

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Waddesdon School**

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110534

Headteacher: Mr A Armstrong

Reporting inspector: Susan Chamberlain  
07661

Dates of inspection: November 19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 2001

Inspection number: 189148

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary Modern

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane  
Waddesdon  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
Postcode: HP18 0LQ

Telephone number: 01296 651382

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend T Thorp

Date of previous inspection: 16 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities (sixth form)	Aspect responsibilities (sixth form)
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9282	Clare Lorenz	Lay inspector		Citizenship
3943	Don Innes	Team inspector	Physical education	Joint co-ordinator
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is an average sized, mixed, secondary modern school with 944 students on roll. Local grammar schools take over a third of potential students. However, many students from the school come from favourable circumstances. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is few (1.0 per cent). Students who have special educational needs, including 1.6 per cent who have statements, amount to 16.3 per cent. The school has made a submission for 'Arts College Status'. Students' attainment on entry is in line with national averages. The school is oversubscribed.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an excellent school from which permeates an atmosphere of trust and respect. Very good results at GCSE combine with excellent leadership, excellent student attitudes, very good behaviour and overall good teaching. When balanced by favourable socio-economic circumstances and a unit cost per student on the high side of average, the school offers very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are excellent.

Detailed tracking and monitoring of students' attainment ensures students make very good progress by the end of Key Stage 4 and as a result gain very good examination results.

Strong pastoral care and good teaching contribute to the excellent attitudes, very good behaviour and self-awareness that students emanate.

#### **What could be improved**

Gifted and talented students need to be formally identified earlier so that they can be extended sufficiently from the beginning of Year 7.

Specialist accommodation, especially for physical education, which is inadequate and is affecting standards.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was doing well at the time of the last inspection in 1996. However, there has been very good improvement since then. Teaching has improved considerably with now a very high proportion of good or better teaching and no unsatisfactory lessons. GCSE results for 5 A\* - C grades have improved markedly from 58 per cent to 69 per cent. The results in science are now robust and consideration is in mind about developing the single science GCSE. There is a first class tracking system that enables staff and students to monitor progress.

Provision for information and communication technology has improved and statutory requirements in this area are now met. The entitlement to religious education is now available although it is only just sufficient in the sixth form. The sixth form has grown substantially and there is a keen focus on vocational courses. School facilities are better but not in physical education, art, science and design and technology.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	D	B	C	

  

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	
below average	D
well below average	

Students enter the school with levels of attainment around the national average. They represent a central group with limited numbers of students at the lower and higher ends. At age fourteen, students' results in mathematics and science are above average whereas in English, they are well above. When compared with similar schools, results are recorded as being well below average. Inspectors believe that this does not accurately represent the situation. The secondary modern nature of the school is not taken into account sufficiently. At age sixteen, GCSE/GNVQ results are well above average for 5 or more grades A\*-C, and high for 5 or more A\*-G and for 1 A\*-G grades. The average point score is well above average. When compared with similar schools, scores are very high against those with similar prior attainment and well above average against those with similar levels of free school meals. Standards in the sixth form are just below the national average but very acceptable given the prior attainment of students. Girls perform considerably better than boys despite boys achieving higher than they do nationally.

Standards in work seen in workbooks are above average at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Students' achievements are very good by age fourteen and sixteen, having moved from average to well above through the key stages. In the sixth form students make good progress and achieve well. The school sets challenging targets, which it exceeds. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good. Standards of students with special educational needs are above expectations. Students, for whom English is additional language, achieve as other students.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students have excellent attitudes to the school. They work hard and are well motivated.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good both in class and around the school. Students are calm and orderly and behave responsibly.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Students are mature, helpful and trustworthy.

Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory at both key stages and good in the sixth form. Unauthorised absence is below that found nationally.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD

Although this was a short inspection, the majority of teachers was seen during the inspection. Overall the quality of teaching is good and best in the sixth form. Strengths in teaching are teachers' knowledge and understanding, very good classroom management, high expectations and good relationships. Lessons sometimes lack sparkle and are too teacher led. Overall, learning is good. Students respond well to clear instructions and like sufficient time to absorb knowledge. Resourcing is not as good as it might be; students need access to computers for use in subjects across the curriculum. Students have a very good knowledge of their learning. Some students use time unproductively when they copy from books. Teaching in mathematics, English and science is good. The teaching of numeracy and literacy are well embedded in teaching. Students with special educational needs learn effectively, teaching being well matched to their needs.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all students. Its strengths are particularly evident in the sixth form where there is a very good range of courses leading to AS, A2 and AVCE qualifications. The curriculum for pupils 11 to 14 is flawed by failure to provide the full range of experiences required for physical education because there are insufficient indoor teaching areas. Those taking a second foreign language have a further reduction of opportunities for physical education since they have fewer lessons in the subject.  The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are excellent. They are highly valued by pupils and further enrich their experience of school and develop their self-confidence.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for special educational needs is good and for those in the sixth form is very good. These pupils make good progress and gain grades in examinations, which exceed reasonable expectations based upon their standards of attainment when they enter the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are very few students for whom English is an additional language. When there is a need, students are catered for effectively
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very Good. Students receive many opportunities to enjoy the spiritual aspect of life particularly through the performing arts, art, music and religious education. Their moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for as is their personal development, overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and students' welfare are very good. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance provided matches learners' aspirations and attainment.



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### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are excellent. High standards exist at middle management too. All are committed to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is led by a committed and reflective Chair and is monitored effectively by a clerk. Mainly it fulfils its responsibilities well but needs to address curriculum problems affecting some students who take a second language.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes excellent steps to monitor its own performance, including the use of external advisors and detailed tracking of students' progress and rigorous monitoring of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Financial control is very good, all specific grants used correctly and effectively. The school applies principles of best value; it makes use of comparisons and challenges accepted ideas and practices in search for better.

The adequacy of accommodation is unsatisfactory in physical education, design and technology and science.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children get the right amount of work to do at home</li> <li>• The school work more closely with the parents.</li> <li>• They are not kept well informed about how their children are progressing.</li> </ul>

The positive views of parents are well-founded. Areas that some parents would like to see improved are not widely held and do not reflect large numbers of parents. Inspectors disagree with these views.

## ANNEX: THE SIXTH FORM

## WADDES DON SCHOOL

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form of this average sized voluntary aided secondary modern school has 198 students and has doubled in size since the time of the last inspection. The majority of students who join the sixth form are those continuing from year 11. Around fifteen students join the sixth form from other schools each year. There is a sympathetic entry policy designed to encourage all students to achieve their full potential. The curriculum is suitably broad with advanced vocational courses and traditional A2 and AS level courses that are well matched to the ability range of its students. The majority of students study a combination of AS and vocational courses. Around a third follow a combination of AS and A2 courses and a small number follow advanced vocational programmes. Almost two thirds of students go on to higher education.

### HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is a strength of the school. It is well led and through a broad curriculum caters well for its students. It is successful and cost effective. Students learn very effectively because of the good teaching and their mature and responsible attitudes to their studies. These positive attitudes together with very good support and guidance from teachers enable students to achieve well in relation to their GCSE results. The overall standards achieved across the courses of study are in line with the national average for sixth forms in maintained schools. Although the average point score for AS and advanced level is slightly below the national average standards have been maintained against the background of rapid growth in sixth form numbers. This represents very good achievement given the intake profile of this secondary modern school sixth form.

#### Strengths

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are strong with effective team work promoting high standards
- The school offers a wide range of courses that meet the needs of its students.
- The support and guidance for students
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Students are proud of their school and have mature attitudes to their studies that lead to very good achievement and excellent relationships.

#### What could be improved

- Accommodation and access to information technology for independent study.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.*

### THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of

teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Overall judgement about provision, with comment</b>
Mathematics	Good. Knowledgeable teachers provide consistently good lessons. Numbers studying mathematics are increasing and standards have risen considerably since the last inspection.
Biology	Good. Results are broadly in line with the national average and staff are keen to improve them. Teaching and learning are good and students are well motivated.
Chemistry	Satisfactory. Although examination results are well below average, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Students are motivated and keen to succeed.
Design and technology	Good. Standards were in line with the national average in 2000. Students in year 12 have made very good progress to date with their coursework. Teachers have strong specialist knowledge and teaching is very good.
Business studies	Good. The standard of work produced is good. Teaching is very good. Students are gaining increasing depth of knowledge, and increasing autonomy, independence and originality.
ICT	Good. Standards are in line with the average for Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education. Students are making good progress. Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching evidence. Students are happy to work autonomously and learn by experiencing a range of computer software.
Physical Education	Very good. Quality of teaching and learning is very good. Students are well motivated and benefit from teaching and very good subject expertise.
Art	Good. Standards were slightly below the national average in 2000 but improved significantly, particularly for the higher grades in 2001. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and students benefit from very good teaching that challenges and promotes imaginative and individual work.
English	Very Good. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and students' individual strengths and needs and make learning enjoyable, purposeful and rewarding. Good use is made of assessment to inform students about their progress and what they need to do to improve.

Other subjects were sampled. These include physics and engineering where standards are average and teaching is good. Economics was also viewed and found to offer good provision. Travel and tourism is offered and when sampled revealed students showing a perceptive appreciation of the link between social issues and the growth of industry. Health and social care was looked at and its provision found to be good with skills to improve communication taught very effectively. Performance Studies was sampled. It offered a combination of drama, dance and the use of dramatic interpretation and presentation, of music.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The support and guidance for students is very good and actively promotes their personal development. Students are provided with very clear information about opportunities and course requirements prior to entering the sixth form and there is a very effective induction programme in year 11. Subject Teachers carefully monitor attainment and progress and assessment is accurate and clear. Students are challenged and set targets for success. Regular monitoring and individual tutorials are used effectively to identify and support students in difficulty or at risk of underachieving. Parents of year 12 students are provided with early information about progress in the sixth form. There is a very strong ethos of care evident in all the work of staff involved with the sixth form and this is recognised and appreciated by the students. Information and guidance about a broad range of career pathways and opportunities beyond school is good.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Day to day leadership and management of the sixth form is very good. The new leadership team has a clear vision for the future and for improvements based upon careful analysis of current provision. Pressures upon accommodation and resources caused by the growth in numbers are being well managed within the constraints that are beyond the school's control. There is a focus upon continued improvements in standards whilst maintaining an inclusive entry policy for the sixth form. Analysis of examination data is used very effectively to monitor performance in all areas of the curriculum. There is good monitoring of students through the day to day work of sixth form staff and subject teachers, which promotes and supports high standards of personal development and achievement. Governors are well informed about the work of the sixth form.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are taught well and challenged to do their best</li> <li>• Teachers are accessible if they have difficulties with their work</li> <li>• They are given help and encouragement to study and research independently</li> <li>• They enjoy life in the sixth form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation for private study and access to ICT for independent learning.</li> </ul>

The students' views are supported by the findings of the inspection team. There are very good relationships between students and with teachers that are supportive of good achievement. Teachers know their students well, are accessible and encourage them to work hard. Students respond very positively.

## COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

*Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses, and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

*Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement “outstanding” in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to “very weak”.*

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are excellent.**

1. The headteacher is an excellent role model, who offers the school dedication, commitment and a competitive will to succeed. The leadership group is strong, traditional and experienced and has guided the school well over many years. It ensures that students meet their potential and many exceed the implied prognosis, having failed their 12+(recently 11+) examinations. A very clear direction has been pursued, which emphasises the development of the individual. The leadership group focuses on raising standards and equality of opportunity but will not pander to league tables or point scores, putting the needs and self-esteem of students first. Such a stand has not in any way restricted the school's progress but rather has enhanced it and has enabled students, many of whom are not academics, to reach high results, which compare very favourably with schools with a fully comprehensive intake.

2. An ethos of order and excellent working attitudes exists and is supported by high standards of behaviour. There is a shared commitment to success. Management is very effective. All are working very hard to promote the school in a positive way. Managers ensure a stability that enables systems to be effectively implemented and efficiently monitored. Heads of Federation and other middle managers are also strong and are aided by very good support staff including the senior officer, secretaries, matron and caretakers. The school development plan is very well documented and underpins school priorities.

3. A very conscientious governing body is led by an excellent chair of governors who knows the school very well. They play their part well in the success of the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are conscientious in the way they fulfil their responsibilities. They are well appraised of the need to develop students' understanding of citizenship and have taken steps to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met. They are assured by the personal, social, health and religious education (PSHRE) co-ordinator that citizenship is well established, properly resourced and that staff training is responsive to students' needs and those of the curriculum.

#### **Detailed tracking and monitoring of students' attainment ensures students make very good progress by the end of Key Stage 4 and as a result gain very good examination results.**

4. The school is very effective at reviewing students' progress. Each individual has a brief overview report. Teachers then target those who can achieve a higher standard with extra support. This is true particularly for boys. Teachers correctly identify strategies to help selected individuals through mentoring or performance reports. The school sets minimum GCSE targets for all subjects in Year 10. This guidance is based on students' average test results in English, maths and science which provides an overall minimum target grade. Similar reviews are undertaken in Years 8, 9 and 11. All reviews are set against National Curriculum levels for Years 7 to 9, GCSE grades for Years 10, 11 or AS/A2 level grades/AVCE grades for Years 12 and 13. The discussion of performance and the setting of targets are thorough. Students know well what they have to do to meet targets. There are progressive deadlines set to meet targets. These targets ensure that students are challenged and extended to attain higher grades. Adjustments are made if required.

5. Many of the targets are about improving presentation, concentration, listening to instructions, reading more widely, becoming more involved and seeking help and acting on advice. When targets are set, teachers distinguish by students' ability the rate to increase the depth and breadth of their understanding, to use a good standard of language, to argue logically and to support their reasoning with evidence. Students who experience difficulties are identified and supported quickly and given additional guidance to raise standards.

6. Students consequently make very good progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment is well above the national average for 5 A\*-C grades and very high for 5 A\*-G and 1 A\*-G grades. Their point score is well above average and results are well above those for similar schools. In 2001, 69 per cent of students gained 5 A\*-C grades. This represents very good progress when considering that attainment on entry is around the national average.

7. There are very good procedures for the sixth form progress checks. A check in October is to highlight, very early in the year, students who may be experiencing difficulties in their courses. Students make good progress at this level and results are good when taking into account prior attainment.

**Strong pastoral care and good teaching contribute to the excellent attitudes, very good behaviour and self-awareness that students emanate.**

8. Students have excellent attitudes to school and learning. They can sustain concentration and are conscientious and enthusiastic. For example in a Year 7 information and communication technology lesson students were very keen and motivated when they searched the Internet for information about William the Conqueror. Students were keen to make progress and polite whilst chatting about the task. All were well turned out and were conscientious and productive. Generally, most students work very hard and respond very positively. Students are mature and co-operative. They stick to the task at hand but on rare occasions there are some who wander; these are usually noticed immediately by the teacher, who promptly ensures they are back on track. The majority of students is confident and behaves well. This is the case not only in class but also in the corridors and playgrounds. Exclusions from school are few. Excluded students are treated fairly and as a result their behaviour improves. Relationships are good both between students and with teachers.

9. As the inspection was a short inspection, not all teachers were seen teaching. However, it was very evident that overall good teaching occurs and this ensures students can achieve well and enjoy school life. Across the whole school, teaching was found to be good and in about a third of lessons it was very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during inspection week in either main school or in the sixth form. Teachers' positive approach, their high expectations and their very good management skills encourage students to learn effectively and work in an atmosphere that promotes self esteem and the desire to do well.

10. Students are well catered for by effective systems and a very good ethos of pastoral care. Child protection is a priority and is supported well by the school matron who is a counsellor and trouble-shooter. She ensures accidents are dealt with properly. She also makes sure registers are kept up-to-date and rings parents on a student's first day of absence. There is also an effective school nurse, who is attached to a local practice and is available to students. The school has a clear behaviour policy, which includes rewards and sanctions. Students appreciate these. They can earn house points for good work,

merit marks for effort and privileges, for example, going to the village. If they require a sanction they normally receive a detention.

11. Students' approach to school life is affected by a strong focus on citizenship. In a lesson in Year 7 students were taught about rights and responsibilities. The teacher took great care to respect students' views. Students devised class and school rules in groups. They found this difficult but enjoyed the challenge hugely.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Gifted and talented students need to be formally identified earlier so that they can be extended sufficiently from the beginning of Year 7.**

12. When students enter the school, the attainment of the majority groups is around the national average. During their first term school is keen to allow students to settle in and does not put too much pressure on them academically. Although this sentiment has many strengths, there is a need to consider the affect on students who may not be sufficiently challenged particularly after having failed the 12 + (11 +) examination earlier in the year. Added to this need to provide sufficient challenge to Year 7 students, is the statutory requirement to formally identify students that the school considers to be gifted and/or talented. Generally, the school is very conscientious in the way it monitors students' progress. Successful examination results add weight to the reality that most students achieve at least close to their potential.

**Specialist accommodation, especially for physical education, which is inadequate and is affecting standards.**

13. Generally, the school accommodation is of a high standard. It is well kept and used extremely efficiently. However, there are weaknesses in science, art and design and technology. In these subjects there are problems with either space and or lack of specialist rooms. In science, for example, students are taught in rooms that are ordinary classrooms for at least six lessons a week. Although such inadequacies are unfortunate there are plans in place to correct the situation once a new block is built.

14. More importantly, there is lack of indoor teaching areas for physical education and this is seriously affecting standards. Accommodation for this subject is so scarce that students are unable to undertake the required range of activities. The school is taking action, in the form of bidding for a grant and includes this weakness in its development planning.

**Accommodation and access to information technology for independent study in the sixth form.**

15. Students, in the sixth form, have too little room to study. They make very good use of the library and empty rooms around the school. However, they do not have sufficient space that they can call their own, where they can really settle for long periods of study. The sixth form common room is very small and is certainly not conducive to learning. These students, the numbers of which are growing each year, need somewhere where they can leave their books; they need proper desks and space to work uninterrupted. Some students use the computer rooms to do research and for project work. This works well when only small classes are booked in but, as cross-curricular use increases across all year groups and sixth form numbers increase further, their access to these facilities will become more and more restrained. Their use of such facilities is very necessary and in



order to compete with other institutions, for example colleges of technology, students need to have access, as near as possible, on demand.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- (1) The school should identify and formally record the names of those students who are gifted and talented and sufficiently extend students when they enter school in Year 7 by:
  - Asking feeder schools for such information sufficiently early so as to enable preparation for these students to take place
  - Including identification tasks, games and quizzes as part of all students' induction process in Year 6
  - Ensuring there are challenging extension tasks available as soon as students enter the school
  - Using tracking data to identify students who may be gifted and talented and are currently at school.
  
- (2) Indoor accommodation for physical education needs to be extended by:
  - Pursuing vigilantly the bid to build a sport's hall
  - Identifying any areas within the school that could be used for small activities, for example, a classroom may be used as an aerobic studio
  - Identifying new facilities within travelling distance that could further meet curricular needs.

### **Sixth form**

- (1) Improve accommodation and access to information technology for independent study in the sixth form by:
  - Ensuring sufficient computers are available
  - Offering sixth formers a large, dedicated area for their studies

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	42
	Sixth form	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		[40]

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Years 7 – 11</b>							
Number	0	14	25	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	60	7	0	0	0
<b>Sixth form</b>							
Number	1	16	24	1	0	0	0
Percentage	2.5	38	57	2.5	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number observed in either the main school or the sixth form is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for [enter Years [ ] – [ ] and/or the sixth form here] as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100 in both, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	156	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	39

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving
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38
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## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	7.7

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	80	71	151

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	60	67	60
	Girls	66	61	52
	Total	126	128	112
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (80)	85 (76)	74 (70)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	38 (40)	46 (42)	27 (22)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	61	68	51
	Girls	66	63	50
	Total	127	131	101
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (81)	87 (79)	67 (68)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (43)	45 (40)	16 (24)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	90	51	141

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	54	90	90
	Girls	41	51	51
	Total	95	141	141
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	67 (69)	100 (99)	100 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	53 (50)
	National	38.4 (38)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National	N/A	N/A

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	27	40	67

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	14.9	16.9	16.2	3.0	2.0	2.5
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/A
	National		76.5

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	929
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	
Black – African heritage	0	
Black – other	0	
Indian	0	
Pakistani	0	
Bangladeshi	0	
Chinese	0	
White	15	
Other minority ethnic groups	0	

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2:1

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	202

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69%
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.9
Key Stage 4	22.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	2,423,953
Total expenditure	2,360,356
Expenditure per pupil	2,496
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30,786
Balance carried forward to next year	32,811

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	[0]
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	[0]

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	944
Number of questionnaires returned	250

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	4	0.5	0.5
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	42	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	60	8	1	1
The teaching is good.	52	44	1	0.5	1.5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	52	7.5	0.5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	33	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	21	0.5	0.5	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	50	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	74	24	0	.05	1.5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	2	0.5	.05
52	52	38	2	0.5	7.5

## **PART D: THE SIXTH FORM**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and students' achievements**

16. The school operates an open and inclusive approach to entry to the sixth form. This allows borderline students to follow a course that, in some cases, is tailor made. Students follow a range of GCE Advanced and GNVQ courses. Standards in the sixth form are above national expectations. The average point score for students taking two or more GCE A/AS courses is just below average. Those students who study Advanced Vocational Qualification courses achieve good levels of attainment. Overall achievement is good with students making at least satisfactory progress and often very good progress based upon their achievements at 16+. Point scores would be higher if the school discriminated more when taking students into the sixth form. However, such an approach is alien to the school's philosophy, preferring rather to develop students' potential despite their prior attainment.

#### **Students' attitudes, values and personal development**

17. Attitudes in the sixth form are excellent. Students are conscientious and demonstrate independence in their approach to their learning. They organise their time well and show pride and care in their work. The quality of the relationships both between teachers and students and between the students themselves is a significant strength of the sixth form. There is a strong emphasis upon spiritual moral and social development and visiting speakers play an important part in the development of students as adults. Students are supportive of one another and are proud of their school. Students work well together and those who are new to the school settle in quickly. Students value the time and commitment of staff who are genuinely interested in the students and have high expectations of them. Some students are actively involved in the main school through work as prefects. All students have opportunities to develop their interests through participation in a range of social and leisure activities along with residential trips, exchanges and overseas visits. A range of clubs and societies including the young enterprise scheme and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme are also well supported. Students regularly participate in public speaking competitions and many carry out voluntary service within school or the local community.

### **HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good in both Years 12 and 13. In two fifths of lessons it was very good and excellent in a few. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The high quality of teaching is a significant factor in the improving results in public examinations and prepares students effectively for the next stage of their education or employment. It has considerably improved since the time of the last inspection. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and convey information in an understandable manner. Students' learning is good. They find the available courses appropriate to their needs. When necessary, teachers spend extra time ensuring that learning is taking place effectively. They are keen to move students forward despite some students' mediocre results at GCSE. Students respond positively to clear goals. They learn most effectively when given opportunities to research and investigate tasks.



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

19. The provision is very good. The curriculum has good breadth and balance and meets the needs of students in the sixth form. Particular gifted and talented students are not formally identified as such but generally do well, for example, in the fields of the performing arts, sport and entrance to universities such as Cambridge. Sixteen GCSE subjects are provided at Advanced and Advanced Supplementary levels together with four Vocational Certificates of Education at Advanced level. There is good provision for the development of key skills. The majority of students choose to study a mixture of courses. The proportion completing two-year courses is high. Students with special educational needs are well supported and, when appropriate, special arrangements for their examinations are agreed with the examiners. The curriculum complements other provision made in the area. The proportion of students entering the sixth form is high. Each year, it is joined by a small but significant numbers of students from other schools. Students wishing to follow courses not offered by the school, such as photography, are encouraged to consider opportunities available in colleges of further education and are given full support in planning their continuing education.

20. There is a good range of opportunities for students to extend and enrich their learning and personal development through participation in musical, dramatic, sporting and social events both within the school and through local, county and national provisions. Students act as mentors to younger pupils and assist with coaching and managing sports teams. They form commercial companies under the Young Enterprise Scheme that provides opportunities to work with representatives of local firms. Students following vocational courses have additional opportunities for work experience. Careers guidance is good.

21. Students are pleased with the opportunities the school provides. Particularly, they value the positive relationships they have with teachers.

22. The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship and the provision of religious education.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS**

### **Advice, support and guidance**

23. Generally, students are cared for well. They are provided with strong and sensitive support. If students have problems, they are able to seek help from a multitude of sources and are happy to ask for advice from their tutors, head of sixth form, deputies, matron and the school nurse. They can access careers advice with ease and are helped with university application procedures. Students are very confident about the levels of care they receive and feel they can approach most teachers for advice. They comment upon the fact that there are a couple of teachers that they would not approach because these teachers are less sympathetic. Induction to the sixth form is good.

### **Assessment**

24. In the sixth form assessment is accurate and clear. A high standard of work from most individuals is produced in terms of presentation, organisation and referencing. Work is sequenced well and arranged under appropriate headings. The grading and review of work is accurate and clearly defined. There is a detailed analysis of performance kept for each individual. Benchmarks for all work are maintained and completed in detail. All work

is marked with useful comments, particularly on grading. Students are required to show good knowledge drawn from a variety of sources and to use a high level of both initiative and independence in accessing these. The monitoring of progress in years 12 and 13 is very good. There is a well-defined tutorial system.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS?**

25. Parents' meetings and booklets about sixth form courses and options contribute to the range of communications that inform parents about the sixth form. The school ensures that both students and parents are kept very well informed of students' progress in Years 12 and 13. The agreement made between home and school on entry to the school remains binding. Reports clearly indicate students' progress. They are to the point and accurate in their assessment despite the occasional need to deliver tough messages, for example, when a student is lazy. Such students are warned and given clues about how to improve and are offered indicators as to why their progress may have declined. If course deadlines are not met, cases are reviewed by staff and the headteacher and a letter is sent to parents. Students are made aware of projected examination grades and are set challenging targets in all subjects. The Waddeston School Association welcomes all parents of sixth formers and offers them the opportunity to join in school life through the various funding raising and other activities that it promotes.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

### **Leadership and management**

26. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good, following a clear direction, which includes a vocational and academic mix. As a priority continued improvement is second only to equality of opportunity. Valuing all students equally, the school prefers to allow some students into the sixth form who might not be especially successful rather than deny them entry. Students' attainment, when viewed in this light, is above expectation. A successful leadership team is evolving and is managing well the growing number of students. It is effective in promoting high standards as does the strong group of dedicated and well-qualified teachers. The sixth form is a strength of the school.

### **Resources**

27. Students express concern that on some occasions suitable spaces for private study are not readily available. Limitations of accommodation restrict the experiences of students in aspects of physical education and design technology. Students sometimes have difficulty in accessing computers. They are short of ICT resources. However, these problems are temporarily being managed effectively but more radical solutions are required.

### **Students' views**

28. **See summary report.**

## PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

29. In the inspection, 9 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

30. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

### ***GCE AS level courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	5	40	53	0	6	0.8	0.97
Mathematics	1	100	63	0	17	2.00	1.56
Music	2	100	87	100	30	4.00	2.42
Physics	1	100	53	0	8	1.00	1.08

### ***GCE A level and AVCE courses***

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	10	100	96	20	45	5.2	6.42
Biology	22	77	88	27	34	4.55	5.28
Chemistry	11	82	89	18	42	3.45	5.87
Performance Studies	8	100	93	0	30	5.75	5.42
Economics	8	63	88	0	36	2.75	5.41
English Literacy	21	100	96	38	36	6.10	5.90
French	4	100	96	25	39	3.50	5.74
Design and Technology	8	100	92	13	29	4.75	5.37
General Studies	29	90	85	45	28	6.69	4.85
Geography	11	91	92	36	37	5.64	5.73
German	5	80	92	0	41	3.20	5.88
History	8	88	89	38	34	4.75	5.43
Mathematics	4	100	89	25	45	5.00	5.99
Music	6	67	93	0	35	2.33	5.72
Physics	9	100	88	33	41	5.78	5.72
Sports/P.E Studies	4	100	91	75	25	7.50	4.99

### **Intermediate vocational qualifications**

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	11	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	11.45	10.78
Leisure & Tourism	1	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	12.00	10.54

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS**

### **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES**

31. Mathematics: The school offers courses leading to mathematics at Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) levels. The students taking AS mathematics study a combination of pure mathematics, and statistics. Those who continue to study for A level study a module of mechanics as well as pure mathematics and statistics to a higher level.

32. In science, the inspection focus was on chemistry and biology but physics was also sampled. In physics, examination results in 2000 were average. Two lessons were observed and teaching was good. The lessons included a variety of activities including practical work and practice in answering examination questions as revision at the end of a topic on electromagnetic induction. The students had a good understanding of this topic.

#### **Mathematics**

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

#### **Strengths**

- Teaching is good.
- Standards are rising.
- The pupils' attitudes to their work and their teaching are very positive.
- The number of students enrolling to study mathematics is rising.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection

#### **What could be improved**

- Advanced Subsidiary results for 2001 were disappointing.
- Provision for information and communication technology is weak.

34. The mathematics department also provides teaching of application of number leading to key skills qualification at level two and/or level three. It was not possible to see any lessons in key skills during the inspection because the students are currently working on projects and are given individual tutorial support as it is needed.

35. Lessons in pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics were seen for Year 12, and in mechanics for Year 13. Students' work was scrutinised and a representative sample of pupils interviewed from each year group.

36. Advanced and advanced subsidiary level results in 2000 can not reliably be compared with national figures because the number of students involved was too small. All those entered obtained a pass at grade E or better. In 2001 seven students were entered for advanced level and none failed. The advanced subsidiary results were disappointing for 2001. Four of the six students entered were unsuccessful. The failures stemmed from several of the students beginning from too low a baseline. Passes below level B on the higher level GCSE papers did not prove an adequate starting point for the increased rigour and volume of work incorporated in the new advanced level arrangements.

37. Current standards of work, as seen during the inspection, indicate better performance both in terms of attainment and of progress. Two of the students in Year 13 are performing above national expectations and one is in line. In Year 12 there are 13 students all of whom are currently on course for success at AS level. Most are more confident with the work in statistics than in pure mathematics. 'A' level students feel secure with mechanics and find the practical applications which they study in A level physics of substantial help in this respect. Almost all demonstrate good algebraic skills. The most significant area of relative weakness is in understanding and interpreting written problems so that they can choose the best mathematical approach to their solution.

38. Teaching is good. All lessons are carefully prepared and well presented providing the right level of pace and challenge. The pupils feel very well supported by their teachers. They feel free to approach them when they are in difficulties and benefit from regular and consistent marking of their work which helps them to identify and learn from their mistakes. They are particularly appreciative of the study area reserved for them at the back of one of the classrooms which affords access to a range of materials including a complete set of fully worked examples covering the statistics syllabus thoroughly. Good clear notes provided for the student studying for AS level in further mathematics in addition to A level mathematics are also valuable. The students' attitudes to their work and the effort that they make in class and in work at home are strengths contributing to good achievements.

39. The mathematics federation is very well managed. The regular head of federation is currently absent on sick leave. In her absence one of the deputy heads is running the department in addition to his other duties. The teachers think highly of the support that he provides for them as they do of the work of their absent colleague. The department is very focussed on improving standards of teaching and learning. The teachers are enthusiastic and pull together as a team.

40. The school has been very fortunate in being able to recruit experienced and talented temporary teachers enabling them to overcome what might otherwise have proved substantial recruitment problems. Two of these have gained invaluable experience and knowledge as senior members of the local education authority's inspection and support services.

41. A hallmark of the department is that it is self-critical. An example of this is the response taken to the weak AS level results referred to above. They now run a foundation course for Year 11 students at the end of the summer term as an introduction to advanced level studies. This is proving very successful in that the students arrive in September better prepared as a result of following the course and completing a substantial amount of homework during the summer holiday.

42. Improvement since the last inspection in 1996 has been very good. The number of pupils studying mathematics has risen and their results are better. More students are gaining places at university to read mathematics or related subjects such as engineering. Teaching remains a strength. Although there is improved access to computers and to the Internet since that time, this is still an area of weakness. There are no machines available for use within the department and access to whole school provision is restricted. The students say that they can usually find a computer to use if they need one, but this does not enable information and communication technology to play the full part in lessons that it should in the context of the modern mathematics curriculum.

## SCIENCE

43. Overall, the quality of provision in biology is **good**.

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• Resources are good.</li><li>• Small group sizes enable students to work together and share ideas.</li><li>• Assessment procedures and target setting.</li><li>• Departmental leadership.</li></ul>



What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop the use of more ICT in lessons</li><li>• Continue to try to improve results.</li></ul>



44. The GCSE A-level examination results in biology in the year 2000 were broadly average. 74 per cent of students who took the examination achieved a pass. More girls than boys achieved the higher grades. These results were not as good as those in 1999 when all students achieved a pass although there were fewer entrants, but better than the results in 2001 when only 60 per cent passed.

45. The standards of work seen are good. Students in Year 13 make good progress in lessons and are achieving well in relation to their GCSE results. They are able to answer complex questions on aerobic and anaerobic respiration and explain the chemical reactions involved. These students can also discuss genetics at an advanced level with confidence, for example, they are able to explain the Hardy-Weinberg equation.

46. Year 12 students show good knowledge of basic biological concepts such as the structure and functions of cell organelles. They were competent at the dissection of a mammalian heart and accurately drew and labelled diagrams of parts isolated. These students are successfully building on work from their GCSE course.

47. Teaching in biology is good, enabling students to learn well. Teachers show good subject knowledge so that they can give good explanations of facts. Lessons are well planned, usually have a brisk pace and aims are clearly stated so that students have a clear idea of what they are to learn. A variety of teaching styles is used to maintain

students' interest and assist learning. The lesson in Year 12, for example, on the heart included notes on its structure and function, discussion with questions, followed by dissection of a heart by each individual student, who then drew the parts isolated. Students are encouraged to share ideas and help each other, which is facilitated by their small group sizes. Teachers' expectations are high and they question students frequently during lessons to establish and reinforce knowledge and understanding. There is a pleasant working relationship during lessons so that students feel able to ask questions if they need to. More use could be made of ICT in lessons, although the head of department hopes to develop this. Homework is set on a regular basis and consists of a variety of tasks. Written work in their folders consists of notes, structured questions, essays, past examination questions, and experimental write-ups. Marking is thorough and appropriately annotated, giving clear guidance to students on areas for improvement. Assessment procedures are very good and target setting takes place regularly so that students are always aware of their progress. Examination assessment criteria for coursework are clearly displayed to help students. Teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject, which is passed on to the students who are encouraged to broaden their own subject knowledge by reading biological journals and independent research.

48. Students learn well, are very mature and highly motivated. They make good progress in lessons as a result of good teaching. They respond well in lessons and rise to challenges as shown during question and answer sessions and class discussions. They work co-operatively together in both theory and practical lessons and help each other and share ideas in a mature and sensible way.

49. Leadership and management of the biology department is very good. There is a good team ethos within the department and staff support each other, meeting regularly to discuss departmental issues. The new head of department has a clear focus on direction and a commitment to raising examination results, and has already introduced some new initiatives, for example, the introduction of a biology book club to promote the interest of students in the subject. Resources are good, although the microscopes are quite old, and staff are effectively deployed so that they can teach their own specialisms enabling them to deliver lessons with confidence and the department has good technical support. The accommodation, however, although good, is inadequate as some lessons have to be taught in a converted technicians' preparation room which is very small, has no outside window and does not provide an area conducive to learning.

## Chemistry

50. Overall, the quality of provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Resources are good.</li> <li>• Small group sizes enable students to work together and share ideas.</li> <li>• Leadership of the department.</li> </ul>



What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of results.</li> <li>• Develop independent learning skills of students.</li> <li>• Laboratory facilities.</li> </ul>



51. The GCSE A-level results in the year 2000 were well below average according to their point scores, although 81 per cent of students who took the examination achieved a

pass. More girls than boys achieved the higher grades. In 1999 all students achieved a pass although there were only six students and in 2001, 70 per cent achieved a pass.

52. The standards of work seen during the inspection are good. Students in Year 13 make good progress in lessons and are achieving well in relation to their GCSE results. They are able to discuss various topics such as separation techniques, for example, chromatography and mass spectrometry with confidence. Essays written on the uses of oil show a clear understanding of the subject. During a practical lesson, students correctly identified a range of unknown samples using standard tests as part of their examination coursework.

53. Students in Year 12 are achieving as expected. They are building on work from their GCSE course and show a good basic knowledge and understanding of organic chemistry. They can discuss topics such as alkanes and alkenes and have written essays on esters, which show a clear understanding of the topic. Their notes are clear and concise and graph work and calculations are accurately carried out.

54. Teaching is good overall, and students learn well as a result. Lessons are usually well planned and have a satisfactory pace. Aims are clearly stated so that students know what they are to learn at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers show a good subject knowledge enabling them to give clear explanations of facts and ask challenging questions. Lessons usually contain a variety of activities which maintains students' interest and prevents boredom. The Year 13 lesson, for example on mass spectroscopy involved note taking, calculations, a demonstration and construction and use of a model mass spectrometer. Students are encouraged to help each other and discuss ideas which they are able to do in their small group sizes. Teachers' expectations are high and they frequently question students to establish their understanding, particularly of the more complex concepts which chemistry involves. The relationships between students and teachers are good with students feeling able to ask questions when they need to. Although none was seen during the inspection week, good use is made of ICT, by way of data-logging equipment and the linking of a spectroscope to a computer. The students do not have much opportunity to carry out personal research work, which would improve their independent learning skills and broaden their subject knowledge, although this is an area, which the head of department hopes to develop. Homework is set on a regular basis and is used to reinforce work covered in lessons. Written work undertaken by students consists of notes, structured questions, examination questions, essays, calculations and experimental writes-up. Marking is thorough and clear guidance is given to students on areas for improvement. Assessment procedures are carried out regularly and the results are shared with students, with targets being set so they are aware of their progress. Examination assessment criteria for coursework are clearly displayed to help students.

55. Students learn well and make good progress in lessons. They are very mature and keen to succeed, responding well to challenges as shown in question and answer sessions and class discussions. They work co-operatively together, especially during practical lessons, showing respect for each other's ideas, and help each other in a mature and sensible way. The lower examination grades achieved at A-level do not reflect the teaching and learning seen during the inspection week.

56. Leadership and management of the chemistry department is very good. The head of department is committed to raising examination grades and, therefore, the average points scores of students. There is a good team ethos within the department and staff support each other, regularly meeting to discuss departmental issues and exchange ideas. Resources are good and the department has good technical support. The quality of the laboratories is good but there is insufficient space in some lessons that need to be taught



in a converted technicians' preparation room. This room is very small, consequently any lessons taught in there are restricted to theory only.

## ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

### Engineering, design and manufacturing.

57. The focus was on Design and Technology but AVCE Engineering was sampled. Examination results for those students who completed this new course in 2001 were satisfactory in relation to their GCSE results. One lesson was observed in which students were putting the final touches to course work. Standards of practical work are above average with sound knowledge of engineering processes as a result of the good specialist teaching.

### Design and Technology

58. Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A level results in 2001.</li><li>• Teaching and learning.</li><li>• Teachers specialist knowledge.</li><li>• Students attitudes and independence.</li></ul>



What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workshop accommodation for resistant materials work.</li><li>• ICT resources for computer aided design and manufacture.</li></ul>



59. The GCE A-Level examination results in 2000 for the eight male students were in line overall with those nationally. In 2001 they improved both for the higher grades and in terms of the overall pass rate. Students achieved well and did a little better than expected in relation to their GCSE results. The AS results for the new examinations in 2001 were broadly as expected in relation to students' GCSE performance. A third of students gained a C grade or better, the weaker aspect being their work on computer aided design and manufacture.

60. Standards of work for the current Year 13 students are in line with expectations overall. Students have in most cases well developed design skills and demonstrate understanding of a range of materials and processes. They can apply these and their research skills in the development of individual products. For example, designs for an educational toy for young children that made very good use of computer aided manufacture techniques to cut acrylic sheet and combined these with construction techniques in wood. Some students were in the early stages of applying the principles of jig manufacture to assist in the mass production of the products they had designed. They made good progress as a result of clear guidance from teachers and their own ability to organise themselves and work independently.

61. Students in Year 12 can either follow a course in product design linked to resistant materials or one linked to textiles. Take up for the courses is good and in both cases standards are above expectations for this early stage of the course. Students have made good progress developing their skills of product analysis particularly in textiles in the absence of a published course textbook. The teacher was very resourceful and provided a wide range of support materials, which helped students develop their knowledge of the properties of textiles and manufacturing processes. In resistant materials students already

have secure knowledge of product analysis methodology and can, in groups, discuss and evaluate everyday products using the appropriate criteria. Students have made good progress developing their formal and freehand illustration skills and can, for example, apply these well to design mechanisms for a mechanical toy. Good guidance by the teacher and questioning that checked their knowledge and understanding enabled them to prepare materials cutting lists from their design sheets.

62. Students are mature and have very good levels of independence and positive attitudes to their work, which contribute to good learning. Relationships are supportive of good standards and students are willing to discuss their work and help one another. Work is well presented and shows a conscientious approach to their work by the great majority of students.

63. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge and use this well in the planning of lessons and units of work. They provide clear guidance about the requirements of coursework and set targets and give deadlines for the completion of work. They provide very good study guides that help students be more independent in the organisation and planning of their work. In the best lessons they ensure a good balance of activities that sustains the pace of learning over a double lesson. For example in a product analysis lesson the teacher first involved the students in discussion, gave a clear review which consolidated the learning and then continued to give good individual advice and support as students continued with their individual analysis through drawing work.

64. The leadership and management of the design and technology federation are strong. Schemes of work have been the subject of thorough review since the head of federation joined the school just over a year ago and there is a clear focus on improving standards. The federation is providing a very good range of curriculum opportunities that are well matched to the needs of students. The school's policy of equality of opportunity is exemplified in the work of the department particularly in the support for special educational needs through the opportunity for students to spread their studies over three years. The implications of the National Curriculum for 2000 have been incorporated into departmental plans. Examination data is used effectively to monitor performance and the development of computer-aided design and manufacture has been identified as an area for improvement. Teachers are familiar with new course requirements and standards and this enables them to give accurate advice to students on how to improve their work.

65. The accommodation criticised at the last inspection continues to constrain the work of the federation. Teachers are resourceful and make very effective use of the existing facilities. There is very limited space in the one resistant materials workshop and there is only one textile room, which means that at times of high demand, sixth form students have to share cramped conditions with the main school or work in non-specialist areas. The computer equipment in specialist rooms is old and cannot support current design and manufacture software.

## **BUSINESS**

66. The focus was on business studies. The AS/A2 economics was sampled. The quality of provision in business studies and economics is good enabling students to develop knowledge and appreciation of the working world.

67. Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **good**

<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a very well motivated, experienced and adaptable staff</li><li>• progress in Years 12 and 13 is good and continues to be monitored</li><li>• teaching and learning methods, resources and materials</li><li>• students utilise a wide range of business resources including internet access</li><li>• all coursework is marked and assessed according to the criteria laid down by the examining board</li></ul>



<b>What could be improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• student participation in oral presentations</li><li>• integration of key skills assignments into the AVCE scheme of work</li><li>• individual learning and teaching materials are limited and continued development needs to take place</li></ul>



68. Standards of work, seen in the sixth form during the inspection, are good. These standards are achieved because the teaching is very good. Students' attitudes and developing skills also cause the quality of their learning in business studies and in economics to be good. As a result, students' achievements overall, in relation to their standards when they began in the sixth form, are good.

69. Standards in Year 12 are good. Students can use relevant terminology, concepts and methods of research. Boys and girls can recognise the strengths and limitations of the business ideas used. Boys are more skilled in using computers to apply their knowledge and understanding in a range of business contexts. Girls are more skilled in the use of language to express their ideas. Much of the girls' writing has a strong sense of purpose. Their competence enhances personal development.

70. Standards in Year 13 are very good. Students can distinguish between facts and opinions and evaluate data in order to make informed judgements. Girls and boys develop their knowledge and appreciation of the working world and of the cooperation and interdependence which participation in economic activity entails. Girls write more clearly about their understanding of the economic, social and political environment within which business activity takes place and of the way in which changes in that environment influence business behaviour. Boys have good skills in numeracy, data handling, discovery, selection and employment of relevant sources of information. Girls are better at presentation and interpretation.

71. Examination results for business studies are above national averages at all levels. Learning and achievements are fully inclusive. Students are gaining a good proportion of the higher grades. Students are making good progress. There is significant value added in the results obtained. In all aspects of their achievement and attainment both boys and girls are on equal terms. For economics the 1999 results were above the national average. In 2000 they were below for the top grades. Girls and boys perform equally.

72. The standard of teaching is very good. Teachers are giving students a critical understanding of the business environment. Students are gaining skills in their use of information and communication technology within a business context but could use this resource more fully if it was more readily available. Teachers monitor the progress of all assignments at regular intervals. However, there are limited materials that take into account the needs of the individual. Homework is given and marked regularly. Students effectively complete a range of activities including case studies, essays and research

tasks. They need to participate in oral presentations. Teachers show students how to organise their time and develop their study skills. Students are self-motivated, disciplined and welcome teacher guidance.

73. Teachers are good at providing a suitable learning environment and act as a resource to the students giving them ideas for areas of investigation. Learning comes as a result of investigating business or the economy. There is a need to integrate more fully the "key skills" assignments into schemes of work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

74. The focus for inspection was information and communication technology.

75. Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**

<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teaching is good</li><li>• Students are motivated and have positive attitudes to the subject</li><li>• Assessment procedures are adhered to well</li><li>• Tasks are challenging</li><li>• The bank of laptops available to students in the sixth form is very useful</li></ul>



<b>What could be improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students must meet interim coursework deadlines.</li><li>• Access for cross-curricular use of ICT is limited</li><li>• The network can be very slow and can inhibit progress</li></ul>



76. The advanced vocational certificate of education (AVCE) is in its first round with two groups in Year 13 completing the course in 2002. These students are on target to complete their units on time. They are working at around average standards and are likely to gain grade C's. Similarly students in Year 12 are working around the norm and are keeping up with the necessary tasks well. An introduction has been made to the Key Skills unit involving information and communication technology. Students have started well and are achieving at least satisfactory levels of attainment.

77. Students show that they can work autonomously but are not afraid to ask for help. They have a good understanding of databases and some can explain the meaning of "relative" databases, whereas others are unsure. However, this does not appear to affect their ability to use them. In Year 12, students took notes and discussed management information systems. They gained a good understanding and could contribute well when challenged by the teacher. Overall, in the lessons seen they reached satisfactory levels of attainment. Students' files are of a high standard although there is quite a range between the lowest and highest.

78. Teaching is good and some very good. Teachers have a good understanding of their subject - even though some of the topics are relatively new. Teachers have high expectations and clear objectives; they enable pupils to talk about technical terms with understanding. Students learn well consolidating skills as they move through the course. The assessment of units is thorough. Useful comments ensure students are in no doubt as to what they should do to improve or gain a pass. Meeting interim deadlines is an issue with a couple of the students, but generally students should meet the final date.

79. Students are very positive about the subject, all saying that they like it and most saying they understand what they are doing. Some difficulties found in changing fields from numeric to alphanumeric once their basic database was set-up and in changing integers to decimal point notation and vice versa. They understood well the concept of using one-to-one and one-to-many functions. All had enjoyed interviewing estate agents and brought to the lessons useful information to create their database with.

80. Leadership is very good and ensures all statutory requirements are met. Resources are good but are becoming increasingly in demand. When using the internet students often have to wait because the network is slow. Students needing to use ICT in subjects across the curriculum need more access to computers. The school has a below average number of students per suitable computer. Accommodation is good and plans are in place to extend the number of computer suites. Staffing levels are satisfactory. The ICT department forms a cohesive team. Since the last inspection, considerable improvements have been made in the resourcing of information and communication technology, including the purchase of a bank of laptops for individual use.

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

81. The focus for inspection was physical education. Travel and tourism was also sampled. It is taught in Year 12. The current scheme was started in September 2001. The students are learning about the need and expectations of customers, promotional activities and how travel and tourism is marketed. The standard of teaching is good. Detailed explanations are provided backed up by the use of statistics and the consistent use of appropriate technical language demonstrating a good understanding of the industry. Students demonstrate a good ability to synthesise information from a range of primary and secondary sources and they use a good level of both initiative and independence in accessing these. The higher attainers show a good level of evaluation skills. Girls produce clear, logical opinions and judgements about the tourist industry and reach accurate conclusions on such issues as value for money. Boys can supply good numerical data to support their case and can use statistics to provide evidence for their argument. Both boys and girls show a considerable degree of perception of the link between changing social issues and the growth of the industry.

82. Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **very good**.

<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attainment is good.</li><li>• Students have good practical skills and a sound and developing grasp of concepts.</li><li>• Teaching is very good.</li><li>• The subject is very well led and its work contributes to the achievement of the school's aspirations for its students.</li></ul>



<b>What could be improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Courses at GCSE introduced into year 10 this September should be continued so that students may enter the sixth form with a more secure knowledge base.</li><li>• Writing skills.</li></ul>



83. Advanced level results in 2000 were better than in previous years although the number of candidates was smaller. In recent years, almost all students have gained pass grades. In 2000, the proportion gaining the highest grades was above average. Provisional results for 2001, with a larger number entered, were of similar good quality. Almost all

students entered for A/ S examinations were successful and are continuing to Advanced level.

84. Standards of attainment of students are above average, especially in performance skills. Students in Year 12 have no prior experience of working to examination level in the subject at GCSE but there is no clear evidence of their being significantly disadvantaged by this. They have good practical skills. In an investigation of conditioning theories and how learning affects performance, students were confident and articulate in showing good understanding of work done in previous lessons. They contribute well to discussion and are gaining clear understanding of important concepts. They attempt physical tasks, identify significant factors and then modify their strategies so that performance improves.

85. Year 13 students attain high standards in sporting activities. One has represented England; six others have represented their county and another has achieved a black belt in judo. All other members of the class demonstrate good levels of skill in at least one area of physical activity. In a very good lesson on the psychological implications of performing before an audience students were thoughtful and perceptive in drawing upon earlier learning to explore different circumstances. Because they are confident in their relationships with teachers and each other they are willing to explore ideas, knowing their thoughts will be valued. Written work shows good levels of knowledge and understanding, and skill in redrafting extended writing so that it is organised effectively and expressed clearly. The best written work is characterised by clarity of expression and development of thought together with close relevance to the task. In such work, students unfailingly provide evidence to support their opinions and have clearly undertaken appropriate research, using both printed and electronic text. Writing which is below this quality shares many of the same strengths but has weaknesses in the accuracy of expression. Limited writing skills prevent some from showing the true quality of their knowledge and understanding.

86. Teaching is mostly very good and is never less than good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and of their students' strengths and needs. At the end of the course, they enter students for examinations which most closely match their assessed abilities. Teachers encourage purposeful learning with high levels of interest and challenge students both physically and intellectually. Students in Year 12 will have vivid memories of their introduction to Pavlov's work on conditioned responses when they learned to associate the ringing of a hand bell with the receipt of sweets and to understand the implications. Teachers give clear explanations of tasks and they require students to work within groups and individually to carry out investigations and draw conclusions from evidence. A feature of lessons is the brisk pace and efficient use of the time available. This is sometimes reduced by the consequences of the inadequacy of specialist indoor accommodation and the susceptibility to flooding of grassed areas.

87. Students learn well because they are highly motivated and work hard. They have very good attitudes to the subject. They respond well to the high expectations of teachers whom they like and respect. They are highly competitive so that they may raise levels of personal performance yet are also strongly supportive of each other.

88. Students not taking examination courses are offered a good range of opportunities for games and sporting activities within the curriculum. They are able to go swimming or to leisure and fitness clubs as alternatives. Students are also offered a good range of extra curricular opportunities for playing games and for coaching and managing teams of younger pupils.

89. The last report expressed concern that pupils in the sixth form mostly rehearsed and consolidated existing skills. The evidence of this inspection, including that provided by

a lesson on rucking and driving skills in rugby, shows that there is now some very good developmental work at this level.

90. Work in the subject is very well led and managed. There is a strong shared commitment to contributing to the personal development of students which helps to achieve the aims the school has for all its members. Throughout the course, progress of individuals is monitored carefully so that appropriate encouragement and advice are readily available.

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

91. There was no focus in this section but health and social care was sampled. The quality of provision in health and social care is good enabling mainly female students to learn about good practice in the caring professions. Standards of work are good. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good. Students are gaining a thorough understanding of the importance of good client care. Case studies are introduced to show students how the professions involved in health and care are changing. Students are aware of how legislation and policies are integral to good day-to-day practice. Students are developing a good understanding of how to make judgements about clients' needs. Examination results are good. Students are gaining an increasing depth and breadth of understanding about the health profession.

92. Teaching is very good. The planning and interpretation of information for students supports learning. Students are being shown how to search and select information correctly. Writing is taught some of which is extended and includes the use of statistics. Students are shown how to treat sensitive information with confidentiality and how to recognise differences in people's approach to health. Effective skills to improve communication are well taught. Students are aware of the factors that inhibit interaction and their potential effects on an individual's health and well-being. Students are aware of a range of social and ethical issues that need to be remembered when negotiating and liaising with clients and their family members. Students know about the data protection act, the access to personal files act and the access to health records act.

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

93. Art was a focus for inspection.

94. Also sampled was Performance Studies, a combination of drama, dance and the use, dramatic interpretation and presentation, of music.

95. In this subject, all teaching is good and sometimes very good: standards of students' creativity and performance are equivalent to the national average and are rising as the subject is further developed lower down the school and pupils gain experience. All students make very good progress because of their enthusiasm, their positive, mature and co-operative attitudes, their willingness to learn and the dedication and skills of their teachers. Students are currently preparing for a coursework project, their own presentation of events from local history, which they have closely researched and interpreted using drama and dance, and are taking out into the community.

96. Overall, the quality of provision for art is **good**



<b>Strengths</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advanced level and AS examination results in 2001.</li><li>• Leadership and management of art</li><li>• The quality of work in sketchbooks</li><li>• Teaching and the use of assessment to support student achievement.</li><li>• Students attitudes to their work</li></ul>



<b>What could be improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accommodation to improve opportunities for three-dimensional work.</li><li>• Opportunities for discussion to improve development and confidence in the use of specialist art vocabulary.</li></ul>



97. Standards in 2001 were high and improved in comparison to 2000. Challenging teaching promotes very good learning and imaginative and expressive work from students. Students achieve well although the accommodation places constraints upon the range of work.

98. Since the time of the last inspection standards have improved. In 2000 the results were slightly below the national average for the higher grades for male students but in 2001 they were well above for both males and females with six of the nine candidates achieving A grades and all candidates passing the examination.

99. Current Year 13 students achieved well in their recent AS examinations in relation to their performance at GCSE. Students' abilities to develop personal and imaginative responses to a range of subject matter are a strength. They use sketchbooks very effectively to develop their ideas using a range of media with flare and confidence. They develop skills appropriately in drawing and painting using a wide range of media and they can make very good use of references to the work of artists.

100. Year 13 for example, was exploring images of conflict over a series of lessons. Progress was very good because the teachers used their specialist knowledge to challenge students thinking around the topic. This together with good quality verbal assessment inspired well considered personal work referenced to their earlier studies of images by artists such as Francis Bacon.

101. Students in Year 12 have made good progress with their studies to date. In their lesson they were able to use their prior learning about the expressive use of colour and other techniques employed by a range of artists to develop their own images. Good monitoring by the teacher and individual discussion that challenged their ideas resulted in good progress with their work. They were already developing their use of a sketchbook as a journal to experiment and record ideas. General levels of drawing and painting are in line with course expectations. Students enjoy their art lessons and it is a popular subject with the numbers opting increased again this year.

102. Teaching is very good and students make good progress with their learning as a result. The system of monitoring and assessment through personal tutorials is very good and together with good verbal assessment and comment in lessons gives helpful guidance to students on how to improve. Students have very positive attitudes as a result and confidence in their teachers and their own capacity to succeed. There is good use of discussion by teachers to develop knowledge but some students are reticent about speaking about art, lacking the specialist vocabulary required. There is scope for more extended use of discussion that gives opportunities for students to speak about artwork and so develop their confidence in the use of art vocabulary.

103. The range of two dimensional work that students undertake is broad and teachers encourage them to use a wide range of reference material including their own observational drawing in the development of their ideas. This leads to highly personal work that explores issues and ideas and makes very competent use of different media. Students understanding and knowledge is broadened through visits to galleries and in the past the work of visiting artists. Opportunities are being extended through planned foreign visits. Some students make extensive and very competent use of computers to develop their work.

104. The leadership and management of art is very good and has been instrumental in securing improvements both in standards in the main school and the sixth form. This has led to art becoming a very popular and successful subject. The work of students, celebrated through displays around the school, bears testimony to this success. A number of students go on to study art through further and higher education courses. As at the time of the last inspection the accommodation for art is cramped and places some limitations on the range of media and work that can be undertaken. Students and staff use the available resources and accommodation well but there are limited facilities and space for three-dimensional work and printmaking.

## **ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION**

105. English literature was the main focus of the inspection. Overall, the quality of provision in English is **very good**.

### **Strengths**

- Very good leadership and management provide a clear vision for continuous improvement.
- Students enjoy English literature, make very good progress and achieve standards which are above those achieved in most schools nationally.
- All teachers have a secure knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, their subject, have high expectations of their students and manage, support and interact very well with them.

### **What could be improved**

- Strategies to help students to develop further their capacity for independent learning.
- Students' critical and analytical skills, in order to enable them to give greater emphasis to writers' use of language and imagery, and how they affect the responses of readers and audiences, and thus gain higher examination grades.

106. Many students who enter the sixth form have achieved standards, which are at or above national expectations. All abilities make very good progress and they regularly perform better in English literature than they do in most other Advanced level subjects. Although there was a slight downward trend in the A-level grades awarded to the school from 1998 to 2000, standards were still above those achieved nationally. Unvalidated results for 2001 indicate that this trend has halted: results are now well above, with an average points score of 7.2, compared with the national figure for this year of 5.7. Standards achieved at AS level were also high, with all students gaining grades A-D, but no national comparisons are yet available.

107. The quality of written work seen during the inspection is good, given that both the lower and upper sixth forms have only recently started their AS and A-level courses, and overall standards are above average. The most able students write fluently and accurately

and respond to texts in a mature and sensitive way. They are able to comment effectively on writers' themes, plot and character and to support their opinions with appropriate textual references. Occasionally, they are both perceptive and original in their answers. The less able tend to adopt an inappropriate narrative style, telling the story instead of responding critically to the text, make unsupported assertions and sometimes fail to develop their arguments effectively. Although students of all abilities know that they must synthesize quotations into their responses, they rarely engage closely enough with the language and imagery used by writers: it is this lack of close critical and analytical skills which is preventing more of them from achieving the top grades. Oral contributions in class are very good. Students read and speak confidently and use talk very effectively to consolidate and refine their own ideas, and explore those of others. In the upper sixth the quality and, at times, passion of debate engendered by class and group discussion is very impressive, particularly as argument is usually well rooted in the texts being studied. The very good progress of all students is especially enhanced by their mature attitudes to study, their enjoyment of the subject, the support, which they freely give to each other and their willingness to work hard.

108. In spite of group sizes which are larger than in many schools, particularly in the lower sixth, teaching is good, with some very good and one excellent lesson observed. All teachers plan well for continuity and progression and have secure subject knowledge. They set targets for students and share assessment criteria with them so that they know how they are doing and what they must do to improve. They also have a genuine love and appreciation of their subject, which is readily conveyed to their students. In the good lessons, teachers make frequent use of praise to give confidence and encourage all to participate and contribute, and are well aware of the particular learning needs of students. They also have high expectations of their classes and make very effective use of questioning techniques to check understanding or to encourage them to consider other possibilities and ideas. Those lessons judged to be very good are less teacher led. There is a wider range of teaching strategies, to cater for a variety of learning styles, and teachers make effective use of students' own experiences to help them to engage closely with the subject matter: for example they gained a much greater understanding of the dilemma faced by characters in Friel's "Translations," who longed to communicate but did not speak the same language, by being asked to recall some of their own problems when abroad. Additionally, in some of these lessons, students are given choices of activities as well as opportunities to do personal research and to develop their independent learning skills. The excellent teaching also provides stimulating and exciting written and oral tasks which challenge all students to make their own judgements and then to justify them. This ensures that they know and confidently use correct critical terminology and enables them to discuss and analyse their texts in a scholarly and rewarding way which closely involves them in their own learning.

109. The sixth form course is very well managed. The head of department offers strong and sensitive leadership and support to both teachers and students and is continually looking for ways to improve both learning and teaching, which are already very good. Communication and organisation are also very good and departmental priorities and resource needs clearly identified in development planning and budgeting.

110. Overall improvement since the last inspection is very good. There is some very good and excellent teaching; more teaching groups now operate and are growing in size annually because of the department's successes and the popularity of the subject. In spite of increased numbers, standards are very high and results impressive, both at AS and Advanced levels, especially when the levels at which many students enter the school are considered.