the school places students with EAL in the higher sets so that they have good linguistic models and this has proved to be most successful. Students who have been identified as gifted and talented are suitably challenged and are provided with many good opportunities to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. A good range of enrichment courses is provided for them and a senior manager has very good and clear oversight of their identification procedures, provision and progress.
6. The progress of students with special educational needs is good; they are supported well. A small proportion of students in the lower sets improve their work at a slower rate than their peers in the same classes. Students with special educational needs are also offered additional learning enrichment opportunities during, before and after the school day. The inclusive nature of the school is excellent; for example, a group who was identified in Year 7 formed part of the Reigate Project. Although still of compulsory school age and considered as students of Reigate School, they now attend courses at East Surrey College, which are more in keeping with their special needs. The success of this project is now being used for a few students currently in Years 8 and 9 giving them special courses and help within the school and from the local Youth Service. In Years 10 and 11, individual students can negotiate their own programmes of study with good support and guidance from their teachers.

Literacy

7. Standards of literacy in the school serve students' learning well. Students retrieve information efficiently in a range of subjects, both in texts and from the Internet. The use of the resource centre is gradually taking a major rôle in pupils' literacy. There are specific library lessons for all students in English.
8. The school claims to be "a reading school" and evidence amply supports this. The majority of students exhibit good levels of reading skills. A programme of paired reading helps lower attaining students. In geography, students read widely. In history, there are good opportunities for students to read independently in class. Lessons provide good opportunities for reading aloud in a range of subjects. There is a French and Spanish lunchtime reading club. Students' private reading includes, besides age appropriate fiction, a good selection of current novels intended for adults. Some students have read all the novels on the short list for the Carnegie Prize.

9. Students write well and are becoming increasingly aware of the purpose, audience, form and style of their written tasks. Their work is well supported by ICT. Students annotate texts effectively in English. They make good notes in a range of subjects. Writing frames help attainment in such subjects as French and Spanish. Independent writing is a strong feature of attainment in English. The school publishes the written work of some of its students in several languages.
10. Students' standards of speaking and listening are very good. Students listen attentively in lessons. There are good opportunities for discussion in subjects such as English and art. Students develop good skills of oral collaboration in English. In geography, students explain the plight of forest Indians in Brazil in some detail. Provision in drama gives students good opportunities for public performance.

Numeracy

11. Students enter the school with average numeracy skills. They develop these skills well as they move through the school, not only in mathematics lessons, but also by using mathematics in some other subjects. For example, in science, they calculate averages, using decimals and percentages; they substitute in and rearrange formulae; they collect and tabulate data that they represent graphically. In geography, they use co-ordinates in map reading, finding routes and buildings; they use graphs and bar charts to illustrate data; they use latitude, longitude and compass directions to track the routes of hurricanes through the Caribbean. In religious education, they construct and use bar and pie charts to represent data. In information and communication technology (ICT), they use spreadsheets to analyse data and find averages. In all subjects students' numeracy skills support learning and enable them to make good progress. By the end of Year 9, overall numeracy skills are above average and this standard is maintained to the end of Year 11.
12. Students in Years 7-11 are confident and competent in using information and communication technology (ICT) and transfer ICT skills well for use in other subject areas. This is a significant improvement on standards since the last inspection. The majority of students in Year 11 now take a short course in information and communication technology. The percentage of students who achieved GCSE grades in the range A* to C was above the national average. All the students entered achieved a pass grade. A small number of students are not entered for this examination. They complete all the requirements of the National Curriculum and they are awarded a certificate of achievement.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Good behaviour was highlighted in the last inspection and this has been sustained so that it is now a major strength of the school. People whose work brings them into contact with many secondary schools in the area comment that Reigate School compares very favourably with any of the others. The atmosphere in the school is that of a community where everyone works very hard and achieves good results accordingly. Targets are set and exceeded.
14. Parents find no problem in getting their children to come to school. This is due in part to the impressive range of extra-curricular activities available at lunchtime and before and after school. These cater for students interested in sports, creative hobbies, literature such as the Lord of the Rings and the Harry Potter clubs, musical students, those wishing to improve their technology skills, and many more activities. There is a very keen group pursuing the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. All of these activities are

led by dedicated teachers who find obvious enjoyment in the enthusiasm of their group members from all years and both sexes.

15. Attendance levels are above the national average and the latest unauthorised absence level is in line with national averages. Students are in school early in the mornings. Very few have to report lateness to the Student Services office that monitors the day-to-day attendance and keeps computerised statistical records. There are procedures to check on those students who have to leave school during the daytime for medical appointments or interviews. Parents are telephoned if a student fails to attend without a reason being given.
16. Students have very mature attitudes to their studies. In classrooms, students give their full attention to their teachers and incidents of disruptive behaviour are very rare. During the year prior to the inspection there has been one permanent exclusion. Exclusions are below average overall for a school of this size. Students are very attentive listeners and know that they can always ask questions of the teacher if there is something that they do not understand. Students move around the school in a sensible way, not rushing or pushing. Although most corridors are wide, there are at least two places where there is considerable congestion when classes are changing, but students are careful in the two-way traffic on narrow stairways and they give way to one another where routes cross. Changeover takes place remarkably quickly and lessons run to time. The school is carrying out observations to see whether the pattern of circulation can be improved.
17. Before school the catering staff provide breakfast for those who want it and there is food available at break as well as at lunchtime. A very large number of students are served remarkably quickly and find somewhere in the hall to eat their meals. Behaviour is good and there is not very much litter in the building and outside for the assistant caretaker to collect afterwards. Students are not allowed to go into classrooms unless a teacher is present.
18. Relationships are very good between students, irrespective of age or gender. They are also very good between students and their teachers or other adults working in the school. The incidence of bullying and racial harassment is very low. The staff work together as an excellent team and provide good role models for the students. Visitors to the school are treated with politeness and courtesy. Year 11 students help those in Year 7 with their reading and with work given in tutor lessons before morning school. Many of Year 11 are prefects and undertake various responsibilities around the school particularly supervision at break and lunchtime. They also find Bible readers for assemblies and help with a variety of evening events when parents or prospective parents are in the school. There is sufficient space for every child who wishes to have a locker.
19. Students are able to air their views at the School Council and are pleased that many of their suggestions have been taken up including the queuing arrangements for serving food, a wider selection of healthier food which is now on sale, improvements to the changing rooms, cycle routes and benches outside. A questionnaire about school issues was given to the students and the resulting replies were analysed by gender. Students feel that people listen to them.
20. The school has a very strong drama department, which is not afraid to tackle some difficult issues in the plays which it chooses. Music, dance and art are also strong areas of teaching which help the more artistically expressive members of the school community. In the wider community the school is well represented on local bodies by

members of staff. Students become involved with charity fundraising, the local community centre and the Rotary Club's speech competition. When they are out of school supporting the school in events or on visits, the students are a credit to Reigate School. It is not surprising, therefore, that the school is held in high regard by the local community, that it has a waiting list for next year, that it is regarded by parents as the number one choice in the area and that it has been chosen as Surrey's School of the Year.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching and learning throughout the school are very good overall. Of the lessons seen, nearly half were very good and excellent, eight out of ten lessons seen were good and better and almost all of the remaining seen, satisfactory. One lesson was poor.
22. One of the strengths of the school is the very good and successful teaching and learning partnership. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Overall teaching in English, mathematics and science is good and has led to improved standards in these subjects. A large proportion of the teaching seen in ICT, music, art and design, physical education and history is very good or excellent resulting in very good standards being achieved. Teaching in religious education was satisfactory
23. Particular strengths in teaching are that teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. They have high expectations of their students. Teachers plan and deliver challenging and interesting lessons and use effective methods. Notable strengths across all subjects are the common and thorough approaches given to lesson planning. Teachers are skilful at building on students' previous knowledge, skills and understanding and they clearly identify learning intentions and how they are to be achieved. They work hard to explore how they might extend students' skills. They use discussion and debate well, encouraging students to develop and to have confidence in their own views and take initiative for their own learning. Clear demonstrations and explanations are a strong feature of many lessons. In physical education, very good demonstrations were seen in gymnastics and dance and these inspired students to improve. Teachers have very good relationships with their students and manage their classes effectively.
24. Very good use is made of open-ended questions that encourage students to extend their thoughts and understanding of new concepts. For example, in a Year 9 geography lesson, students used a computer program to create a climate graph, the teacher questioned their knowledge and understanding of rainfall and temperature statistics before the class moved to a computer room. There is a strong emphasis, in all subjects, on using appropriate subject specific language. Key words are highlighted, enabling students confidently to use these in their own work and thereby increase their literacy skills generally. In a Year 7 English lesson, higher attaining students defined caricature in the work of Charles Dickens and Roald Dahl and, using the correct technical terms, said how it was achieved. Most lessons are interesting and brisk. Teachers invariably present a good range of tasks and activities that are interesting and use resources well to consolidate learning. For example in a Year 10 mathematics lesson a triangular prism was used to demonstrate its surface area and its net to calculate it. This helped students understand the algebraic formula, which they were able to apply successfully.
25. Excellent use is made of interactive boards, PowerPoint and white notice boards to highlight and reinforce learning objectives in most subjects. There is good use of these boards in religious education and in modern foreign languages where they are used to

highlight key grammatical terms and compare English spellings with those in foreign languages. In science, for example, these words are specifically referred to in teaching and often reinforced through homework. Generally, basic skills are well taught. Particularly good examples were seen in ICT and in business studies using interactive boards and PowerPoint. In business studies, study skills are promoted well, for example, note-taking skills and using spider diagrams to brainstorm information and views.

26. Where the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be satisfactory, rather than good or better, the pace was not as brisk and demanding in terms of student learning. In the one poor lesson, the resources used did not match the ability of the students and the delivery was slow and unimaginative.
27. The school meets the needs of all students well. Students are well supported by both teachers and learning support assistants. Students with special educational needs learn effectively because teachers provide suitable tasks so that their learning is successful. In a Year 9 English lesson the teacher's lively and engaging approach took account of the difficult language of Shakespeare's Henry V so that all students understood the text well. They were able to generate adjectives to describe Henry V at different points of the play, and they understood Henry's historical claim to the French throne. Students with statements of special educational needs were well supported by a learning support assistant. Targets in students' individual education plans were checked to record their progress.
28. Students with special educational needs who receive intensive teaching to improve reading learn very well. They learn to recognise and recall word sounds from letter combinations. This helps them to improve their reading when similar letter combinations appear in stories they read aloud. Another student scores a student's reading, and each student records points awarded in a workbook. In this way they see how much progress they make, and this encourages their motivation. Students receive certificates of commendation at special meetings to recognise their effort with learning.
29. Some students with English as an additional language and at the early stages of language acquisition receive individual support from the local authority. Teachers are aware of these students and others who are more competent and adapt resources for them as necessary; for example, sections of textbooks are highlighted for them.
30. Those students of higher attainment are suitably challenged. Several good examples were seen, as for example in science, knowledgeable and stimulating teaching encouraged higher attaining students in Year 8 to analyse critically environmental changes when exploring energy resources. This enabled them to gain a lasting appreciation of the effects of scientific development. In English, the written work of higher attaining students illustrates their capacity to make sophisticated comparisons and develop their arguments in detail. In modern foreign languages, students receive extra challenge in top sets, as well as being offered a second modern foreign language.
31. Homework is well integrated into planning; it is set regularly. Some parents were concerned that too much was set but students say it is manageable. Homework is purposeful, challenging and used well to build on and extend students' learning. It is well marked by most teachers with helpful comments to assist students to improve.
32. Students enjoy their lessons. Their interest, concentration and capacity for independent study are excellent and they participate fully. They strive hard to do their best and progress is maintained throughout the school as they become increasingly confident

and develop more advanced skills. They take pride in what they accomplish and are clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it. Lessons are full of purposeful activity. Students persevere and improve their work. Good examples were seen in ICT where students often extend their learning through additional individual research. Students respond well to the many opportunities provided to work independently in pairs and small groups. Assessment is well used so that students have a clear idea of what they have achieved and what they must do to improve. Students respond well to the challenge they receive and as a consequence they learn effectively. Students' attitudes are a positive contributory factor to the standards achieved.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO STUDENTS?

33. The curriculum in Years 7-11 is broad and balanced, providing a very good range of learning opportunities. Since the last inspection, students have benefited from a broadening of the curriculum provision in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.
34. In Years 7-9, curriculum opportunities and students' access to them are very good. In addition to the prescribed National Curriculum, all students follow a course of study in drama. All students study French and approximately half of the students in each year group also learn Spanish. Students are selected to study the additional language on the basis of their primary school national test results. Teaching time for Spanish is found from within the time allocated to French.
35. Setting is used to teach students in Years 7-9 in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and geography. The placement of students in sets is reviewed each term, and care is taken to ensure that each student receives work appropriate to their needs.
36. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has improved since the last inspection. The core curriculum consists of English, mathematics, double award science, information and communication technology (short course), religious education (short course), personal and social education and physical education. These are taught to GCSE level, with the exception of information and communication technology, personal & social education and physical education. Students can study GCSE physical education as an optional subject. Higher attaining students are required to choose a modern foreign language and all students must study at least one of history and geography. Students can opt for three additional subjects. Technology and French are required choices, unless the student is formally exempted from studying these subjects in the National Curriculum. Inspection evidence shows that the statutory procedures for disapplying students from subjects of the National Curriculum have been followed correctly. The optional subjects available to students include GNVQ courses in hospitality & catering and construction crafts, which are studied at the East Surrey College, and a variety of GCSE subjects. Since the last inspection, the range of subjects has been increased. Short courses in ICT and religious education have been introduced in addition to the GNVQ courses. The college-based courses have gone a long way to addressing the criticism in the last inspection report that the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 was not entirely appropriate for lower attaining students. The school intends to extend the range of GNVQ courses by introducing leisure & tourism. There are also plans to establish GCSE courses in food technology and dance.

37. The school has good strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. These have been incorporated to good effect in the teaching of all subjects. There is a very good, simple, whole-school literacy policy, which has recently been introduced and has yet to be formally monitored. In-service training for teachers on reading styles as part of this policy is in an advanced stage of preparation. Teachers are already becoming more aware of the literacy needs of their students. There is now a whiteboard in every classroom on which key words are written for every lesson. For those students requiring additional assistance, computer-based spelling programmes are available for use before the start of the school day.
38. The school makes very good provision for students with special educational needs. Teachers address students' individual needs through planning appropriate work so that they make good progress, and meet the targets on individual education plans. The school regularly reviews the needs of all its students. Students have ready access to broad and balanced programmes. In Years 7-9 a 'passport to reading scheme' is in place and supplements the use of computer-based literacy and numeracy programmes. In Years 10 and 11 individual students can negotiate their own programmes of study with good support and guidance from their teachers.
39. Each department has a teacher who links with the learning support team and is informed regularly about changes and progress. Learning support assistants play very important and valued roles in assessing students' needs and progress and in sensitive support that guides students towards greater independence as learners. Withdrawal from non-core curriculum lessons for students with pronounced reading weakness is rotated half-termly so that disruption to continuity in subjects is minimised. An arrangement in Years 10 and 11 allows a number of students with special educational needs to reduce their curriculum by one optional subject. This gives them time to attend lessons where they work individually on tasks from other subjects. This time is very well used to keep up-to-date with assessed coursework and assignments. Teachers and assistants give just enough guidance to allow students to make their own way forward. Students greatly appreciate the extra time to understand the work, and keep abreast with the workload. Before the start of lessons on two mornings a week volunteer students from Year 10 listen to weak readers from Years 7 and 8. This regular practice helps these younger students to progress and both readers and listeners make a comment on the record kept. Lunchtime homework clubs are held daily to help students with difficulties.
40. All students at the earlier stages of language acquisition have an individual language plan. This is well monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. As students' linguistic competence increases, they achieve the same access to the curriculum as the rest of the school. Some requirements are modified to fit religious norms. Moslems are not required to produce figurative art, for example. Students at the earlier stages of language acquisition are placed in top sets, so they have good linguistic models to improve their performance. Students with English as an additional language are never withdrawn from lessons as a matter of educational principle. This ensures that equal opportunities are maintained.
41. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has undergone regular review. This has resulted in changes to the school timetable and in the time allocations for individual subjects. In religious education, teaching time in Years 7-9 is satisfactory. Allocations are now appropriate for all subjects throughout the school. At present, the time allotted to science in Year 7 is less than intended. This is due to the school being unable to recruit teaching staff for additional numbers of students in this year group. It is hoped that this situation will be rectified next year. Over the past two years, schemes of work

have been reviewed in all subjects of the curriculum. Provision for ICT has been significantly improved since the last inspection.

42. The school's curriculum statement emphasises the governing body's intention of ensuring that the educational needs of all students are effectively met. Curriculum planning is a strong feature of the work of the school, with senior staff working together to forecast future needs according to changing local and national priorities. The school has agreed strategies in place to address the variations in overall teaching time resulting from the increased numbers entering the school over the next few years.
43. The school's personal and social education programme is very effective in supporting students' personal development. In Years 7-9, personal and social education is included in tutorial time, with the programme being organised by individual heads of year. In Years 10 and 11, personal and social education is timetabled separately.
44. Careers education is included in the personal and social education programme. This is supplemented by weekly visits from the local education authority link officer, who works mainly with lower attaining students on an individual basis. Work experience weeks are arranged for Year 10 students, but it has proved difficult to provide sufficient suitable placements. The school is considering utilising work experience more as a supplement to GNVQ courses. Most students remain in full-time education after leaving at 16 and very good links exist between the school and the local colleges.
45. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that are well supported by teachers and popular with students. Most areas of the curriculum are represented and a wide range of activities is provided, including web design, photography and trampolining. A link with Mexico involves students in sending e-mail messages in Spanish and receiving them in English. In addition, a variety of educational visits are organised. For instance, theatre visits and frequent workshops in drama, and a visit to the Victoria & Albert Museum by the art department informed the theme for last year's GCSE examination.

46. The school has very good contacts with the local community. In particular, strong business links have been forged with national companies. These have helped the school develop its ICT facilities to a high standard. In design and technology, productive links have been made with the British Airport Authority (BAA). As a result, opportunities for work experience have been extended and students have received support for their work in graphics. Links with partner schools are very productive. In science, for instance, there have been regular teacher exchanges with a number of local primary schools. These have improved the continuity in teaching between Years 6 and 7.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision

47. The school's provision for spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Most students attend morning school assembly twice per week and have opportunities for reflection in tutor periods. Students have good opportunities for reflection and Year 11 volunteers take Bible readings. There is also a variety of speakers from the community who focus on spiritual and moral issues. In most subjects there are opportunities for reflection on spiritual values. In religious education students are encouraged to value the spiritual dimensions of holy books and separate specific beliefs. In history lessons the Islam, Catholic and Protestant religions are explored together with the power of the medieval church. Students discuss the merits of each religion and that no one religion is better than any other. In English literature, art, music and science there are further opportunities for reflection on themes that go beyond the material and encourage self-awareness.
48. Provision for moral development is very good. Teachers and other adults act as good role models for their students. The school actively fosters values such as honesty and fairness and students are clearly made aware of the difference between right and wrong. For example, in physical education students are expected to abide by the rules. Students organise donations to charities such as Cystic Fibrosis and Imperial Cancer Research. There are many opportunities in the curriculum for moral issues to be explored. Issues such as family values, abortion, war and peace are discussed in religious education; pollution and the environment in science; and deforestation of the rain forest in geography. The rise of Nazi Germany and conditions in Stalin's Russia are explored in history, as is the civil rights movement. In these and other subjects students are encouraged to think about and discuss the moral issues involved. The personal and social education programme also contributes by encouraging students to think about current moral issues such as drugs, alcohol and bullying. At all times students are encouraged to be responsible and sensitive to the feelings of others.
49. The schools' provision for social education is very good. A wide variety of clubs, games and extra-curricular activities promote good social interaction. Younger and older students often work together. Work experience also gives students the opportunity to meet and work with adults and thus widen their social contacts. The school organises residential courses and trips, thus giving students experience of working and living together. In many subject departments there are opportunities for students to work together in groups or pairs.
50. Cultural provision is good. In religious education the values, beliefs and customs of other cultures are examined and discussed. They are linked to their spiritual beliefs. In business studies students investigate cultural issues within employment law. In modern foreign languages European and non-European languages are studied and compared with our own. Music also plays a part in students' cultural experience and students experience contributions from across the world including those from Latin American, India and China. Although there are planned opportunities to explore and

raise awareness of cultural diversity, the school recognises that this is an area for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

51. One of the great strengths of the school that contributes to its success is the way in which it cares for the students. The staff know every individual and, from the day they enter the school, each child is in a group with a tutor who will, in normal circumstances, remain as tutor until the student leaves the school at sixteen.
52. The school provides a healthy, safe environment in which students can learn. No effort is spared to ensure that the students can feel secure and know to whom they can turn if they have any worries at all, academic or social. Inspectors were given many instances of where the school has helped students and parents through difficult times such as illness or bereavement. It functions as a community where everyone, whether they are students, teaching or ancillary staff, cares about the school's good name and the welfare of everyone in it.
53. Through their physical education lessons and the broad curriculum of personal, health and social education which begins in Year 7, students are given very good advice about important matters such as the inherent dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. The school nurse is currently involved in a project to help girls who want to give up smoking.
54. Students are given good guidance about study skills and what they can expect from secondary education. As they move through the school, issues such as relationships, sex education and parenting are included. Years 10 and 11 are given good advice about finance, citizenship, the environment, disability, crime and punishment, human rights and civil liberties. These lessons are very well conducted, often using videos or invited speakers from such organisations as the Redhill and Reigate Schools' Project to help the students' understanding and to lead strong discussions.
55. Governors and staff are very aware of the safety issues that arise with nearly one thousand young people on the premises. Regular risk assessments are carried out and health and safety matters are very quickly remedied. Security issues are also regularly considered. In response to the school's demands, the local education authority has set aside funding for a pedestrian crossing adjacent to the school entrance.
56. The attendance rate is above the national average and parents illustrated how keen their children are to come to school, not wishing to miss anything. Even so the school is making efforts to improve attendance. Certificates are awarded for 100 per cent and 95 per cent attendance. The governors have a small panel of members who interview the parents of children who are frequently absent. The local education welfare officer works closely with the school, trying to help those students whose interest in education has evaporated and convince them that there are areas of the curriculum that they will still find interesting and helpful.
57. The school is noted for the good behaviour of its students and any issues of bullying or harassment are dealt with "even before the parents know about them". Everyone, parents and students, is aware of the school's strong behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Students are clear about which person to approach if they do want to talk about a bullying problem. Many of the students in Year 11 are prefects and have duties of supervision at break and at lunchtime. They take these responsibilities very seriously and each team of fifteen prefects has its own three supervising senior prefects.

Therefore, the staff or prefects cover all areas of the school well whenever students are not in the classroom.

58. Excellent systems have been introduced to monitor and assess the students' personal development and their academic work. Form tutors, heads of year and subject teachers make contributions to these assessments. The records follow the students from year to year as they move through the school and are then sent forward to their sixth form college or further education college at the end of Year 11. Those students with special educational needs have good individual education plans in addition to the other records. Their parents are very involved in the production and updating of these plans. Students who show real ability in certain subjects are given extension work to do to maximise their potential achievements, such as the Level 8 mathematics classes for Year 9. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is used effectively, although some of this information is quite recent. The school is aware that teachers require a greater focus on using all available information to inform future teaching, learning and curricular planning.
59. Certificates of achievement are presented in assemblies from time to time and parents of recipients are invited to attend.
60. Students are set for the main National Curriculum subjects and these settings are closely reviewed when students are 14 years old and making subject choices for future examinations. Before examinations, students have a good opportunity to attend revision groups and, for all year groups, sessions are available before morning registration, at lunchtime and after school to assist anyone having difficulties with an academic subject. Staff are very generous with their time.
61. From their knowledge of the students and guided by the monitoring of their personal development and academic progress, tutors and heads of year are able to give excellent advice to students and their parents. They advise on how students should proceed with choices of subject, decisions about colleges or other further education and with possible choices of university or career. In addition, there are very good links with the two colleges to which the majority go - Reigate College and East Surrey College. Staff from the local colleges are frequent visitors to the school and students have many opportunities to visit the colleges while they are making their choices. A careers adviser from the local education authority visits on a weekly basis to help students, particularly those who are not particularly academic, and to interview and guide them towards possible careers. The school and the parents receive a written report on such interviews.
62. The inclusive nature of the school is excellent. A group of students who were identified in Year 7 as facing particular issues formed part of the Reigate Project which has guided their progress and helped them to stay in education. Although still of compulsory school age and considered as students of Reigate School, they now attend courses at East Surrey College, which are more in keeping with their special needs. The success of this venture is now being used for a few students currently in Years 8 and 9, giving them special courses and help within the school and from the local Youth Service. In this way some students, whose behaviour might well have resulted in exclusion, are helped to stay in school and to make better progress than would otherwise have been the case. The school worked with "Learning Space" on a pilot project funded by Surrey Training and Enterprise Council.
63. Another initiative that has been introduced within the child protection policy is a care committee. Heads of year, who have had child protection training, identify maybe one or

two students who may have difficulties at home or are possibly suffering from abuse or neglect or showing signs of developing ill health. The committee meets once a month to discuss about ten such students and is made up of the deputy headteacher, the education welfare officer, the school doctor and nurse, a representative of social services, the educational psychologist if she is available, a governor of the school who has particular expertise in behaviour management and a representative of the local mental health committee. Parents and the social services department are kept closely informed of the support that this committee considers necessary and all records of these meetings are strictly confidential. All staff are aware of the need to be observant for signs of distress in their students. Also, many of the staff are trained in first aid.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. The last inspection found that parents' links with the school were good and supportive. These links are now even better. Parents express great pleasure about the progress their children are making. They fully support the aims of the school and recognise its successes. They feel that their children are shown respect and tolerance by the staff and are being taught to respect the values of other people and to be part of a caring community. The school offers wonderful facilities and excellent opportunities through its extra-curricular activities. They know that their children are proud of Reigate School.
65. The information given to parents through the school newsletters, calendar of events, options booklets, homework guidelines and diaries and other letters is very good and parents say that they are well informed. The prospectus and the annual report of the governors are good and meet statutory requirements. Some parents would like more information about GCSE courses and would prefer the Year 9 choices evening to be in the autumn rather than in March.
66. The two progress reports that the students are given during the year are in a new format and parents are content with the information they contain. The end-of-year report is also different and it is accepted that, in such a large school, it is no longer possible to have the individual, hand-written paragraphs on each subject. However, the new format satisfies most parents and gives them good information about their child's progress, achievements and targets. There are meetings for parents when curriculum changes take place and a parents' consultation evening, which has a high attendance rate. In addition, parents know that they have only to telephone the school if they wish for more information from a teacher. The teacher will usually answer the call on the same day and an appointment is made within a week.

67. Students receive a Record of Achievement when they complete Year 11 and this gives very good information about every subject studied. It contains certificates received, a self-evaluation and an all-round picture of the student leaving the school to go on to further education.
68. Parents welcome other opportunities to visit the school, for example, when certificates of achievement or good attendance are presented in assembly to their children. They feel that the productions of the drama department are outstanding and help the students to have a good sense of the school as a community. The home/school agreement, which the school circulated, received a relatively poor response and the parents' view is that those who sign and send it back are those who would care anyway. Although some parents have concerns about the large amount of homework set, the students comment that "they can handle it". Some, in fact, would like more. The vast majority of parents are keen to support their children's education at home but feel that it is preferable to leave them, when in school, to develop in their own way with the excellent guidance and care the school provides.
69. Parents of students with special educational needs are fully involved in the individual education plan, which is prepared for their child. The learning support department communicates well with parents. Last term parents heard about the revised special educational needs Code of Practice at a coffee morning. They had an opportunity to discuss matters individually with the special educational needs co-ordinator. Parents receive a very helpful information pack that gives suggestions of how they can help their children to progress, for example with reading and spelling. A parent governor has oversight of the provision for special educational needs by the school. A number of parents spoke positively about the quality of provision and care by the staff.
70. Parents are also pleased with the school's good links with the primary schools that feed the school and comment on the way teachers from Reigate visit to make every single child feel comfortable about the transfer to secondary school. Equally good links exist with the colleges. Parents feel that Reigate School helps to make their children's decisions about college and careers easier. Links with local communities and with industry in the area are also felt to be very good. These links have provided the school with large amounts of sponsorship. Although there is no longer a parents' association, parents generally give a good response when funds are needed for specific purchases and it is hoped that they will support the bid for Performing Arts Status.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. The leadership and management of the school are excellent, with outstanding leadership by the headteacher. He is perceptive and creative in his vision for the school and has drive and high expectations for all. The headteacher is exceptionally well supported by a strong management team, which includes the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and the bursar. Together, they are a decisive group and with the governors and staff they are very well focused on school improvement and fully committed to providing the best education for their students. Management is well structured, with all those in management responsibilities having clear roles and a firm understanding of responsibility for further improvement and accountability. Leadership is decisive but recognises the value and importance of consultation and negotiation. As a result, management successfully encourages all staff to participate fully and many have handled change well. Students, parents and the local community are kept well informed of developments and are encouraged to contribute their views. Staff are inspired and are encouraged to reach their full professional potential. Their ideas are enthusiastically channelled to initiate new educational developments that will be beneficial for the school.

72. The senior management team is cohesive and dynamic in its outlook. Emerging developments or concerns are not seen as problems to be overcome but as ways of being innovative and moving forward positively. This approach to initiatives and developments underpins much of the work of the school. The team carries out its roles most efficiently and is well respected by staff, governors, students and parents. Delegation and the contribution of staff with management responsibilities are excellent. Expansion of the senior management team since the last inspection has allowed greater flexibility in terms of responsibility, monitoring and evaluation of whole-school developments whilst at the same time maximising and utilising the skills of those in post. Together, senior managers provide overall direction and a shared and common purpose. Developments are implemented, managed, monitored and evaluated, and are operationally efficient.
73. The heads of department are a strong team of managers. They are clearly aware of their accountability in terms of standards, teaching, learning and the curriculum within their subject areas. Their roles and responsibilities are fully developed. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection. With the senior management team they undertake rigorous reviews of their departments identifying areas for further development and actioning improvement. Year leaders are also very involved in the monitoring of students' academic, personal and social development. They effectively provide the vital link with parents and other agencies. They have a very good oversight of records of achievement and pastoral issues. Year leaders are committed and dedicated to providing the best support for all their students.
74. Ongoing observations of lessons by heads of department, senior managers and external advisors ensure that strengths and areas for improvement in all curriculum areas are constantly reviewed in terms of seeking best practices to further raise standards. The very good structures secure effective monitoring and evaluation of standards, teaching and learning. The constant high profile of senior managers about the school ensures that they too have a direct pulse on all areas. Their unobtrusive drop-in visits to lessons are appreciated and welcomed by both teachers and the students. During the inspection it was evident that students are used to this and enjoy sharing what it is they have been studying. They are proud of their achievements.
75. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and taking effective action are excellent. School improvement and development planning are well established and involve all staff. Well-developed systems together with the energy and commitment of all staff ensure that the school will continue to improve. The school is fully inclusive and is committed to equality of opportunity. The way in which the school's aims and values are reflected in the work of the school is an excellent feature.
76. The governors' knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development puts them in an excellent position to support its work. They are fully informed and between them have considerable and valued expertise. The school readily uses their skills. The chair of governors is particularly well informed and plays a wide and active role. Governors are proactive but are also critical friends and have full confidence in the senior management team to leave the day-to-day management of the school in their care. A well-trying committee structure is in place. This operates effectively and the work of the school is constantly under review. Governors are well positioned to make informed decisions and participate fully in the recognised priorities of the school. The action to meet the school's targets is excellent. A strength of the school is the shared commitment to continued improvement. The very positive way in

which the previous inspection findings were used to strengthen the school's provision is an excellent example of such commitment.

77. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) leads her dedicated team of teachers and support assistants very ably. Information is managed and disseminated effectively. The governing body is well informed of special educational needs provision through the nominated governor. She meets regularly with the SENCO, and observes lessons and withdrawal groups. The school is already advanced in its implementation of the revised changes in the national legislation for special educational needs Code of Practice. The school is closely involved in annual reviews of statements and these are well attended by professional personnel, together with participation by parents and students. Effective monitoring systems have been developed and the necessary documentation for parents is readily available. The governing body fully meets its statutory requirements with regard to special educational needs.
78. Co-ordination and management of students with English as an additional language are very good. The school liaises well with students' homes and with the local education authority. Teachers know the pupils with language difficulties because they are reliably given the appropriate information. Monitoring of their performance is good.
79. The school has responded most effectively to the issues raised in the last inspection in April 1996. External examination results have improved consistently over the past five years. The latest school GCSE results for 2001 show a higher number of students obtaining A* and A grades and fewer achieving lower grades. The monitoring, evaluation and use of assessment are implemented well and inform standards, teaching, learning and the curriculum. Very good systems are in place and standards have risen as a result. The extensive refurbishment of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and facilities has made a substantial contribution to the outstanding improvement in the quality of learning in ICT. The roles of those in middle management are well defined and are developing appropriately. Students are suitably challenged, consistently reflecting the improvements seen in attainment.

Staffing

80. The senior management team and the governing body work well together to manage the teaching, administrative and support staff of the school in a very efficient manner. They use creative and proactive strategies very successfully to recruit and retain a very loyal staff. There is a very good balance of gender and experience amongst the staff and they are all fully qualified to teach within their areas of deployment. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All the staff have clear job profiles and they have all completed their performance review and taken recent training relevant to their needs. Since the last inspection all staff have completed training in ICT.
81. New and newly qualified teachers are supported through a good induction programme. There is a co-ordinator for students with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Another full-time teacher and a sufficient number of learning support assistants provide additional support for these students to a good standard. The school is served exceptionally well by the support staff, administration including student support services and maintenance staff. They make a very valuable contribution to the success of the school and the well-being of the school community.

Accommodation

82. The accommodation is very good. The school provides an attractive, very clean and well-maintained learning environment. Two major building schemes since the previous inspection have kept pace with the growing school population. These included improved provision for art and a new learning resources centre. A third building scheme is due to start immediately following the inspection, which will further enhance facilities, including those for physical education. An all-weather pitch added in September 2001 is enabling students to gain higher standards. Using it for football at lunchtimes allows remaining social areas to be calm and safe. They are attractively landscaped and provided with seating.
83. Most teaching areas are conveniently grouped together by subject and carpeted where this is appropriate. There are good quality displays of work in all curriculum areas and corridors that celebrate students' achievements or display information. Buildings are cleaned to a high standard and the provision of daytime cleaning maintains this during the school day. The ample provision of litterbins, both inside and outside the building, encourages students to keep it relatively litter free. The caretakers and contract cleaners keep the school very clean. Plans are well advanced to improve road layout to the site and provide safer crossings for students.

Learning resources

84. The provision of learning resources is good. There are no shortcomings in curriculum areas. They are excellent for business studies, where there is easy access to ICT facilities, interactive whiteboard, colour photocopier and a good range of other subject material. They are very good for art and design and modern foreign languages, which have their own computer and resource room. Design and technology has very good ICT facilities for graphics and resistant materials.
85. Provision for ICT has been significantly enhanced. There are now three computer rooms grouped together, which have broadband Internet access and interactive whiteboards, and are well used to support students' learning. The on-line booking system gives current room availability and allows easy access for classes from all subject areas. The resource room has an additional ICT suite, which greatly enhances the value of this important and well-used resource. It is heavily used at lunchtimes by students and can be booked by teachers for lessons where research is needed. For example, a Year 11 art group accesses the Internet and the good range of art books to gather information and images towards their 'still life' project.
86. The learning resources centre is an excellent resource central to the teaching and learning in the school. Although the number of books is lower than recommended nationally, all are specially chosen to support specific aspects of the curriculum and all volumes are frequently borrowed and well used to support learning. The centre has a good range of CD-ROMs. Books are borrowed from other sources, including public libraries, if there is a shortfall. The resources centre is regarded as an important additional resource in art, as students research their projects on still life. For geography, the centre provides a good range of books and CD-ROMs for research homework. Books have been purchased to support newly written schemes of work in history.
87. The manager of the centre provides an excellent level of advice for the general reader and help for the student who needs to research. Her erudition and knowledge of children's books excellently supports literacy lessons. Her enthusiasm tempts students to read more adventurously. The "passport to reading" club enables students to talk

about what they have read and enthuse others. There is a thriving book club in the centre each evening and at lunchtimes.

88. The centre holds a range of excellent book lists to support leisure reading and specific aspects of study. "Newsworthy words", changed weekly, are prominently displayed. Liaison with teachers and curriculum managers is excellent and ensures effectiveness of provision. The centre is open for long hours daily, to ensure all students have good opportunities to use it. The room is light, welcoming and well decorated. Students assist in the administration.

Efficiency

89. The appointment of the bursar has contributed substantially to the school's financial expertise. She is financially very skilful and is a valued member of the senior management team. Governors' financial expertise has been used to good effect in ensuring that expenditure is prudent but related to the needs identified through forward planning. The budget is carefully planned over a three-year period. The school has successfully applied for and received grants through bids. It also has developed an active and financially rewarding partnership with a local business. The headteacher is very active in the local community and is proactive in terms of networking with people and funds that will support the school. Funding received by the school for specific purposes has been well spent. The school uses funding provided by statements of special educational need to purchase the specified resource, usually the time of learning support assistants. Governors' judgements about the appropriateness of expenditure are well informed by the very clear budgetary information with which they are provided. Considerations of cost and best value are invoked in all decisions about major items of expenditure. Excellent examples of this are in the expansion of the school buildings, the development of ICT and the retention of staffing.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

90. This is an outstandingly effective school with no significant weaknesses. The following minor shortcoming should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:
- Fine-tune the use of the recent assessment data that identifies the performance of different groups of students for Years 7, 8 and 9 so as to further inform teaching and learning and raise standards.
(Paragraph numbers 58, 93, 153, 157, 170, 183, 189, 194 and 196.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	160
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	13	63	52	31	0	1	0
Percentage	8	39	33	19	0	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	1000
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	105

Special educational needs	Y7-11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	166

English as an additional language	No. of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No. of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1

National comparative data	8.1
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National comparative data	1.1
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	113	83	196

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	71 (53)	78 (73)	87 (71)
	Girls	64 (60)	61 (59)	59 (54)
	Total	135 (113)	139 (132)	146 (125)
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (65)	72 (75)	75 (71)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	28 (26)	54 (53)	38 (38)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	76 (66)	79 (73)	79 (71)
	Girls	66 (67)	65 (60)	61 (61)
	Total	142 (133)	144 (133)	140 (132)
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	73 (76)	74 (76)	72 (75)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (44)	48 (51)	41 (34)
	National	31 (33)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	74	79	153

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	31 (39)	70 (66)	72 (68)
	Girls	48 (30)	76 (53)	78 (53)
	Total	79 (69)	146 (119)	150 (121)
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	52 (54)	95 (93)	98 (95)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	44 (43)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	5
Indian	2
Pakistani	11
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	974
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	21	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52.8
Number of students per qualified teacher	18.9:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	326.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	26.5
Key Stage 4	26.1

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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Total income	2268533
Total expenditure	2166285
Expenditure per pupil	2305
Balance brought forward from previous year	138022
Balance carried forward to next year	240270

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1000
Number of questionnaires returned	169

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	42	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	50	4	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	50	8	2	4
The teaching is good.	46	50	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	42	8	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	31	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	40	44	8	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	38	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	40	3	1	3

Other issues raised by parents

Some 25 written returns were received. The great majority of these were very supportive of the school, its standards, quality of leadership, teaching and curriculum offered. A few parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework set.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Strengths

- The very good standard of teaching and learning at both key stages, particularly of English literature.
- Students' very positive level of response to all lessons in English.
- The consistent level of ongoing improvement since the last inspection.
- The very good level of management that has secured this improvement over a number of years.

Areas for improvement

- Build on the changes that reflect the higher attainment achieved in Year 9.
- Improve students' performance at GCSE, particularly that of boys.

91. It is a strong feature of the department that all students are entered for the GCSE examinations in English literature in addition to English. In 2001, the proportion achieving grades A* to B, A* to C and A* to G exceeded the national average in English. Girls did better than boys. All students have achieved grades A* to G in this examination for the last three years. In 2001, the performance of all students in English literature comfortably exceeded the national average in their attainment of grades A* to B and A* to C, with girls exceeding the national average by a wide margin, with a particularly high proportion of grades A* and A. Boys' achievement of A* to C grades was also above the national average. Their achievement of grades A* to G was 100 per cent.
92. The proportion of students gaining grades A* to C in English has improved significantly during the last three years. Grades A* to C in English literature peaked in 2001, but have otherwise improved steadily and significantly year upon year from 1995. Results show boys have not made as much progress as girls in either subject. In 2001, when all students are taken into account, performance in English literature was significantly better than the median grades of all subjects in the school, and reflects very good progress.
93. When students enter the school, their attainment in English was seen on inspection to be broadly in line with the national average. Results of the national tests at the end of Year 9 show that improvement, based on this information, is modest, and considerably lower than the work seen during the inspection would suggest. Standards by the end of Years 9 and 11 actually are above average. This reflects the impact of the work undertaken by the English department to adapt the schemes of work so as to match student ability better and thereby further raise attainment. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show students' attainment to be broadly comparable with the national average for all schools and for schools in similar contexts, with boys' attainment slightly above the average for boys' and girls' attainment slightly above the national average for girls. The proportion of students achieving the expected Level 5 was above the national average. However, teachers' assessments were underestimated for those achieving the higher grades. This was confirmed on inspection. Results have remained steady for the last 3 years.
94. Overall standards in listening and speaking are well above average. By the end of Year 9, students listen carefully to the teacher and each other. They make confident

responses in lessons, showing a good level of understanding. They work effectively in pairs and small groups. Well-planned plenary sessions in lessons allow students to have their say and further extend their knowledge. Higher attaining students in Year 8, for example, gave oral examples of the pathetic fallacy used in Wilfred Owen's poem "Exposure", and explained how it created the sombre mood of the poem. From this they deduced Owen's attitude to the war, and spoke fluently about what had caused it. Lower attaining students orally identified the mood of the poem from the weather described in it, and were able to say whether the poem was a piece of anti-war propaganda or an honest response to experience. By the end of Year 11, students speak confidently in the classroom and ask pertinent and searching questions. Discussion in groups and pairs is of a high order. Students have well-developed skills of oral collaboration. Their learning of literary texts is deepened and extended by their ability to act in rôle. In their study of "An Inspector Calls" by J.B Priestley, for example, students collected evidence from the text to enhance their understanding of the character of Mr Birling, and took turns to answer questions from the class in rôle. Students read aloud fluently and expressively. There are, however, too few opportunities for them to speak to a different audience, and to fully realise they should change their speech according to whom they are addressing.

95. Overall standards in reading are above average. By the end of Year 9, all students have successfully tackled the close reading of a range of worthwhile and demanding literature, including at least one complete text of a Shakespeare play. In their study of Henry V, for example, all students understand precisely why Henry felt justified in claiming the French throne. All appear to enjoy the play and some are genuinely moved by Falstaff's death. Students annotate effectively to help their understanding of literature. They rapidly acquire a competent knowledge of technical terms such as "alliteration" in their study of poetry. A working knowledge of parts of speech further assists their learning. A board hangs in each classroom reminding students of key concepts needed in their study of the text in hand. In a Year 7 lesson, higher attaining students defined caricature in the work of Charles Dickens and Roald Dahl, and, using the correct technical terms, said how it was achieved. In another Year 7 lesson, lower attaining students correctly identified types of writing from brief extracts that were given to them. Besides their capacity to read a text closely, students support their assertions by quotation in an increasingly effective way.
96. By the end of Year 11, students' skills of literacy criticism are very good. Higher attaining students readily scan pages and skim read, but lower attaining students have difficulty with these techniques, although they confidently read specified parts of the text and illustrate their work with quotations. Students understand texts in ways beyond the literal. Higher attaining students in Year 10 understood that in the poem "Hawk Roosting" by Ted Hughes, the poet sees the bird as a god. They understood how the unconventional word order and punctuation of the poem combine to enhance the unique quality of the bird, and by the end of the lesson had learned the words "juxtaposition", "status", "hierarchy" and "deification" in order to discuss, and write about, their perceptions. Lower attaining students have a good knowledge of plot and understanding of character in such tales as "The Withered Arm" by Thomas Hardy.
97. Overall standards in writing are above average. By the end of Year 9, students have written in a range of styles, including personal autobiographies and a biography of Shakespeare written at some length. Striking examples of their attainment are well-structured imaginative tales written about slaves in a Mississippi landscape, based on their study of "Underground to Canada". Independent writing is a strong feature of their work. Their original poetry is appealing and follows required stylistic conventions. A sonnet based on Shakespeare and written by a boy comparing his love to a Ferrari is

witty and correct. Students show an increasing sense of audience. They proofread their work, which is well presented, often with striking and original use of information and communication technology. Students make good use of their drafting books to plan and improve their work.

98. By the end of Year 11, students write at length for a wide range of purposes. Their work is carefully drafted and well presented with good use of ICT. Well-developed skills of literary analysis inform their very good attainment in media studies. All students visualise cinema in writing a director's log. The written work of higher attaining students illustrates their capacity to make sophisticated comparisons and develop their arguments in detail. Redrafted writing of all students is tidily presented and substantially correct.
99. Students learn very well throughout the school because they are very well taught. They do well in English literature because the teachers have such good knowledge and transmit their enthusiasm for the subject. Novels, poems and plays chosen for use in the classroom are worthwhile and demanding. The teachers make them interesting, so pupils rise to the challenge and achieve well. As a result of students' high level of interest, class management appears to be effortless. Lessons follow a common pattern, fully understood by students and which is informed by the National Literacy Strategy. All teachers state their learning objectives, so students are left in no doubt as to what they must learn in order to succeed.
100. Imaginative plays hold students' interest and catch their imagination. For Year 7, for example, the manager of the resources centre prepared a "Book Banquet". Students were entranced, as they were encouraged to construct a "meal" from very carefully chosen titles. They decided which were "starters", "main meals" and which titles should go on the sweet trolley. Learning was supported by pamphlets describing what the library had to offer, including "snack attack", "thriller filler" and other titles such as "fiction café" and "book bistro". Encyclopaedic knowledge of children's books by both teacher and librarian ensured an excellent standard of learning. Students said they were "munching, stuffing, scoffing and nibbling books", and so they were.
101. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure all students are included. Students with special educational needs have individual learning plans which are working documents that ensure they make the same very good progress as others. There is a high level of awareness of those who speak English as an additional language. These students make the same progress as the rest. The high level of planning ensures much ground is covered in each lesson. Lessons contain a variety of practical activities which help to maintain students' concentration.
102. The curriculum is very good and rich in classic texts. In Years 7, 8 and 9, it usefully incorporates both the National Literacy Strategy and the whole-school literacy policy. In Year 7, a government initiative to raise standards for some students is being trialled outside lesson time, and this is already improving attainment. Standards of literacy in the school serve students learning well. There are good opportunities in other curriculum areas for students to develop their very good speaking and listening, and reading and writing skills. Teaching allows effective adaptation according to ability and equal opportunities for all. Assessment is well moderated and helpful to students. Media studies considerably enhance curricular provision in Years 10 and 11. There is a lively programme of extra-curricular activities, some of which such as the "Lord of the Rings" club are specially designed to appeal to boys and raise their attainment. An activity to give students more experience of using formal speech has, unfortunately, lapsed.

103. The newly appointed heads of department are very good. They are well informed and energetic. They share the workload effectively and have already developed a collegial approach in which all the teachers share ideas and planning. Their observation of others' lessons has already served to raise teaching standards, and when developed further will ensure greater consistency of teaching quality.
104. Since the last inspection, there has been a very good level of improvement. Criticisms in the last report were thoroughly and systematically addressed. The proportion of students receiving grades A* to C in GCSE language and literature since then has almost doubled. Progress is now very good throughout the school. Students' enthusiasm for lessons and their attention and application to work continue to be a key factor in their progress.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE have improved significantly.
- Standards are above the national expectation.
- Students make good progress in lessons and over time.
- Teaching is well planned and leads to very good learning.
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good
- Leadership is effective with all staff committed to raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Review setting arrangements in Year 11 to ensure students are entered for GCSE at the most appropriate level.
- Increase opportunities for independent learning in some lessons.

105. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were above the national average of all schools and well above the average of similar schools. They have improved significantly in the last two years. GCSE results in 2001 are just above the national average of all schools. They have maintained this level for the past four years. In both examinations, results are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. There is no overall difference between the results for boys and the results for girls.
106. In lessons and in other work, the overall standard of students in Years 9 and 11 is above the national average. It is above the standard at the time of the last inspection. The attainment of students in mathematics on entry to the school is in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 9 the majority of students have good number skills. They understand place value and can use decimals, fractions and percentages confidently. They use the number rules to solve problems and to evaluate areas and volumes. They also calculate the probability of successive events and undertake experiments to justify their results. Most have a sound understanding of basic algebra and solve linear equations. A minority of lower attaining students have limited number skills. They are unsure of their tables but use calculators accurately to solve problems. They have basic graphical skills and construct bar charts. By Year 11 almost all students have good number and measurement skills. They calculate areas and volumes of prisms and cones and have good data handling skills. Algebraic skills are

well developed and most students can substitute accurately in formulae, which they rearrange when necessary. They also factorise and solve equations.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good. Teachers have very good relationships with their students and manage their classes effectively. Good planning, with clear aims, enables students to focus quickly on their work and use their time well. By using resources appropriately teachers assist students to appreciate new ideas and understand new methods. For example, in a Year 10 lesson a triangular prism was used to demonstrate its surface area and the net used to calculate it. This helped students to understand the algebraic formula, which they were able to apply successfully. Good use of ICT contributes well to teaching and learning. Students with special educational needs are particularly well taught. Their teachers, ably assisted by support staff, often use practical methods to assist students' understanding. For example in a Year 9 lesson, by measuring the diameter and circumference of a variety of circular shapes, students were able to find an approximation for pi. This enabled them to understand the circle formula, which they applied successfully to a variety of problems. In most lessons an appropriate balance between class teaching and independent learning enables students to sustain interest and learn effectively. In one or two lessons students are given insufficient time to work independently and this limits their understanding and progress. Homework is used well to consolidate and extend class work. It is well marked by most teachers with helpful comments to assist students to improve.
108. The department is very well led. It is cohesive with positive relationships between staff, all of whom are committed to raising standards. All staff are well monitored and supported. Setting arrangements are generally sound, although adjustments in Year 11 would help to ensure that students are entered for GCSE at the most appropriate level. There are sufficient good quality books and resources.
109. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Standards of attainment are now above average and this is reflected in a significant improvement in both National Curriculum and GCSE results. Teaching and learning have improved with a more appropriate pace in lessons. Standards of numeracy in the school serve students' learning well. There are good opportunities in other curriculum areas for students to develop their numeracy skills. Students' attitudes are now more positive and they work diligently in lessons. Work files are more carefully maintained and the standard of presentation of work is high.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Attainment levels are above national averages.
- Teaching is good. High expectations in lessons are helping students to gain a good understanding of scientific ideas.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Students enjoy the subject and are keen to learn.
- Assessment procedures are very well designed and are used to good effect.
- The range of additional learning opportunities is very good, including after-school clubs and educational visits.

Areas for improvement

- The written content of students' work is not sufficiently developed to ensure that lesson notes support future learning effectively.

110. In 2001, the attainment of students in the national tests at the end of Year 9 was above the national average. The percentages of students reaching Levels 5 and 6 were above average for similar schools; in 2000 they were well above. At the time of the last inspection, attainment at the end of Year 9 was below national expectations. Since then test results have been consistently higher than average and have increased in line with national trends. In 2001, the attainment of boys and girls was similar.

111. The attainment of students at the end of Year 11 has improved since the last inspection, when it was below the national average. In the 2001 examinations for GCSE double award science, attainment was above the national average; in 2000, attainment was well above. In 2001, the attainment of girls was higher than that of boys, with boys achieving slightly below the national average. In 2000, the attainment of both boys and girls was above the national average with boys achieving higher than girls. The percentage of students gaining A*/A grades in 2001 was above the national average for both boys and girls; in 2000, the percentage of students gaining the highest grades was very high.

112. The attainment of students in science on entry to the school is in line with national expectations. Inspection evidence shows that in Years 7 to 9 students make very good progress. By the end of Year 9 attainment is well above the national average. Students are beginning to make appropriate links between scientific observations and can apply ideas effectively. In a very good lesson on the properties of calcium carbonate, students were able to suggest ways of proving that a chemical reaction occurs when limestone is heated.

113. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is good. By the end of Year 11 students' attainment is above the national average. Most of them have a good working knowledge of scientific concepts. For instance, in a Year 11 lesson on the uses of radioactivity, students understood why the properties of the three types of radiation made these suitable for different purposes. Higher attaining students also made links with more advanced ideas about atomic structure.

114. From inspection evidence, boys and girls make similar progress throughout the school. Students with special educational needs make good progress and meet their individual targets.

115. Good levels of literacy and numeracy assist students to achieve well. However, the quality of the notes recorded in students' exercise books is not always adequate to make these a good resource for revision. The department will wish to address this issue and ensure that students' learning is fully supported.
116. Students' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school; they are very good in Years 7 to 9. Students are co-operative and their behaviour is very good. They listen effectively in lessons and are keen to make progress. In a good Year 8 lesson on the weathering of rocks, lower attaining students responded well to challenging and well-planned teaching. As a result they learned to recognise the variety of ways in which natural changes occur.
117. Overall, teaching is good. There has been an improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Teaching is generally very good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have high expectations of their students and deliver lessons in ways that promote very good standards of scientific thinking. Lesson planning is thorough. Teachers stimulate students' scientific curiosity by using a very good variety of methods. For instance, students responded positively to a well-conceived Year 8 lesson on energy resources. Knowledgeable and stimulating teaching encouraged higher attaining students to critically analyse environmental changes. This enabled them to gain a lasting appreciation of the effects of scientific development.
118. At the time of the last inspection, some of the work in Years 7 to 9 was too undemanding. A new scheme of work has since been introduced and teaching approaches have been modified. From inspection evidence, lessons now provide an appropriate challenge for most students.
119. Teachers know their students well and provide good support. Work is regularly marked and useful comments are provided as pointers to improvement. Procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are very good. Good use is made of assessment information when planning lessons. Improvements have been made since the last inspection.
120. The department organises a range of other activities for students. These include after-school clubs and visits to places of scientific interest. These events are well supported by teachers and are appreciated by students, who are keen to attend.
121. The department has continued to extend its resources for ICT. These are having a positive impact on students' work. In particular, the recent acquisition of a number of interactive whiteboards has extended the range of teaching approaches. For instance, in a very good Year 9 lesson on the reactivity series, the use of a remote camera enabled students to appreciate fully the vigorous nature of the reaction of potassium with water.
122. The science department is well led and managed. Effective policies and procedures are in place and these are used consistently. Teachers work well together and are fully involved in planning developments. The head of department provides a clear educational direction that is helping to raise standards. The department's objectives are to improve attainment levels further and to develop aspects of the subject throughout the school. These are appropriate priorities at this time.

123. Monitoring of the progress of the performance of the subject as a whole is good. The department has access to a considerable amount of data that is used very effectively to plan longer-term changes. Arrangements are also in place for work in classrooms to be regularly monitored by the head of department. This is limited at present by the additional demands on teaching time created by increased student numbers in Year 7.
124. Overall, there has been good improvement in the work of the science department since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision for art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- The high standards achieved by students.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to produce and modify artwork is not yet sufficiently developed.
- Limited storage restricts the scale of 3 dimensional work attempted.

125. In the GCSE examinations for 2001 the proportion of students gaining grades A* to C was very high compared to the national average. With the exception of one student, all gained an A* to C grade. Though girls performed better than boys, boys' results were well above the national average. Students performed better in art and design than in most other subjects. The assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2001 found that standards were well above average for both boys and girls, with girls' attainment higher than boys, reflecting the national difference.
126. The standard of work in the current Year 9 is above expectations. Students use sketchbooks well to record their research, to develop ideas and make written evaluations of their work. Standards of literacy are good and students are able to talk confidently about their work. Boys and girls generally draw well from direct observation because they are systematically taught from Year 7. Students record the proportions of the face accurately and use tone to give some sense of form. Higher attaining students use convincing tonal renderings. Lower attaining students record shape and detail with some accuracy but are not able to represent form convincingly. All students develop lively ideas for making soundly constructed ceramic gargoyles, which are well informed by their personal research, often on the Internet. Students exploit the plastic nature of clay very well to make grotesque forms that are very effective. There is some early promising work using ICT to modify and distort scanned images but this is not widely enough used by students. Overall, students achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Students with English as an additional language are well supported by the teacher and by other students, and they make good progress.

127. The standard of work in the current Year 11 is above expectations and achievement is good. Students work in extended studies around broad themes. These are well structured whilst giving students opportunities to reflect their own backgrounds, interests and passions. Students use sketchbooks very well, to record research, make images, experiment with techniques and develop ideas. They make realistic and well-written evaluations of their own work and commentaries on the work of artists and the artistic practice of other cultures. Standards of presentation are generally high, particularly in girls' work, which is reflected in their overall higher grades. Higher attaining students developed work that reflected their sporting interests and cultural backgrounds and researched the work of the artist Gauguin. Students are able to relate their own work to that of artists and make meaningful connections. Though less technically accomplished, lower attaining students produced strong images using combinations of paint, wax-resist, inks and drawing. Students access information and images from the Internet but do not use ICT sufficiently to develop and modify their work.
128. Students work well in class and many make use of the generous provision at lunchtimes and after school. They concentrate well on their work and their behaviour is very good. Both boys and girls are keen to be involved in lessons and contribute to discussions. Most clearly enjoy art lessons. There are very good relationships between students and teachers.
129. The quality of teaching is very good. Teaching was very good in two-thirds of lessons seen and was good in the remainder. Teachers plan effectively and use a range of teaching approaches, including whole class and individual support and tuition, so that students learn well and make good progress during each lesson. Assessment is well used so that students have a clear idea of what they have achieved and what they must do to improve. This is particularly well used in Year 11, where computer based assessment records are used very effectively to motivate students to improve their coursework marks for GCSE.
130. The subject has been very effectively led and managed since the previous inspection, during which time the standards achieved by all students have been raised dramatically. Overall, improvement has been excellent. The accommodation is much improved with newly built rooms, though limited storage restricts the scale of students' three-dimensional work. Resources have continued to be improved and are now good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision for design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- A forward-looking and skilled department team which is led effectively and which is involved in raising standards.
- Recently built teaching rooms, which are bright and cheerful and are well equipped.
- Good provision of equipment for ICT.
- Good standards of work in GCSE graphics courses.

Areas for improvement

- A greater use of ICT in Years 7, 8 and 9 for presentation of research and design work.
- Greater use of computers to control external devices.

131. In 2001, two-fifths of those entered for GCSE examinations gained grades A* to C as compared to the national average where about half of those entered gain grades A* to C. In 2001 the best results were in the graphics option where half of those entered gained A* to C grades. These results were better than those in 2000. In resistant materials the attainment was not as good as in 2000. Attainment in food technology was much improved on 2000 with about two-fifths of those entered gaining grades A* to C. The generally low attainment in resistant materials is largely due to a significant number of lower attaining students taking the option. In all GCSE courses girls achieve better results than boys. At the end of Year 9, attainment, as judged by teacher assessment, broadly matches the national average. In 2001 about two thirds of the students attained Level 5 or above. However, this is not as good as 2000 where four-fifths of the students attained Level 5 or above.
132. The last inspection referred to the need to make more effective use of information and communication technology. The department has made good progress towards this and has achieved good results. In Year 8, students made use of computer-based drawing software to design logos and decorations for small boxes made from acrylic. Their designs were then cut out using a computer-driven cutting machine. In Years 10 and 11, students followed a graphics option and made extensive use of computer-aided design and manufacture, especially in coursework projects. However, the use of generic software for word-processing, spreadsheets and databases is limited. In addition, developments have yet to be made in the area of computer control of external devices such as light bulbs and small motors. Currently this is being taught within the science and ICT curriculum.
133. The department has taken steps to improve the performance of students in GCSE examinations, especially resistant materials, by focusing on those students likely to attain a grade C or D. It is not possible to judge at this stage how successful these measures will be. However, from lessons seen during the inspection, it is clear that attainment is improving and achievement is now satisfactory in all years. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Many students in Years 10 and 11 are producing graphics work that is of high quality and compares well with work from other schools. In Years 10 and 11 the attainment of boys and girls is very similar. All students, including lower attaining students are producing some good graphics work. Improvement, in the quality of work from students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is less marked, but still evident and the attainment of all students is again very similar. The department has taken steps to follow the school policies on literacy and numeracy. Effective use is made of key technological words that are displayed in classrooms.
134. The quality of learning was good in about half of the lessons seen, and satisfactory in just under half. In one lesson learning was unsatisfactory and at a slow pace, students were not fully on task. The vast majority of students showed a very positive attitude to the content of the lessons and to the subject as a whole. Most students are able to describe clearly what they are doing and show that they have a good understanding of what they have been taught.
135. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in about half of the lessons, and good in the remainder. Characteristics of good teaching include careful preparation, a good pace of teaching and a positive working relationship with the students. In some lessons the pace of teaching was rather slow. The scheme of work covers a wide range of appropriate design activities and materials but there could be a greater emphasis on control and electronics.
136. The last inspection referred to the need to make more effective use of assessment to plan future work and to develop graphic skills. The department has made good

progress in using assessment to plan future work and this is now effective. The standards of graphics to show design thinking are good in Years 10 and 11. Effective use is made of design booklets in Years 7, 8 and 9, but generally the quality of the graphics work needs to be higher.

137. The recently completed resistant materials and graphics rooms are of high quality and enhance the teaching of the subject. Resources in the department are generally good. Technician support for resistant materials and graphics is satisfactory, although there is no specialist technician support for food technology.
138. The department is managed in an effective manner. The department handbook includes all key areas and these are clearly set out. The layout of the department handbook to ensure that those items that relate to food technology are integrated into the various sections would be an improvement. Provision for health and safety within the department is excellent. All equipment and machines are guarded and students are instructed to wear aprons and to use eye protection. Risk assessments of the activities that students undertake and of teaching rooms have all been completed.

DRAMA

Provision for drama is **very good**.

Strengths

- The high quality of teaching and learning.
- The promotion of students' analytical skills.
- The quality of the curriculum.
- Students' attainment at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Students' use of ICT could be developed further.

139. The proportion of GCSE grades A* to C achieved by students is consistently well above the national average. All students consistently achieve grades A * to G.
140. By the end of Year 9, standards are above those expected nationally. Students readily choose a character, and introduce themselves to others in rôle. They perform dialogue in rôle and answer questions put by the rest of the class. They explore non-verbal ways of communication and demonstrate a good understanding of personal and general use of space through movement.
141. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above those expected nationally. Students work effectively in pairs and small groups to plan, rehearse and present their work. In a Year 10 lesson, students confidently created a dramatic phrase using mime and movement to present a disaster on board ship. They maintained a specified character throughout. Slow motion was choreographed to good dramatic effect. In a Year 11 lesson, students created tableaux to illustrate their individual interpretations of the same character. They used space and levels well, as they posed, spoke and moved to illustrate one aspect of the character, which in collaboration became a subtle and complex entity.
142. Students take the expert direction provided well. They work particularly well in rôle and use associated techniques appropriately. Their understanding of stagecraft is excellent. In Years 10 and 11, they use well-honed presentation skills in a sophisticated way to

good effect. Discussion is a key feature of their learning at both key stages, and analysis of their own and others' performance is a significant strength.

143. Teaching was good, but this evaluation is depressed as one teacher had been three days in post, and had yet to get to know the pupils. This put her at a disadvantage, as drama teaching is dependent on mutual trust. Lessons are well planned from a secure knowledge base. Warm-up activities are very good and rapidly set a relaxing mood in which the dramatic imagination can flourish. There are clear learning objectives. Activities are well focused. In Years 10 and 11 students are frequently reminded of the requirements of the GCSE examination and what they must do to succeed in them. Interventions from the teachers are of very high quality. Questioning in the classroom is skilful and informs the quality of students' self-evaluation, which is a key to their progress. This also promotes the high quality of constructive dialogue, which further aids the learning process. Class management is secure. Constructive relationships between students and between student and teacher are a strong feature of learning. Lessons are demanding but students are enthusiastic, co-operative and highly self-motivated. They accept the level of challenge offered, and are determined to succeed.
144. The curriculum is very good, giving students excellent opportunities for public performance. There is very good provision for theatre visits and frequent workshops. The drama studios are in constant use at lunchtime and after school. Some pupils are given the opportunity to study media and performing arts at the National Youth Theatre.
145. Management has been very good. The newly appointed head of department is now taking over confidently under the mentorship of her predecessor. Both share a passionate interest in drama. Future provision for the subject appears to be secure.
146. The excellent standards described in the last inspection have been successfully maintained.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good achievement and progress throughout.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, and very good in a high proportion of lessons.
- Students behave very well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Very good assessment procedures.
- The subject area is well led and managed.
- Very good opportunities for learning.

Areas for improvement

- Develop further the use of assessment information to guide planning.
- Return GCSE results to the above average level achieved before 2001.

147. The trend of results in recent years has been consistently above the national average for the GCSE higher grades A* to C, and for the full range of A* to G grades. In 2001 GCSE results fell well below average for grades A* to C, and below for A* to G. During the year there was a staffing difficulty that had a wide effect on teaching and learning. It was not resolved until the summer term. The gap between the attainment of girls and boys was much wider than average, but the school knew this was probable from students' previous achievements on entry to the school. On entry to the school

students begin studying geography with broadly average levels of achievement. By the end of Year 9 they make good progress and achieve above average in assessed work.

148. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm that attainment at the end of Years 9 and 11 is above average, and that good progress is made. During Year 9 students become increasingly confident in using subject terms in written and oral work. They use six figure grid references to locate places on Ordnance Survey maps, and latitude and longitude on atlas maps. Lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress: in Year 8 they thoughtfully gathered evidence of preparations for a hurricane in Antigua from an eyewitness account. Higher attaining students have very good research skills that they use well with the Internet. For example, Year 9 students produced very well-presented articles on the adaptations of wildlife to tropical rain forests for homework. By the end of Year 9, students use information and communication technology very competently to understand geographical ideas. For example, Year 9 students created climate graphs from rainfall and temperature statistics of the Amazon rain forest, and considered the relationship between these variables.
149. Older students apply their earlier learning to new tasks. They use geographical skills to consider the impact of physical geography on people. For example a Year 11 class interpreted rainfall graphs of places in different parts of India to understand the change that the monsoon brings to people living in hot, dry areas. Students use good study skills, such as scanning passages and highlighting key words and phrases, to quickly grasp facts and gain understanding. Weaker students do not support their answers with sufficient detail because they probe source materials less effectively. They do not express themselves as clearly in writing as higher attaining students do. Spelling errors occur sometimes because they are careless about checking key words on display in the classroom, in textbooks and resource sheets.
150. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good; in half the lessons observed teaching was very good. Lesson planning is very thoughtful and teachers manage students very effectively. Students see the learning objectives for every lesson on a board as they enter classrooms. Teachers distribute learning resources before students arrive, so a prompt start is made. Invariably teachers question classes well about learning from the previous lesson. These questions reinforce knowledge and understanding, assess quality of learning, and make links with the new topic. For example, in a Year 9 lesson where students used a computer program to create a climate graph the teacher questioned their knowledge and understanding of the rainfall and temperature statistics before the class moved to a computer room. The teacher made clear that students should attempt to interpret the relationship between rainfall and temperature from their graphs. Teachers use very good methods to show the impact of geography on places and people. For example, Year 11 students gained powerful images of the damage caused by a hurricane in the southern United States by reading extracts from local newspapers. Using information on dates, times, wind strength and direction they followed the hurricane's track across the Caribbean Sea. Such methods and resources create immense interest for students so that they concentrate hard.
151. Teachers' very good knowledge of the subject means that they select carefully what is important for students to learn so they meet the expectations of the National Curriculum and the GCSE examination syllabus. They give opportunities for students' moral and social development. For example, Year 9 learned how deforestation changes the lives of Amazonian Indians. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and presentation of work so they create very favourable learning conditions. These

encourage students of all abilities to strive hard to do their best, and take pride in what they accomplish. Teachers develop students' literacy skills by reinforcing the use of new subject words through a prominent display board. Higher attaining students write extensive essays as part of assessed coursework. For example, Year 10 wrote about the problems of flooding and overpopulation in Bangladesh. Teachers give much help to students with special educational needs. A little guidance from a teacher with words or understanding helps them to work independently on their tasks. Students with English as an additional language make good progress and they are well supported. Regular marking and helpful comments give students a clear understanding of the standards of their work and how it may be improved.

152. Since the last inspection the subject's learning resources have improved significantly. There is now greater access to information and communication technology in lessons. The learning resources centre provides excellent facilities for research and enquiry using printed materials, CD-ROM and the Internet sources.
153. The geography team is unified in its commitment to improvement, and the head of department gives good, clear direction. Revised policies and schemes of work provide a good framework of management. Assessment procedures are very good. Teachers use National Curriculum levels with greater precision, and work samples have begun to be saved for reference. The use of assessment to guide what is going well and what needs to be improved requires more development. Very good display and fieldwork for all students strongly supports learning.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The teaching of history is good overall.
- The subject area is led and managed well.
- All students make good progress, with the majority showing good achievement in relation to their previous attainment.
- Attitudes and behaviour to work are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop the use of assessment data to inform future lesson planning and delivery.
- Centralise student assessment data and devise a system of tracking student progress to complement the system in use throughout the school.
- Investigate opportunities for students in Years 8, 10 and 11 to experience one off-site visit per year.

154. GCSE results for 2001 within the A* to C category (55 per cent) were a significant improvement on those achieved in 2000 (45 per cent). The 2001 results were closer to the national average (61 per cent). Every student entered for GCSE history in 2001 achieved a grade within the A* to G category - an improvement on the 2000 position (94 per cent). Standards achieved by all students in this subject are good. When students enter the school their standards in history are broadly in line with national expectation. The teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Year 9 indicate that in 2001 student attainment was broadly in line with the national average with 59 per cent achieving at least a Level 5. Students who then choose to continue studying history to GCSE level make good progress. Overall, there is an improving trend within this department with regard to student performance at the end of Years 9 and 11. Realistic and challenging

targets have been set for the summer 2002. In analysing the end of Year 11 GCSE results for 2001 the department identified that girls achieve higher grades in relation to coursework than boys. As a result they gain higher grades overall. The head of department has chosen a different coursework topic so that it appeals to all students.

155. From the work seen during the inspection, student achievement is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Evidence gained through lesson observations and looking at the work produced confirms that all students are working to a good standard and that current achievement reflects rising standards for students at the end of Years 9 and 11. Achievement is now good and standards now seen are above average for Years 9 and 11. In lessons students are very keen to offer responses to questions posed by teachers and they are orally very confident. Their understanding of some of the key historical concepts, such as cause and effect and empathy, is developing from Year 7 and is very secure by Year 10. The majority of students in all year groups are skilled at using a wide range of source material and make clear deductions from both written and pictorial pieces of evidence. In one Year 10 class students were using data and pictures of Victorian criminals to analyse the range of crimes committed during this period of history. They also had to make decisions on the appropriateness of the punishment in relation to the crime. As part of the topic looking at the role of the medieval church, a Year 7 class was asked to analyse four pictures to decide which scenes represented heaven and those which represented hell. Both of these activities then led students into producing structured and extended pieces of written work. The department has a clear focus on introducing extended writing from early in Year 7 to encourage students to produce well-reasoned arguments based on historical fact. The last inspection report commented upon the limited range of teaching resources used by teachers. This is no longer the case. In all lessons observed good use was made of a wide range of resources e.g. textbooks, resource sheets, worksheets and writing frames.
156. Teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good with some lessons observed being very good and excellent. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is very good. Lesson planning is very thorough and students are set a wide range of different tasks to both maintain their interest and extend their knowledge. Many opportunities are provided for students to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. The majority of teachers use good question and answer sessions at the start and the end of each lesson to ensure that all students have a thorough understanding of the topic being studied. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning. Students who have special educational needs or have English as an additional language achieve good standards due to the way in which the teachers use and deliver the resources available. Teachers in this subject provide a high level of individual support to students. High standards of both work and behaviour are demanded and received. A limited amount of less than good teaching was observed and in these lessons the resources in use did not match the ability of the students and the style of delivery was slow and unimaginative. Overall, the improving standards achieved by students studying history can be directly attributed to good and imaginative teaching.
157. The management and leadership skills of the newly appointed head of history are good. Since her appointment in September 2001 a wide range of strategies have been introduced which have had a direct impact on standards. All statutory requirements relating to this subject are in place. Rigorous monitoring systems are now in place to ensure that each student makes good progress in relation to his/her prior attainment. High levels of consistency are in evidence within lessons with regard to marking and implementing both departmental and whole-school policies. In addition to re-writing the department handbook, the schemes of work and introducing a new GCSE course into

Year 10, a new assessment policy has been implemented. All of these recently introduced systems should support all students in attaining even higher grades at the end of Years 9 and 11.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The quality of education provided in ICT is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching.
- Full entitlement for all students.
- Very good facilities.
- Very good leadership.

Areas for improvement

- Minimise the gender imbalance in the students' achievement in Years 10 and 11.

158. In the GCSE short course examination in 2001 the percentage of students who achieved grades in the range A* to C was above the national average. All the students entered achieved a pass grade. A small number of students are not entered for this examination. They complete all the requirements of the National Curriculum and they are awarded a certificate of achievement. By the end of Year 9 in teacher assessments, students' attainment is above national expectations. These standards are confirmed from the evidence of the inspection. This is a significant improvement on standards since the last inspection. Girls are achieving better than boys.
159. In Year 9 students used PowerPoint to animate and illustrate the sequence of overlapping tasks to be completed in the production of a school play. They went on to complete a computerised Gantt project plan to order these overlapping tasks against target dates. In Year 11 they produced a flow chart to illustrate and test the design of their personal web site including the positioning and effect of their hyperlinks to other pages in their publication.
160. The quality of teaching is always very good and frequently it is outstanding, particularly during practical sessions when technical skills are explained very well. The teachers have good subject knowledge and they set high expectations to which the students readily respond. Appropriate and challenging work is set and the students are well supported when they require help and the pace of the lessons is very good. Good provision is made for students of all abilities to be fully included in the learning process.
161. Consequently the quality of learning is very good. Students of all abilities and educational needs make very good progress with their studies. This progress is maintained throughout the school as students become increasingly confident and develop more advanced skills. All the students enjoy this subject and work for long periods of time sustaining their concentration on the tasks set for them. Many are highly motivated and they can work on their own when required to do so. They are confident in their skills and they are prepared to explore new ideas and work creatively. Their work is completed with care and attention to accuracy and detail. Students often extend their learning through additional individual research.
162. The curriculum is very well planned to ensure continuity as the students progress from year to year. Many students benefit from the good access to the Internet. This helps them to improve their skills through the exploration of many special educational facilities available on the World Wide Web.

163. All students have equal opportunity to study this subject throughout the school. The scheme of work is very good. It is well thought out and delivered in an imaginative way effectively using the available time and very good resources. ICT is used to enhance the quality of learning in all the other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in history, computer simulation enables students to investigate the quality of life in the Tudor times and in science to monitor experiments through electronic probes. Electronic mail is used to enhance the quality of learning in Spanish when students communicate with children in a school in Mexico. ICT is used very effectively as a vital part of the business studies course. The ICT teachers enable the computer rooms to be available out of lesson times. Many students take the opportunity to extend their skills during these times. The library has a good provision of computers and the students are able to search for books and other resources using key words connected with their studies. Project work enables students to extend their work to the limits of their abilities and interests. Students with special educational needs make good progress with the use of software to improve their skills in literacy and numeracy.
164. Gifted and higher attaining students also benefit from special after-school provision to extend their learning experiences. Attention is paid to developing students' literacy skills, for example, in the correct use of key words and the accuracy of their technical explanations. Students use a spreadsheet application to manipulate figures using formulas. They write and edit control procedures to instruct a computer to draw repeated mathematical shapes on the screen (Logo).
165. Assessment matched to National Curriculum levels of attainment is carried out very regularly and to a very good standard for students in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Years 10 and 11 the students' achievement is carefully assessed against examination requirements. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Students' work is marked with helpful comments to encourage and enable them to improve their work further. Standards are monitored as students progress through the school allowing adjustments to be made to meet their learning needs.
166. An experienced and enthusiastic head of department manages the subject very effectively. The students' learning benefits from the excellent teamwork in this department. A full time network manager makes a valued contribution by keeping the network of computers running to maximise their use. ICT equipment and facilities have been extensively updated and improved. The extensive refurbishment of equipment and facilities has made a substantial contribution to the improvement in the quality of learning. Good planning, leadership and high expectations have further ensured that the improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall the provision for modern foreign languages is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards are dramatically improved in French and continue to be good in Spanish.
- Teaching is good and often very good.
- Management is excellent.
- Pupil response is very good.
- Cross-curricular and extra-curricular links are strong.

Areas for development

- Use assessment more effectively to inform curriculum planning.

- Review teacher assessment of National Curriculum levels in Years 7, 8 and 9.

167. In 20001, GCSE results compare very favourably with other subjects in the school. This represents a remarkable improvement since the last inspection. In Year 11 at GCSE students perform significantly higher than the national average in French, and as expected in Spanish. Boys perform less well than girls, but both compare well to national standards and the gap is less wide than the national average. By the end of Year 9 teacher assessment is similar to other foundation subjects in the school but considerably higher than the national average.
168. By the end of Year 9 students perform significantly above national averages, but less well than is indicated by teacher assessed National Curriculum levels. In Years 10 and 11, students also perform significantly above national levels and make good progress value from Year 9. Lower attaining students are well served by the individually tailored work provided for them in set 3. Higher attaining students receive extra challenge in top sets, as well as being offered a second modern foreign language. Students with special educational needs attain well, although many do not continue with a language in Years 10 and 11. The small number of students with English as an additional language achieve well. The setting arrangements favour girls marginally, but boys' attainment is closer to girls' than usual in this subject.
169. Students have a very positive attitude to study. Typically they work well together in mixed gender pairs, tackling tasks quickly and effectively. Relations with teachers in all sets are very good. While lower attaining students are very motivated in most years, there is less motivation towards the end of Year 9 for students who are not intending to continue with the subject.
170. Teaching is consistently good, with all staff showing enthusiasm for language learning, sharing learning objectives, using target language appropriately and encouraging pupils to use the target language. Students are well prepared for individual or pair work, there is fluent movement between activities and teachers have high expectations. All classrooms are attractively displayed with students' work and language learning aids. Day-to-day assessment is not usually linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment and students are uncertain of their levels or of what they should do to move to the next level. Teacher assessment of these levels would benefit from review. Lessons usually end with a summing up, which tend to be used only to test what has been learned rather than to deconstruct the learning process itself.
171. The use of ICT meets national requirements and is developing well. There is a very good portfolio of opportunities to use computers to enhance the study of the subject. Students use computers in language lessons regularly and there are many examples of work on classroom walls demonstrating competent use of a variety of computer programs. An e-mail link to Mexico has recently been set up very successfully.
172. Leadership of the department is excellent. The head of department has led the department successfully through times of great change and staff work together very well as a team. Teaching, marking and homework are monitored very thoroughly and, despite different individual styles, teaching across the department has a familiar feel to it, with many good ideas shared. Staff and students are aware of the strong sense of direction provided by the head of department with the support of the school's management.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average in all year groups.
- Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching. This has a positive impact on students' learning.
- Relationships in the department are very good.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. These enable students to develop further their performing skills.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop the use of ICT in Years 7 to 9.

173. The GCSE examination in 2000 and 2001 was taken by a small number of students. As a result, no meaningful comparison can be made with the national average. Of the six students who took the examination in 2000 all gained A or B grades. In 2001, of the seven students who took the examination, five gained A to C grades. However, in both years, no student gained the highest A* grade. Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are above average and students achieve well in relation to their age and ability. Only two lessons were seen in Year 11, due to timetable arrangements. However, scrutiny of work and attendance at extra-curricular activities confirm this judgement. Standards in all year groups have improved since the last inspection. There is a good take-up rate for the subject in the current Years 10 and 11. The teacher assessment results for students age 14 in 2000 were well above the national average. In 2001 they were in line with the national average. Students with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and the more musically able make good progress. The previous report stated that the progress of instrumental players and the more musically able was slow. There has been an improvement in their progress since the last inspection.

174. In Years 7 to 9 students experience a range of activities that enable them to gain confidence as performers, composers and listeners. Year 7 and 8 students show some knowledge of the characteristics of music from other cultures. For example, students in Year 7 sing a Chinese pentatonic melody. They practise playing the melody on keyboards and know how an ostinato pattern might be added to improve the performance. They make good progress in understanding the way music could be recorded in notation. Year 8 students listen to a short extract of Indian music. Many students accurately identify the different types of instruments playing. They practise improvising their own raga using a given pattern of notes. They play these to each other, with some students successfully adding another part as an accompaniment. By Year 9 most students are confident in locating notes on the keyboard and in playing simple melodies fluently. However, a few students find difficulty in maintaining a rhythmic pattern when playing together in groups. Students created their own music to illustrate a short scene from a film. They satisfactorily evaluated their work and suggested ways that it might be improved. Students show a secure knowledge of basic chord structures. They make good progress in understanding how three chords were used in the twelve bar blues. The last inspection report stated that students lacked knowledge of the elements of music; their listening skills were insufficiently developed; they did not use musical vocabulary and their compositions lacked structure. None of these weaknesses were seen during the inspection.

175. Students in Year 11 listen to a recording of a popular song. They practise arranging part of the song for instruments and voices. They understand the need to rehearse together in order to achieve a good ensemble performance. They show skill in following a

musical score and in identifying different instrumental sounds. They use appropriate musical terms when describing what they hear. Students write compositions for instruments and show some understanding of basic musical form. However, occasionally, students limit their compositions to one particular style and do not explore other possibilities.

176. Teaching and learning are good overall across Years 7 to 9, with some very good teaching. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use their own skills to demonstrate to students. Activities are carefully planned to integrate listening and performing tasks. For example, in a very good Year 9 lesson, students listened to a performance of a blues song. They recognised the twelve bar chord sequence and then played the sequence on keyboards. The teacher used the piano to demonstrate the way that a top part might be added. This resulted in very good learning taking place. Some students were successful in creating part of a blues scale melody above the chords.
177. The previous report stated that there was no formal structured listening programme, that there was insufficient written work and that inconsistent use was made of homework. All these weaknesses have been successfully addressed. Good provision is made for developing students' literacy skills. There is satisfactory provision for students to use ICT in Years 10 and 11. However, the use of ICT is not as well developed in Years 7 to 9. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and students achieve high standards of performance. There are vocal and instrumental groups and the steel band group, Club Latino. Students have opportunities to perform both in and out of school. There has been a performance of the musical Cabaret and students have taken part in the Southern Counties Radio programme for Children in Need. Students perform at the school's Certificate Evening and at the termly concerts. They have been involved in recording items for the department's compact disc.
178. Students have very good attitudes towards the subject. They are always well behaved and attentive in lessons. They are enthusiastic in their response to extra-curricular activities.
179. The subject is well led and managed. The previous report stated that assessment procedures were unsystematic. Good assessment procedures are now in place. Students are involved in assessing their own progress and in setting targets. Peripatetic staff provide instrumental lessons for over 50 students. These teachers make a valuable contribution to the department. The accommodation and resources are good. However, there is a shortage of computers.
180. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
181. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The standard of students' work has improved and the issues highlighted in the previous report have been addressed. However, the school is aware of the need to develop the provision for ICT in Years 7 to 9.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall the quality of provision for physical education is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good standards of teaching and learning.

- GCSE results are well above national averages.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Leadership of the department is very strong.
- Extra-curricular activities are excellent.

Areas for further improvement

- Develop ongoing assessment to inform planning.
- Provide students with more opportunity to lead warm-up and introductory activities.
- Ensure that there is always a clear link between the skills that are introduced in the lesson and the activities that are provided to apply them.

182. GCSE results in 2001 show that the percentage of students gaining A* to C grades was well above the national average. The proportion of students achieving the higher grades was also above the national average. There has been a substantial and consistent improvement in results since the last inspection when the percentage of A* to C grades was slightly below national averages. In 2001 students who took GCSE physical education achieved significantly better in physical education than in the other examinations that they took. Observation of lessons during the inspection shows that students in GCSE groups have good control, tactical awareness and the ability to devise and evaluate team strategies in hockey. They abide by the rules and conventions of the game and are able to officiate with increasing confidence. They have good knowledge of drug-related issues in sport and the higher attaining can offer opinions of their own.
183. For students at the age of 14 in 2001, teachers' assessments show that overall standards are well above those expected nationally for students of this age. During the inspection the standards observed in lessons did not reflect this. Attainment is slightly above the expectation in most activities though standards in gymnastics and dance are good. In these activities students work in groups to perform good sequences and dances using well-developed compositional principles. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs make good progress. They contribute well when groups are composing and refining dances and sequences. Students acquire a good range of movement vocabulary that they are then able to apply to their performance. Activities are in mixed ability and mixed gender groups and this has a positive impact on the standards that boys achieve in gymnastics and dance. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls in hockey.
184. By the age of 16 standards are always at least satisfactory and often good. In boys' football students make good progress in developing and implementing team strategies. They can incorporate skills into self-planned warm-up activities and the higher attaining students show good control and tactical awareness when playing the game.
185. No ICT was seen during the inspection but the departmental documentation does identify the use of CD-ROMs to enhance learning in anatomy and physiology and in the analysis of movement.
186. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. No teaching or learning is less than satisfactory and in almost two thirds of lessons it is at least very good. Teaching and learning in Year 9 gymnastics, some Year 8 dance and in Year 11 GCSE hockey is excellent.
187. Teachers have very high expectations for behaviour and performance, and relationships between teachers and students are very good. All teachers in the department are specialists with very good knowledge of their subject and this has a significant impact on learning. Lesson plans have clear objectives and appropriate

progressions that are always shared with the students. Lessons are well paced with sufficient time for students to acquire, practise and apply new skills. Some demonstrations in gymnastics and dance inspire students to improve. In better lessons teachers encourage students to improve their knowledge by setting challenging tasks that provide opportunities to discuss, evaluate and adapt performance. Students respond very well when teachers give them the opportunity to take responsibility in gymnastics and dance. Intervention by teachers is usually purposeful and gives opportunity to reinforce objectives or to introduce new ideas and challenges. Pupil management and organisation of resources is very good. Insufficient opportunity is given to students throughout the school to lead warm-ups and introductory activities. In a small minority of games lessons group activities do not always provide sufficient opportunity to apply the basic skills introduced.

188. The attitude of students is very good in all lessons. They are keen and interested and stay on task throughout the lesson. They enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively and show very good relationships with each other. In mixed gender groups there are no tensions as boys and girls work with, and alongside, each other very effectively. These attitudes have a very positive effect as little time is wasted and students want to learn and improve.
189. Leadership of the department is very strong and relationships between the staff are very good. Departmental documentation provides very good support for teaching and learning and schemes of work have been adapted to reflect new requirements. There is adequate coverage of National Curriculum. Since the last inspection the programme for students up to the age of 14 includes a better balance of activities, as more gymnastics and dance are included. End of unit assessment procedures and systems are in place but there is no system of ongoing assessment to ensure that judgements are accurate and planning is appropriate. Monitoring of teaching is established and targets are set for future development.
190. Indoor accommodation is in good condition. Both gymnasias are clean, bright and well marked. The new Astroturf area is excellent and has a very positive impact on standards. The school has very good links with local gymnastics and table tennis coaches and benefits from the excellent tables that are provided by the table tennis club.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The range of teaching skills in departmental staffing.
- The introduction of short course religious education for all Year 10 and 11 students.
- Accommodation and learning resources.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment.
- Applying knowledge and understanding about religions.
- The use of ICT and homework to develop students' skills and interest.

191. In 2001 GCSE results were broadly in line with national standards and expectations. Averages for grades B to C were in line with national standards but few students gained A/A* grades. Most lower attaining students did not take the examination although they

covered the material. No evidence of significant gender differences in GCSE entry or results was seen during the inspection. Attainment throughout the school is broadly in line with national expectations for knowledge and understanding, and a little below for the application of knowledge and understanding about religions.

192. By the end of Year 11 students know and understand about Christianity and major contemporary issues, including the environment, the family, war and peace. Most students can discuss opinion, express their own and respect differences between equally valid and strongly held views on these topics. They quote examples of struggles against inequality such as Martin Luther King and the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. They are learning how to draft, revise and write extended prose based on argument and example. They comment on newspaper articles, pictures, statistics and cartoons. Lower attaining students gain from pair and group work, practising skills in reading aloud and acquiring new vocabulary. There is little evidence of extension work for the gifted and talented in Years 10 and 11 or the use of ICT for assignments and essays.

193. By the end of Year 9 there is no objective set within Surrey's locally agreed syllabus to judge the progress students have made since they joined the school. They learn and understand about religions, covering Christianity and five other major world religions by Year 9. They develop reference skills for using textbooks and the Bible. They are less articulate in their application of this learning, with few opportunities to discuss, reflect or show empathy. They achieve a satisfactory standard. Target setting is not used for students in Year 9.
194. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Respect for diversity of opinion and culture is taught across the school. In a Year 7 class on Hebrew scriptures, students discussed the different directions of written languages. The teacher showed there is no 'right' way, only the recognised usage for each language. In a Year 11 class after hearing about arguments for a 'Just War' groups of students considered a large range of opinions from pacifism to patriotism. They formed judgements, and reported back to the whole class. Towards the end of Year 9 students can express opinion on the family. They recall their knowledge of biblical words for love and move to defining the family from their own experiences. But students are not always challenged to express opinions or write at length. The teacher may dominate while students listen attentively, with the chance only to respond briefly to closed questions. The pace of lessons is good but the chance to reflect, or apply knowledge and understanding can be missed. The time in the curriculum for religious education meets that recommended by the local education authority. Planning, though sound, lacks assessment and homework based on applying knowledge and understanding.
195. Attitudes and behaviour are good, with supportive relationships and a focus on learning. Students with special educational needs come to lessons with clear literacy and behaviour targets and are given appropriate support and challenge by teachers. Students with English as an additional language are given extra time to study the language, and after only a short time can cope with examination work, being able to use a common understanding of issues, such as suffering. They learn the vocabulary and give written as well as oral responses.
196. The introduction of short course GCSE religious education for all has led to improved standards which at the end of Year 11 are now comparable to national expectations. The large majority of students take the examination. All students complete the course in Christianity and contemporary issues. In Years 7, 8 and 9 religions other than Christianity are now covered adequately. Students benefit from good accommodation and a wide range of learning resources. The staff in the department has changed since the last inspection. All are committed, bringing skills from history, English and music teaching, and they are well managed. A focus on further development of teaching strategies, assessment using homework as well as class tests, target setting for Years 7, 8 and 9 will further support learning. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and student achievement now meets expected standards.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Overall provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good; lessons are well planned and structured.
- Lessons include a wide range of activities, which effectively help students to build upon their knowledge.
- Students are expected and encouraged to work both collaboratively and independently.
- Behaviour and attitudes in lessons are very good.
- All students make good progress over the two-year course, with the majority showing good achievement in relation to their prior levels of attainment.
- The subject area is very well managed.

Areas for improvement

- Develop the systems for monitoring student progress. Closely monitor and record the performance of each student at the end of each completed unit of work.
- Use assessment data to re-write or re-adjust schemes of work to ensure that they support the learning of all students.
- Continue to investigate and develop a range of strategies to raise attainment at the end of Year 11 particularly within the A* to C grades.
- Improve the range of homework opportunities to support learning.
- Build on links with local industry partners to encourage more adults from the business world to contribute to the teaching of some of the units of work.

197. In 2001 GCSE results were below the national results for grades A* to C and A* to G. Over the last three years, they have shown a declining trend within the A* to C category (1999 - 50 per cent; 2000 - 36 per cent; 2001 - 30 per cent). Standards achieved by all students are improving and are now good. This is due to staff changes and a more rigorous approach to changes in teaching, learning and the curriculum. Business studies is offered to students for the first time at the beginning of Year 10. The recently appointed head of department has already identified and put into practice strategies to improve the declining GCSE results.

198. Student achievement from the work seen is satisfactory overall in Year 11 and good in Year 10. Evidence gained through observing lessons confirm that all students are producing work in line with their prior levels of attainment based on end of Year 9 attainment in English. In all lessons observed the students were keen to be actively involved in the lessons and co-operated fully with the class teacher. The majority of students are skilled at using a wide range of material displayed in a number of ways for example, graphs, charts and text to extract information. They regularly use the Internet for research purposes. Students work well together to research and share information. They also listen to the views expressed by their peers and the teacher. For example, in one Year 10 class, students were actively involved in an exercise to demonstrate the way in which a business may be organised. During this exercise they were divided into teams to perform various functions. All of the tasks to be completed were directed by one student. The end result was that the task was completed to the satisfaction of the student manager who had directed and guided a number of teams.

199. There is now an emphasis in lessons on recording relevant and pertinent information. The teacher promotes a wide range of study skills, for example, note-taking skills and using spider diagrams to brainstorm information and views. In the lessons, the teacher uses PowerPoint on a regular basis to outline the lesson and to check student

understanding of the unit of work studied. As a result of this all students make good progress in the lessons. Students for whom English is an additional language or who have been identified as having special educational needs also make good progress in this subject.

200. Teaching is very good overall. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the subject. Teaching is lively and interactive, which captures the interest of all students. Lessons are thoroughly planned and incorporate a wide range of teaching methods. In one Year 11 lesson, students used the Internet to research the number of different products, using different brand names, which companies use. The information gathered was then recorded using a writing frame produced by the teacher to ensure that only the outcomes of the activity were noted. The lesson structure and the range of activities clearly focused students' learning. Students in this lesson developed a greater understanding of the importance of branding when promoting products. The teacher demands high standards from the students who follow a business course and successfully promotes a business-learning environment.
201. Overall the management of this area is very good. The head of department has been in post since September 2000. He is also the head of ICT. Since his appointment he has focused on re-writing the schemes of work, introducing the new GCSE requirements into the current Year 10 courses and re-designing the activities that students need to complete to ensure that they meet their individual learning needs. He has also established a positive learning culture within this area. Strategies are now in place, which should support a year-on-year improvement in the results achieved by all students at the end of Year 11.