

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **HAMBLE SCHOOL**

Hamble-Le-Rice

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116413

Headteacher: Mr I Knights

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Murray  
[1606]

Dates of inspection: 19 – 23 November 2001

Inspection number: 189319

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of students: 11-16

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Satchell Lane  
Hamble  
Southampton  
Hampshire

Postcode: SO31 4NE

Telephone number: 023 8045 2105

Fax number: 023 8045 7439

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Tickner

Date of previous inspection: 23 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities   |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 1606         | Mrs J Murray   | Registered inspector | -   | What sort of school is it?<br>The school's results and achievements.<br>How well are students taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9970         | Mr J Acaster   | Lay inspector        |   | Students' attitudes, values and personal development.<br>How well does the school care for its students?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?                            |
| 2740         | Ms B Barratt   | Team inspector       | History<br>Special educational needs<br>English as an additional language |   |
| 15462        | Mr C Blakemore | Team inspector       | Geography   |   |
| 4647         | Mrs J Evans    | Team inspector       | Physical education  |   |
| 23434        | Ms M Gibbon    | Team inspector       | English<br>Equal opportunities  |   |
| 1604         | Mrs J Head     | Team inspector       | Mathematics   |   |
| 31765        | Mr I Hume      | Team inspector       | Information and communication technology                                  | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students.  |
| 7428         | Mr R Jardine   | Team inspector       | Science   |   |
| 8139         | Ms B Johnstone | Team inspector       | Music   |   |
| 10053        | Ms J Simms     | Team inspector       | Art and design<br>Boys' achievement                                       |   |
| 22491        | Ms L Small     | Team inspector       | Design and technology   |   |
| 31690        | Ms B Smith     | Team inspector       | French  |   |
| 29212        | Ms M Smith     | Team inspector       | Spanish   |   |
| 18673        | Mr R Wilkins   | Team inspector       | Religious education   |   |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The inspection included a focused evaluation of the school's strategies to support the achievement of boys.

Hamble School is a designated community comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. With 926 students on roll, it is about the same size as other comprehensive schools nationally having increased the number of students by 100 over the last five years. The school is sited on a peninsular close to Southampton and draws its intake of students from three neighbouring parishes. Nearly all students are white with UK heritage. Very few students are from other ethnic backgrounds and none have English as an additional language. Students are from broadly average socio-economic backgrounds. The area has almost full employment but many jobs are low paid; this affects entitlement to free school meals and does not reflect that the area has fewer high social households than are found nationally. The school's register of special educational needs includes over 25 per cent of students; this is broadly average but only three students have statements of special educational need, which is below national figures. Results in the Year 6 national tests, confirmed by the school's standardized tests, show that students enter the school with average levels of attainment but that there are less students in the highest ability range than might be expected. The numbers entering further education have declined over the previous few years as students have preferred to enter into paid employment straight from school.

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

This is a popular and effective school that provides a good range of opportunities for students to learn well and to achieve good results. For a significant proportion of students, GCSE results are very high because almost all students gain five or more A\* to G grades in English, mathematics and science. The school's average GCSE points score is above average compared to other schools nationally and well above those with similar intakes. Teaching is good and the school is led and managed well. There is a clear focus on future developments to enhance facilities and to improve standards even further. Funding is high compared to that received by most schools nationally but it is used well ensuring that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Almost all students attain five or more GCSE A\* to G grades. This represents good achievement, especially as nearly all students gain grades in English, mathematics and science.
- Good teaching throughout the school helps students to learn well.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher, supported by a very effective senior management team and a strong governing body, has driven the school forward.
- Excellent links have been forged with the community to enhance provision for students and their families.

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

- Curricular provision is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements are not met for religious education, design and technology and a daily act of collective worship; students' spiritual development is not promoted sufficiently well.
- The opportunities to use information and communication technology in subjects, other than in the successful GNVQ course, are limited by the lack of ready access to computers.
- The rich collection of assessment data is not used as effectively as it could be to improve students' standards of work.
- Health and safety procedures, including risk assessment and security of the school site, are not monitored rigorously enough.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was inspected in September 1996. Teaching has improved significantly and the school's anti-achievement culture has been changed to one of celebrating success. These factors have contributed to the maintenance of above average GCSE points score and to almost all students successfully achieving five or more GCSE grades at A\* to G. All key issues identified in the previous report have been addressed so that there is now no significant underachievement; students respond to good teaching and work well; assessment data is collected and used at whole school level to target and support students' learning; staff and governors understand their roles and play a full part in monitoring the school's work; and a very successful staff development programme inducts staff well and has led to improved teaching and an awareness of gender issues. The school has moved forward over the last five years by becoming outward looking and gaining national accreditation. It gained the School's Curriculum Award in 2000 and has Sportsmark status. The building of an impressive sports complex and teaching block are near to completion and are tangible evidence of the school's determination to serve its community and its capacity to strive for higher standards.

## STANDARDS

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

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

| Key                |   |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

The school's average GCSE points score has been well above, or above, national figures for the past five years but the trend of improvement has been below that nationally because the proportion of students attaining five or more A\* to C grades has remained broadly average. The well above average points score attained in the GCSE examinations show that many students achieved better than might be expected given their attainment on entry to the school. Of particular note is the high proportion of students who gained five or more GCSE A\* to G grades. All but one student gained these grades placing the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Standards are also well above average when results are compared to schools with a similar intake of students. However, the school did not meet its target for A\* to C grades but exceeded its targets for average points score and A\* to G grades. Students did best in GCSE examinations in business studies, computer studies, media studies and history, and least well in art and design, drama, physical education and geography. Boys did less well than girls in art and design, geography, French and Spanish and physical education.

Standards in the Year 9 national tests were average with a trend of improvement below that nationally. During the inspection, standards in Year 9 were seen to be broadly average. Students' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory given their average attainment on entry to the school. The exceptions are in information and communication technology and music where achievement is good. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls at the end of Year 9.

In Year 11, during the inspection standards were found to be better than GCSE results in art and design, geography, French, Spanish and physical education. This is attributable to well prepared lessons, focused tasks and improved guidance so that students' learning is supported well. Overall achievement through Years 10 and 11 is good as so many students, including those with special educational needs, leave the school with GCSE grades in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in subjects in Year 11 is at least satisfactory and is good in design and technology, history, information and communication technology and very good in art and design.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES



| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Students are generally well motivated and enjoy coming to school.   |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Good. Students behave in an orderly way about the school creating a sociable atmosphere.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Very good relationships are evident throughout the school. Students take part in a range of activities that encourages their development. |
| Attendance                             | Good. Punctuality is good but the start of some lessons is ragged.  |

Students work and behave well in almost all lessons. It is only on a few occasions that a small minority of boys act in a silly way. The very good relationships are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of students: | Years 7 – 9 | Years 10 – 11 |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Quality of teaching   | Good        | Good          |

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

Teaching is good overall. Very good teaching takes place in most subjects. Good quality teaching has helped students to achieve a good range of GCSE results and to maintain the school's average points score well above that nationally. Because of good teaching students learn well, enjoy what they are doing and are purposeful in the way they tackle tasks. Some instability in the teaching staff in English, modern foreign languages and music has impacted on standards but the school now has a full complement of specialist teachers. Teaching is good overall because teachers not only organize and manage their classes well but they use their subject knowledge to motivate and interest students. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science with some aspects that are good. Teaching is also satisfactory in French and Spanish but it is good in art and design, design and technology, geography in Years 10 and 11, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. In religious education teaching is very good. In the few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers tend not to manage students well or hold their interest in learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory but there is no whole school approach to underpin consistent practice.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Overall curricular provision is unsatisfactory mainly because religious education is not taught in Years 10 and 11. Most other aspects of the curriculum are good.                               |
| Provision for students with special educational needs   | Good. The provision made in subjects and the good support of the learning support department enables students to achieve well.   |
| Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Satisfactory overall. Provision for social and moral development is good; that for cultural is satisfactory. Opportunities and planning for spiritual development are unsatisfactory.            |
| How well the school cares for its students  | Satisfactory. Very good support for personal development is provided. Academic monitoring is becoming more firmly established. Health and safety procedures are not monitored rigorously enough. |

Curricular provision is unsatisfactory because there are breaches in statutory requirements. The school does not hold a daily act of collective worship, or teach religious education in Years 10 and 11, or

ensure that all students follow a course in design and technology. Students' spiritual development is not well provided for and there is limited learning about a range of cultures. To offset this, a good range of courses, extra-curricular activities and links with the community are provided. Assessment data is used well at whole school level but practice is inconsistent in subjects. Students are safe in the school but formal health and safety checks are not conducted regularly or with sufficient rigour.

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

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The deputies with the headteacher are a very effective team. The quality of middle management is good overall. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Satisfactory. The governing body is strong but it has not ensured that all statutory requirements are met in full.  |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Good overall. Very good systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Very good. The school uses its funding well to ensure that students have adequate resources and qualified teachers to help them learn.                                      |

The school has a clear sense of purpose and educational direction because of the strong team work between the school staff and the governing body. The principles of best value are well understood and spending is carefully planned and monitored. Considerable effort has gone into improving the school's facilities but the present buildings are inadequate for the demands of the curriculum; this is having an adverse effect on standards. Resources are adequate overall but there are deficiencies in music and religious education. Staffing is now stable; induction procedures and staff development are very good.

#### 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>• Their children love coming to school and they are pleased to be part of it.</li> <li>• Teachers motivate, encourage and praise their children so they feel valued.</li> <li>• The caring and supportive atmosphere of the school.</li> <li>• Extra-curricular provision is extensive with a range of residential and day visits.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school working more closely with them.</li> <li>• Better information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The organization of the target setting days.</li> <li>• Regular amounts of homework across the school.</li> <li>• Behaviour in a few lessons.</li> </ul> |

Parents and carers have a good opinion of the school. Inspection findings confirm parents' positive opinions of the school. The school works hard to promote partnership with parents and the links it has with them are effective. In response to the concerns expressed, communication between the school and parents is frequent. Weekly planners are used well and regular parents' meetings are held. Students' targets are beginning to be used by teachers but parents are not involved in the process of setting these. Information regarding how students are progressing is generally good but more information about course work requirements in Year 10 and 11 would be helpful. Homework arrangements are satisfactory overall. Behaviour was found to be good, but in a small number of lessons a small minority of boys create disturbances.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average but with a smaller proportion of higher attaining students than might be expected. From this average base, all students in Year 11 in 2001 left the school with GCSE grades in English, mathematics and science and two other subjects. The school's average points score was well above that nationally. This represents good achievement as about a quarter of these students were on the school's register of special educational needs; it reflects good teaching and students' own positive attitudes and desire to succeed. The school was in the top five per cent of all schools nationally who attained these results.
2. The national test results at the end of Year 9 have been average across the core subjects since 1997 showing that students achieve what is expected of them, given their attainment on intake. However, in English, there has been a fall in standards since 1999 when they were above the national average; they are now broadly in line. The school attributes this to staff mobility which has been unsettled for the past two years. Parents supported this view by voicing their concerns about the number of supply teachers who taught their children last year and that standards had slipped. Results in mathematics were in line with national figures for all schools and those with similar intake. Standards in science improved in 2001 and were above the national averages and those attained by schools with similar intake. There has been no marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls in English, mathematics or science. The school's average points score at the end of Year 9 is in line with that nationally and with similar schools but the trend of improvement has been below the national trend.
3. For the past five years the school's average points score at the end of Year 11 has been above or well above that nationally and for schools with similar intake of students. The trend of improvement has been below that nationally because the proportion of students attaining five or more A\* to C grades has remained constant and is about average; this is more than offset by high performance at lower grades. All but one student attained five or more A\* to G grades which is very high compared to all schools nationally and those with a similar intake.
4. In 2001, GCSE results for A\* to C grades in English and mathematics were broadly average. In the double award science, they were below average but the results for higher attaining students in the separate sciences of biology, chemistry and physics were broadly average with just one or two students who did not receive an A\* to C grade. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in these subjects. In English all students achieved an A\* to G grade and almost all students did so in mathematics and science.
5. The proportion of students achieving A\* to C grades in 2001 was well above national figures in business studies and information and communication technology but was significantly below the national average in art and design, geography and French. In each of these subjects, and in Spanish and physical education, boys performed less well than girls. Results in history showed good improvement in 2001 and were above average with boys attaining better than girls. National comparative data shows that students did best in business studies, media studies and history and least well in art and design, drama, physical education and geography.
6. The school uses results from Year 6 and Year 9 National tests and information from other standardized tests to predict likely future performance in GCSE examinations. However, this information did not help the school to meet its targets in 2001 partly because the target was ambitious but also because of lower than expected attainment in some subjects for A\* to C grades. The school analyses its results retrospectively but it is not using base-line information consistently at subject level to monitor progress towards these targets. Targets for 2002 are lower than those for 2001 and well within the school's reach as they are below the present national average. Appropriate targets are in place for end of Year 9 performance.

7. Inspection evidence mainly confirms that standards of work in Year 9 are broadly average in most subjects with the exception of information and communication technology where they are above average. In design and technology, teacher assessment indicated that students were working significantly above the national average with girls outperforming boys but this did not match the level of work seen during the inspection, which was broadly in line with the national average. In Year 11, the standards of work seen were better than the GCSE results in art and design, geography, French, Spanish and physical education. This is attributable to well structured lessons, focused tasks and improved guidance so that pupils' learning is supported well. Students' work was seen to be above average in information and communication technology and history largely because of good teaching and well-structured courses. Standards in music were confirmed to be below average because students have limited musical knowledge and an insecure understanding of musical vocabulary.
8. Standards of literacy across the school are average. There is variation in the provision made by subjects for the teaching of literacy and whilst in most subjects standards are at least average there are also weaker elements in a number of subjects. The teaching of subject specific language is not consistent across the school and there is no common expectation for accuracy of spelling. Standards of literacy are above average in information and communication technology, history, design and technology and modern foreign languages because skills are specifically taught and there are consistent expectations. In some subject areas, students' general level of literacy inhibits their effectiveness in meeting the demands of their GCSE syllabus; this is particularly relevant in physical education. In subjects such as art and design and music, there is evidence that while there has been too limited focus on literacy in the past, standards are now improving with better planning and consistent expectations in the subjects. In science, restricted writing about experiments and research topics hold literacy standards down. In mathematics, science and art and design students do not talk about their work in sufficient depth or detail.
9. Standards of numeracy are broadly average throughout the school. Students are confident and competent with written arithmetic; most have appropriate knowledge of tables and other number facts. Their skills of mental calculation are less secure. Most students also have sound knowledge of a range of algebraic, statistical and spatial techniques. When required to do so, students can use and apply their skills; most cope reasonably well with the numerical demands of other subjects. For example, in geography, students regularly draw graphs to illustrate differing climate patterns. Standards of graphical work are mostly satisfactory, but the work of a minority is untidy and leads to inaccuracies. In history, students work confidently and accurately, calculating differences in population. In mathematics, students mostly use calculators accurately and appropriately. However, in some subjects, such as science, calculators are used for simple calculations that should be performed mentally; often, students are not expected to check the reasonableness of their answers. At present, there is no whole school approach to the development of numeracy skills across subjects.
10. During the inspection, it was confirmed that for many students their achievement is good because of their positive attitudes and their willingness to learn. In many lessons, students make good progress and they learn well. At the end of Year 9, achievement is as to be expected given average standards on entry to the school. The exceptions are in information and communication technology and music where achievement is good. It is in Years 10 and 11 that achievement is more frequently good. Attendance in the school is good and the range of courses in Years 10 and 11 motivates students to take part and to be entered for GCSE examinations. All students are entered for English language and literature, mathematics and science and virtually all students attain grades in these examinations. A far higher than is usual proportion of students follow a GCSE course in history and the GNVQ course for information and communication technology and NVQ courses in catering, construction and hairdressing are very successful and enable students to show how well they can achieve. Students' achievements are at least satisfactory in all subjects in Year 11 and are good in design and technology, history, information and communication technology and very good in art and design.

11. The very few students who are from ethnic backgrounds other than white British are fully integrated into the school and their achievement is equally good as their peer group. For students with special educational needs, their achievement is good. They make good progress in improving their reading and writing skills and in moving to lower stages of need on the school's register of special education needs. Good achievement is also shown in the annual reviews of students with statements of special educational needs, and in their GCSE results. In 2001, virtually all students with special educational needs achieved a grade at GCSE resulting in the school's results at grades A\* to G being in the top five per cent nationally. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Progress in lessons however varies. Students make good progress and achievement is good when teachers ensure that work is well matched to their learning needs. This is evident for instance in information and communication technology, history, religious education and physical education.
12. The school has not identified specifically gifted or talented students but higher attaining students' achievement is at least satisfactory. However, teachers do not always challenge these students consistently enough to research or take part in deep and meaningful discussion that extends their knowledge and understanding and stretches their achievement to the highest levels.
13. Since the last inspection, the proportion of students attaining at Level 5 and above in the national tests in Year 9, and the proportion attaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades has remained in line with national figures so that the rate of improvement has been below the national trend. Even so, improvement can be considered to be good because in 2001, 100 per cent of students attained GCSE grades in English and science, and 99.5 per cent did so in mathematics. This is very high and places the school in the top five per cent of all schools, and for schools with a similar intake of students, for the benchmarks of five or more A\* to G grades and one or more A\* to G grades. It has also maintained its average GCSE points score at above or well above that nationally for the past five years with an average ability intake and staffing instability in several subjects. Achievement is good, especially for those students with special educational needs, and in Years 10 and 11.

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

14. Students have good attitudes to their work. In most lessons, students are well motivated and show purposeful attention. They apply themselves readily to what is expected. Most show good levels of concentration. Occasionally, attitudes and behaviour are excellent. This was seen, for example, in a Year 7 lesson on Sikhism, where students used considerable imagination and intellectual effort in acting out the role of clans within a village community gathered round 'the sacred flame'. Students also have good attitudes towards their school, though they tend not to be effusive about it. They generally find their work interesting and enjoy the overall atmosphere of the school. They acknowledge the hard work of the teachers. They are pleased with the improvements, which are taking place and look forward to being able to use the new facilities. They continue to be critical of several features, such as the provision of lockers, the end-of-day bus services, the condition of parts of the accommodation, and with some aspects of student behaviour. They like the variety of extra-curricular activities and visits. Some of these are very popular, such as the dance club. Almost all parents say their children enjoy their school life, and one in three is very positive about this.
15. Inspection evidence found that the attitudes and behaviour of boys is similar to that of girls. A small minority of boys in a few lessons where the teacher's class management is weak, create disturbances which spoil their own learning and that of others. Although little of this was seen during the inspection, boys reported that it is a regular occurrence in lessons with some weaker members of staff. They readily acknowledge that they exploit opportunities to do little in these lessons. This was seen for example, in a Year 9 lesson when the discussion session for sharing views was undermined by undisciplined remarks and the occasional tossing of pen-tops. In general, though, boys have very positive attitudes to school, to learning and to their teachers. They value the good relationships they enjoy with most staff and enjoy being worked hard in those subjects and lessons they like most. They enjoy lessons and subjects best where teachers make the learning active and where learning is perceived as fun, usually where they are busily engaged.

They dislike learning by rote and enjoy least those lessons and homework where the tasks are routine and require little activity.

16. Behaviour overall is good. Behaviour around the school at breaktimes and lunch is orderly and sociable. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection week. Students report that bullying is uncommon, being very promptly and effectively addressed. Permanent exclusions are uncommon, and while the incidence of temporary exclusions is high measured by national figures, the level is not by any means beyond what might be considered justified given the behavioural problems experienced.
17. Students' personal development and relationships throughout the school are very good. This represents considerable improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Students relate very well to each other and to staff. This is based on mutual respect. Both teaching and non-teaching staff provide very good role models of dedication, co-operation and personal concern. Consequently, all students are encouraged and have a supportive climate for their personal development. They generally assist each other well, for instance when learning at the computer keyboard. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and most show appropriate respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Where opportunities are provided, such as in team activities, initiative and personal responsibility are generally well exercised, but these opportunities are not provided frequently enough. The large team of prefects have few duties and the school council, chaired by a teacher, has not met so far this academic year thereby not encouraging students to be involved more fully in the life of the school.
18. Attendance is good, with relatively little unauthorised absence, when compared to the national average. National attendance standards are, however, rising at a faster rate than those of the school. Punctuality to school is good, but the start of some lessons is ragged.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

19. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection when over two fifths was unsatisfactory. The school has invested a great deal of time in developing teachers' awareness of what makes a good lesson. This has paid dividends as in two thirds of lessons seen, students of all abilities were engaged in learning, working well together and achieving above what might be expected of them; this was because teaching was good, and sometimes very good, and had captured the interest of students. A small proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory, spread across English, mathematics, science and art and design with a further small proportion in geography and personal and social education.
20. Teaching has improved and is now good overall because teachers not only organize and manage their classes well but they use their subject knowledge to motivate and interest students. As a result of this students are intent on the tasks set and apply themselves to learning. There is very good teaching in all subjects but in English, mathematics, science, French and Spanish, the greatest proportion of lessons were satisfactory. Teaching is consistently good in information and communication technology, design and technology, geography in Years 10 and 11, history, music, physical education and personal and social education. In religious education, teaching is very good. In art and design, although the overall quality is good, the school's failure to eliminate unsatisfactory teaching has resulted in low examination results and reduced the effectiveness of the department and thus students' learning.
21. There has been some instability in the teaching staff, particularly in English, modern foreign languages and music that has affected students' learning and the standards achieved. The school has been fortunate to recruit teachers who are subject specialists and have good subject knowledge and this is already beginning to improve standards in these subjects. Teachers are using their knowledge well to ensure that students have a good grasp of skills in subjects, so that for example, in information and communication technology teachers' use of business language and their good choices of CD Rom audio visual resources provide students with good role models and understanding of professional presentations. Where teachers' knowledge has inspired students, their creativity and imaginative skills shine through. This was very evident from the high

quality three-dimensional art and design work about the school. Students in science, history and physical education also show this same flair but teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for in-depth investigation, research and discussion for these skills to be of the highest order.

22. All teachers plan their work based on subject schemes of work. Planning is at least satisfactory but in many subjects there is a lack of clarity about how lesson plans will build towards meeting students' individual targets for learning and departments' overall targets. Individual education plans for students with special educational needs, together with a summary of students' learning needs, are available to support planning in all subjects, though their use by individual teachers varies. Few plans show how work will be set for students in differing groups, the ways that subject language will be taught or how numeracy or the development of information and communication technology skills are to be embedded in every day practice. Consequently, teachers are missing opportunities to ensure that learning is as productive as it could be. However, lessons are usually well structured; in subjects such as mathematics, French and Spanish the use of short, sharp starter activities settle students quickly and set the tone for the rest of the lesson. Where this happens, learning is more purposeful as students are prepared for work that is to follow. Teachers are clear about what they want students to learn but there is a lack of consistency in the way that teachers share the purpose of lessons with students or summarise, at the end, what has been learned.
23. Teachers use an appropriate range of techniques to teach their subjects and often use well-selected tasks to help students to learn. For example, students with learning difficulties learn well when teachers ensure that work is well matched to their learning needs. This is evident in information and communication technology, history, religious education and physical education where these students often make good progress because of the good choice of activities selected by teachers. Many teachers base their strategies on natural enthusiasm for their subjects such as history and religious education where some excellent teaching was seen during the inspection. On other occasions teachers use skilful questioning and a blend of whole class and group work to encourage students to reflect on their learning and to reinforce and explore their understanding. In a Year 10 physics lesson, the teacher's probing questions enabled students to deduce that a high voltage reduces current for the same power and this leads to a reduction in heat loss from the wires.
24. A strength in teaching is the way in which teachers manage their classes and frequently get the best out of students. Very good relationships make teachers sensitive to how students are learning so that they can encourage and support students as necessary. For example, in a Year 10 physical education lesson the teacher gave appropriate guidance and individual praise and support to students refining their serving skills in badminton. However, it is this aspect of teaching that frequently led to lessons being unsatisfactory. A very small minority of boys need to be carefully managed to ensure that they work hard. Where teaching is weak they exploit the situation by producing little work and are at times disruptive.
25. Teachers know their students very well and generally give good advice during lessons. They pitch work at levels that suit most students but do not always use the knowledge they have gained from tests and marking to adjust either their teaching or the content of the lessons. In most instances, the impact is lessened by students' good attitudes and desire to learn but it does mean that higher attaining students are not always challenged to achieve more. Homework was always set during the inspection week and it was used very effectively in religious education to extend learning. Marking is at least satisfactory in all subjects but does not always include constructive comments to tell students how they should improve.
26. Overall, the teaching of literacy is satisfactory. In some subject areas, such as information and communication technology, design and technology and modern foreign languages, literacy is taught well. There is a clear consistent focus on the skills and aspects of literacy which are relevant to the subject. In design and technology, the good teaching of subject specific vocabulary and the use of writing frames supports students well in their coursework. In information and communication technology lessons, teachers provide effective models of standard business English and students learning is enhanced. However, the focus on literacy is not consistent

across the school and is too dependent on the understanding of individual teachers. In some subjects, such as science, there are weaknesses in the teaching of subject specific vocabulary and in the teaching of the extended writing skills relevant to writing about research and scientific experiments so that students do not develop their understanding of issues as well as they could. In art and design, there are weaknesses in the teaching of students' written and oral responses to their work, which impedes their learning and thus their achievement.

27. The teaching of numeracy is broadly satisfactory. Students use and develop their numerical skills across subjects. There are opportunities for students to develop their algebraic skills in science; for example, through substitution in, and rearrangement of, formulae. Students develop their spatial awareness in art and design. Work involving measuring and the use of statistical techniques occurs in a range of subjects including design and technology, history, geography and physical education. However, as yet, there is no whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy. The school has yet to decide how the work of the mathematics department will be supported by the systematic development of students' numerical skills across subjects.
28. Teachers pay equal attention to all students enabling them to learn well. Teachers have benefited from good recent in-service training that has heightened awareness of gender issues. They are clearer now about how to adapt teaching and learning styles to ensure that boys progress as well as girls. For most teachers this has been very effective in enabling them to provide students with good, supportive teaching environments in which almost all boys feel confident to contribute well. Consequently, in all subjects, and most lessons, there are no differences between teachers' expectations of boys and girls; teachers use methods that generally ensure good learning of both genders. Although boys, especially the younger ones who were interviewed, felt that teachers treat boys more harshly than girls, for example, in the way that they are reprimanded, inspection evidence does not bear this out. The teaching of boys is equally as good as that of girls and reflects the pattern of teachers' overall teaching. During the inspection, where teaching was unsatisfactory because of weak classroom management, boys tended to behave in a more noisily disruptive way than girls.
29. The quality of teaching for students with special educational needs is good. Subject teachers' knowledge of their learning needs is good, and they provide good support in lessons through clear explanation and individual guidance. Practice is particularly effective in small groups and ability sets. But specific planning to meet students' needs is weaker, resulting in insufficient attention being given to ensuring that students are consistently helped to make good progress by work being matched to their learning requirements and the targets set on their individual education plans. This presents particular problems in large mixed ability classes where there is the possibility of students' needs not receiving sufficient attention. The support provided by specialist special needs teachers, and learning support assistants, is good and much appreciated by students. Teaching of students with special educational needs is especially effective in information and communication technology, history, physical education and religious education.
30. Very good progress has been made over the past five years in improving teachers' attitudes to students and to the overall quality of teaching and learning. At the time of the last inspection less than a tenth of teaching was very good or excellent; this proportion has now increased to a fifth and the proportion of good teaching has increased from two fifths to a third. Unsatisfactory teaching has decreased from over two fifths to less than a tenth. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects although further guidance for teaching is still required in mathematics, design and technology and physical education. The overall quality of marking and the setting of homework has improved. As a consequence of these improvements, standards have improved and students are attaining in the top five per cent of schools nationally for gaining 5+ A\* to G GCSE grades.

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

31. Curricular provision is unsatisfactory because not all students follow a design and technology course or are taught religious education in Years 10 and 11. In addition, the school does not hold



a daily act of collective worship. These are not only breaches of statutory requirements but also curtail students' entitlement to the full curriculum.

32. The school's intentions are to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to which access is assured for all students. In large measure it succeeds in doing this in Years 7 to 9 and partially so in Years 10 and 11 through the innovative provision of a GNVQ and NVQ courses. The taught curriculum is beneficially supplemented by a good range of extra-curricular and community activities. The school working week is 25 hours and 50 minutes and thus exceeds the recommended time of 25 hours.
33. In Years 7 to 9, all National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught. Information and communication technology is taught as a separate subject throughout, as is drama and personal and social education; students follow courses in either French or Spanish. Most subject areas have regular meetings with colleagues from primary schools to plan progression activities and to obtain detailed data on students about to enter Year 7. The system is good and serves students well by ensuring that there is continuity in their learning.
34. In Years 10 and 11 a core curriculum of English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, French or Spanish, physical education, and personal and social education is offered. Students are able to study three separate sciences in place of the double award science and higher attaining students can also study statistics. A compulsory GNVQ course in information and communication technology currently established in Years 8, 9 and 10 will next year be extended to Year 11. All students are also able to choose three additional subjects that include new subjects such as business studies. There is an opportunity to take NVQs in the areas of construction, hairdressing or catering. The NVQ courses are a particularly good feature and enhance the relevance of the overall pattern to the world of work. The extension in range of courses in Years 10 and 11 constitutes a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Students are now much better prepared for the challenge of post-16 further education or training.
35. Overall, curricular provision for literacy is satisfactory. The school has begun the process of developing a whole school awareness of literacy across the curriculum. However, it is still in the early stages of development and currently is too dependent on the skills of individual teachers. Subjects such as design technology, information and communication technology and modern foreign languages make good provision for the literacy skills required by their subjects with good focus on specific vocabulary and writing skills used in the subject. However in other subjects such as science and art and design there are weaknesses in the teaching of both oral and written skills required by the subject. The provision for numeracy is satisfactory. Opportunities are provided for students to develop their skills in some subjects but there is as yet no whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy or to the systematic development of students' numerical skills across subjects.
36. The school ensures that the needs of students of all abilities are appropriately considered when grouping students. A flexible approach is used so that subjects can set or teach in mixed ability groups to suit the needs of students. Curriculum decisions are carefully focused on the aims of the school, which are reflected in the policy for equal opportunities. These aims include that all students are candidates for examinations. The school's high proportion of students who obtain five or more GCSE grades is good evidence of this.
37. Students with special educational needs have full access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Their access is enhanced by the good support of special educational needs teachers and learning support assistants. Withdrawal of students for specialist support in the learning support department is only made for those students who have specific learning skills development difficulties. For instance, there is a strong focus on providing assistance in the implementation of the literacy strategy through the Catch-up Literacy programme. A wider programme of withdrawal is planned so that commercial computer software can be used to help students to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. This will be implemented when new accommodation and computers are available.

38. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. It has developed well since the last inspection covering drugs and sex education; there are growing links with the tutorial system. Students find the programme helpful and enjoyable. External health education specialists complement the work of the teaching team and the school participates in the Healthy Schools project. Elements of the programme are planned with the involvement of local primary school staff; this enhances progression between the phases.
39. Provision for careers guidance and education is very good. During Years 10 and 11 there is good liaison between staff with pastoral responsibilities, year team leaders and specialist external careers advisers. Through a series of structured visits there are close links with colleges and post-16 training providers. Interviews with students in Years 10 and 11 enable them to make informed choices, with parents involved through open evenings and individual discussions. Through careful monitoring by teachers and training providers, those undertaking NVQ work benefit strongly from detailed advice on appropriate progression routes.
40. The arrangements for work experience are good. All students undertake a two-week period of work experience in Year 10; this activity is well planned and monitored, and data obtained is often used during subsequent class and course work. Good liaison with a range of local employers ensures satisfactory placements that not only enhance the progress of students but also increase the reputation of the school in the community.
41. There is good provision of extra-curricular activities. All curricular areas offer organised activities for enhancement or revision of students' studies. There are extensive opportunities for recreational and sports activities and many talented students are selected to play regionally or nationally. Several theatre trips are arranged each year by staff of the English and drama courses and there is a well-attended public speaking and performance club. The geography and history departments have a range of fieldwork and related activities, and students taking art and design have visited several galleries and Kew Gardens. Over 150 students have taken part in choral and instrumental practice and performance activities, including one for Children in Need. The school now has links with establishments in France and Spain which involve exchange visits, and there are regular visits to exhibitions associated with the cultures of the two countries.
42. Links with industry and the community are outstanding. Over 30 local and national companies work in association with the school to provide inputs into the curriculum of areas such as business studies, English, geography, modern foreign languages, design and technology and careers. The school arranges regular 'industry days' which in conjunction with the well-arranged work experience programme ensures that all students are thoroughly acquainted with the world of work. Further inputs from industry involve participation in a mentoring project and the Young Enterprise scheme. A close working relationship with Eastleigh Action for Skills results in many further opportunities being created for students. One further outstanding example is recent involvement of students in a local survey of public transport, cycling and walking to school routes. The students involved compiled and presented their findings to a variety of adult and student audiences.
43. In association with the local education authority, summer schools in literacy and numeracy were organised for students from Year 6 of local primary schools. There was effective selection and targeting of students who were under-performing. The two-week experience was staffed by teachers from the school whose efforts were complemented by Year 10 and 11 students, some of whom were chosen because of the way in which they had approached their own previous under-performance.
44. The school is used extensively by the local community. Through the enactment of the school's outreach policy, students gain opportunities for participation in activities and for the observation of positive adult role models. The average day sees school facilities used by all age groups in activities from yacht skippering courses to business technology, swimming and foreign languages. Holiday courses for 8-14 year olds bring together senior students, volunteers, parents, teachers and police officers. Sports prefects work alongside qualified leaders and in so doing gain accreditation for components of leadership and GNVQ courses. Many local sports and cultural

organisations are based at the school, and as a consequence students often participate in their activities.

45. Although overall curricular provision is unsatisfactory, good progress has been made in enhancing the opportunities for students to have a breadth of experiences including those offered in GNVQ and NVQ courses. The school has adopted an outgoing approach that enriches students' learning. Not only does it welcome use of the school facilities by the community, but through its active approach it reaches out to create new opportunities.
46. Overall, the school's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Within that context however, its provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. It has not effectively addressed an issue of the previous inspection, concerning its statutory responsibility to provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.
47. Students attend a year group assembly once a week, and on other mornings meet in their form groups for tutorial time. The school takes the organisation of year group assemblies seriously, and they play an important role in reinforcing its moral and social values. There is good practice in, for example, thought provoking addresses, prayers well linked with the assembly themes, and the use of music to create an appropriate ambience. Students respond to the occasions with respect, as was well evidenced in a Year 8 assembly on conflict and reconciliation in the aftermath of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.
48. However, when students meet in their tutor groups the time is used solely for pastoral and administrative purposes, and has no Christian, religious or spiritual dimension. Opportunities are missed, for example, to provide students with the opportunity for reflection on a "Theme for the Day". Furthermore, there is no whole school approach to promoting students' spiritual development in lessons. Where there is good practice, it is the result of individual departmental initiative.
49. This is the case, for example, in geography, where students are led to develop a sense of wonder at the beauty and mystery of the natural world in field trips. Music provides students with very good opportunities for reflection. English encourages them to explore the human situation through prose and poetry, and art and design through two- and three-dimensional design. This was very well evidenced in excellent display of artwork in the reception area. Religious education makes a very strong contribution through, for example, exploration of the power of myth, ritual and symbol, and forms of worship. Elsewhere, because of lack of planning, opportunities are largely missed to develop students' spiritual awareness in lessons.
50. The school makes good provision for students' moral development. It has clear values, based on respect and caring for the individual, that inform its everyday life. Students know right from wrong, and most behave well. They enjoy very good relationships with each other and with their teachers, who provide them with very good role models. Students give practical expression to the values of caring in good support for a range of charities, for example, Children in Need.
51. The well planned programme of personal, social and health education challenges students with moral issues, such as those relating to sexuality and substance abuse. A number of other subjects also raise students' awareness of moral issues. English presents them with opportunities to explore questions of motivation, character and moral choice in texts. Biology challenges them with the ethical issues surrounding genetics. Geography confronts them with the moral issues relating to development, population, and the use of renewable and non-renewable resources.
52. The school also makes good provision for students' social development. It publicly recognizes their achievements in all areas of its life, and raises their self-esteem through a well-planned system of commendations, certificates, praise postcards home, and achievement assemblies. Students are given good opportunities to develop their social skills through the Year and School Councils, the Young Enterprise Scheme, field trips, residential visits and extra curricular

activities. Sports activities make a very strong contribution to developing students' social skills and their confidence and sense of self worth.

53. The school gives students good opportunities to show initiative and develop leadership skills through the head boy and girl and prefect system, the peer mentoring scheme, leadership of sports teams, and acting as librarians. Most subjects provide students with good opportunities for developing skills of collaborative working in pairs and small groups, and they are particularly strong in art and design, music, foreign languages and religious education. The personal, social and health education programme addresses a number of social issues, as do a number of other subjects. For example, design and technology explores the social implications of packaging and recycling, and consumer choice, influence and preferences.
54. The school makes satisfactory provision for students' cultural development. Students are given appropriate opportunities to experience the creative and expressive arts. They can develop skills in a wide range of choral and instrumental music, and have recently contributed to music for the BBC's Children in Need programme. They are also able to develop the skills of performing for an audience through regular school productions, such as "Rocky Monster", and the forthcoming "Smike". Large numbers of students avail themselves of these opportunities. Although there is a dance club, opportunities for students to experience a range of dance styles is more limited. Students' cultural awareness is also raised through visits to galleries, cinemas, concerts and to the drama departments of local further education colleges.
55. The school promotes students' awareness of other European cultures through the annual GCSE art and design visit to Barcelona, humanities visits to Eastern Europe, and language links with Nantes in France, and Portillo in Spain. It is trying to re-establish a foreign language exchange programme. Some subjects promote students' understanding of cultures other than the Western European. In art and design and music, students draw inspiration from the art forms and musical traditions of other cultures. Geography introduces them, for example, to the culture of the Indian sub-continent. Religious education introduces them to the major world faiths. The school now plans more effectively than at the previous inspection to raise students' awareness of the importance of cultures other than the Western European to the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century civilization, and appreciate the multicultural richness and diversity of contemporary British society. However, there is a need for the school to monitor provision more closely, and ensure the good practice evidenced in some departments is embedded in all departments.
56. Overall, improvement for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been unsatisfactory. A particular weakness lies in students' spiritual development. This area is still not co-ordinated well or planned and promoted consistently across the school. Improvements have been made in moral and social development but less so in developing students' understanding of cultures beyond Europe.

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

57. The overall provision to secure the welfare and safety of students is satisfactory. Many aspects of provision are good or very good but the school does not monitor health and safety procedures or risk assessment rigorously enough. The good quality of educational and personal support and guidance is underpinned by the successful adoption of a change of culture brought about by the senior management team. A tutor system, led by year team leaders, has been introduced with the emphasis on tutors knowing their students as individuals. The role of year team leaders is focused principally on supporting and boosting the achievement of students in the year group, rather than, as previously, acting mainly as a trouble-shooter. The school now has a strongly supportive atmosphere and procedures for students' personal development are very good.
58. The school's procedures to promote good behaviour work very well. Rules, discussed with students, are clear. The graded sanctions are well known. Parents report that students value the system of rewards. Commendations for behaviour and work are given at assemblies each half - term. Students enjoy the friendly competition between each tutor group as to which can gain the most commendations. More formal achievement evenings, attended by parents, are held at the

end of each year when particular students are honoured for their hard work and success in each subject. An unusual feature with considerable impact is the use of attractive cards that are, from time to time, posted to a deserving student's home by way of congratulations.

59. Poor behaviour is also very well addressed. A significant number of students have behavioural difficulties and thus present a constant potential problem. The school seeks to address such matters early on, drawing clear lines, so that the nature of the problem may be understood and corrective action taken before anything more serious might develop. Staff management of behaviour is generally consistent and alert. Subject departments note lapses. Through a good internal system of recording and notification close monitoring is maintained. Tutors and year team leaders make comments and recording may include entry on the student's computerised record. Exclusions are automatic for the most serious offences, but the school seeks to use pupil support and a structured approach to avert repetitions very carefully. The home school liaison officer is involved fully and uses strategies that include counselling to reinforce acceptable behaviour. Although last year's total of exclusions is in the upper quartile for the size of school nationally, the school's holistic and inclusive approach bears many indications of success. Relationships throughout the school, for instance, are very good.
60. Attendance procedures are good. Registration is generally swift. Data is recorded electronically. The system is well established. Routine monitoring is on a weekly system, through meetings between the year team leaders and the education welfare officer, but tutors pursue all unexplained absences of more than three days. Parents have to apply for any holidays taken in term time. They are reminded orally of this on occasions such as during the induction to Year 7 and in Year 10 but written reminders are infrequent
61. Day-to-day handling of students' welfare is very good as all students are valued and treated as individuals. Staff are very caring and ensure that the pastoral needs of students, including those with special educational needs, are met. The facilities and organisation of the students' welfare office are good. Child protection arrangements, referred to in the staff handbook, are securely in place. The co-ordinator is trained. She ensures that newly qualified teachers are made aware of the procedures and responsibilities as part of their induction. Due attention is paid to safety during lessons such as physical education and science but the school needs to ensure that dust extractors are connected in the design and technology rooms. Appropriate arrangements exist for first aid. Activities out of school are carefully considered with safety considerations in mind.
62. Even though the daily safety procedures are good, the school lacks a centralised system to monitor risk assessment. Each department monitors its own safety on the basis of local education authority guidance, frequently relying for assurance on the reports of professional independent contractors. The governing body does not receive regular reports from the school on health and safety issues or conduct its own visits.
63. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress, whilst satisfactory overall, are not as effective as they might be in raising academic standards. There are good systems in place, at both departmental level and whole school level, for assessing and recording students' attainment at particular points in time. In Years 7 to 9, all departments assess and record students' attainment against National Curriculum or other agreed criteria twice per year. Some departments, for example religious education, have developed assessment tasks of high quality to inform this process; other departments rely more on teachers' professional judgements. Teachers' assessments are not always accurate; for example, they are too high in geography at the end of Year 9. All such assessments are analysed centrally, so that senior managers can track students' progress over time against subject criteria. However, departments make varying use of such assessments. Some use the results well to inform their planning and to track students' progress in acquiring subject knowledge and content across Years 7 to 9, but practice is inconsistent across departments.
64. Running alongside this process, the school has for some time collected data to provide base line information about students. Appropriate use has been made of national and standardised test information to analyse the attainment of different year groups on entry to the school. Students'

results in standardised tests taken on entry are collated and distributed to staff, together with results from national tests at the end of Year 6 and Year 9. These procedures have been effective in establishing a culture wherein teachers realise the potential of using data to track progress, to identify and support underachievers and, hence, to raise standards. Some teachers and departments are starting to make effective use of the data. For example, in English, a thorough analysis has taken place recently to identify pockets of underachievement. However, practice varies across department. As yet, base line data is not used consistently well to ensure that in Years 7 to 9, standards are as high as they should be, given students' attainment on entry. Assessment has not been used effectively by departments to identify underachievers in a subject or to set targets for year groups and for individuals. Neither has it been used effectively by pastoral staff to monitor students' progress across subjects and to inform target setting.

65. However, better use has been made of both baseline and subject assessment information to predict likely performance at GCSE and to set targets for individual students. Appropriate use has been made of the information by senior managers to monitor and evaluate the performance of individual students, to identify underachievers and to provide mentoring as appropriate for some Year 11 students. However, again practice is somewhat inconsistent at departmental level. Not all students are sufficiently aware of their GCSE targets in all subjects; not all are clear about what they need to do to improve their work, so that they can meet their targets.
66. The progress of those students with special educational needs is assessed and monitored closely and systematically against standardised bench marks; for example, through the use of national progress tests in English and mathematics. Students' individual education plans set specific and clear targets which are kept under systematic review but not all targets can be measured thus lessening their value as a basis for assessing students' progress. The annual reviews of statements of special educational need meet statutory requirements fully.
67. Overall, the school has made good progress in improving its standards of care since the previous inspection. Students receive good educational and personal support and guidance that is effective in maintaining and raising their achievements. Arrangements for the promotion and monitoring of good behaviour are now very good; at the time of the last inspection they were inconsistent and weak. The assessment of students' attainment and progress, a key issue at the time of the previous inspection, has improved significantly. The school is aware that the next stage of development is to produce a clearer analysis of expectations for individuals, classes, departments and whole year groups, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and to extend its academic monitoring, so that tutors and heads of year are involved appropriately. Procedures for child protection are now satisfactory. The particular aspects of health and safety organisation that need addressing have been drawn to the school's attention.

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

68. Parents and carers have a good opinion of the school. They think their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. Teachers promote students' confidence well in a supportive atmosphere. Consequently, parents report that most students are making good progress and are enjoying their school life. Many parents are pleased with the range and quality of activities provided outside lessons. They find the school readily approachable. Indeed parents remark on the amount of time staff give to helping them and the speedy response to any problems raised.
69. About one in four parents responding to the inspection questionnaire had a perception that the school could do more to work closely with them and that they could be better informed concerning their children's progress. A similar number had doubts concerning homework and coursework and also about the behaviour in some lessons. Some dislike the target setting arrangements that cause students to miss a large part of what would otherwise be a mainstream day.
70. The inspection team agrees with all the parents' positive opinions of the school. They think that the school works hard to promote partnership with parents. Information regarding how the students are progressing is generally good, but the quality of target-setting as evidenced in the

annual academic parental reports could be more sharply focused. Homework arrangements are satisfactory overall. In practice the planned timetabling is not always observed by teachers, thus causing unevenness in the workload. More information concerning coursework is needed by some parents. Some revised method of arranging the valuable activity of target-setting to avoid students having otherwise unstructured days would be welcomed by parents. A small minority of boys, particularly in Year 8, takes advantage of weaker teaching by disrupting learning but this was not a frequent occurrence.

71. The school's links with parents are effective. Communication is generally of good quality. For instance, the induction process is informative, assisted by a brochure for new entrants, and the school's prospectus is very well presented. Parents are kept well informed about students' progress. They are expected to sign the weekly planner, and have individual meetings each term, with tutors or subject teachers, to discuss how learning is proceeding. The quality of academic reports is good, usually containing much helpfully-directed professional comment, indication of attainment levels, and personal reflection by the student. Whilst the frequency of newsletters to parents is satisfactory, their style and coverage does not consistently celebrate the undoubted progress being made by students and the school.
72. Parents of students on the school's register of special educational need are kept closely informed. They are consulted appropriately in connection with target-setting and review of individual education plans. The development over the last two years of a well structured home school programme of support is a particular strength. The home school liaison officer and two home school assistants are very experienced and are providing very good support for students and their parents especially in improving problems of attendance, behaviour and motivation. Tutors and year team leaders are frequently involved in referring matters to parents and answering parental concerns about the welfare of all students. This is done well and is much appreciated by those involved. Good liaison also takes place through the administrative and support staff. The close links with homes and the mentoring of individual students are proving to be very successful in improving achievement, motivation and behaviour.
73. Parents have a good influence on the work of the school. Most are fully supportive of what the school is trying to achieve, facilitating the progress of their children and co-operating with the school when problematic circumstances arise. A few voluntarily assist educational work in the school, such as hearing students read or contributing to personal, social and health education. In the past, parents have physically helped to improve the premises. The 'Friends' association is active. Events, such as the annual leavers' ball, are well attended. Useful sums are donated from these activities annually to provide additional services and resources.

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

74. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has been instrumental in creating a very effective senior management team that works in close partnership with the governing body to drive the school forward. He has given the school a clear sense of purpose based on aims and values that underpin what the school is trying to achieve. The senior management team, and other managers, believe that all students deserve the best and it is this determination that has led to almost all students achieving five or more grades in the GCSE examinations.
75. The governing body is very strong and shares the vision that the school will become the focus for community activities. It is very well led with a clear organizational structure and committees that monitor the school's results, provision for students and financial matters. Governors are a knowledgeable group of people who support the senior managers very well and have assisted in procuring lottery funding to enhance the sports and teaching facilities. However, they have not ensured that all statutory requirements related to the curriculum are met or monitored the safety and security of the students and school rigorously enough.
76. The last Ofsted report recognized the strong leadership of the school but also identified as a key issue that the role and effectiveness of heads of curriculum areas should be developed. A great

deal of work has taken place through shared planning, LEA support and use of in-service time to aid middle managers to understand the demands of their roles and the need to raise standards. For many, this has been very successful and most are leading their teams well, particularly so in geography, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. All middle managers have a good understanding how to monitor the quality of teaching and the progress that students make. The managers of English, mathematics and science have very successfully enabled almost all students to achieve an A\* to G grade in their subjects but they have not increased the proportion who attain at the higher levels of A\* to C. With the exception of geography, history and religious education, subject leaders do not use the information gained from assessment effectively enough in planning future work to raise standards.

77. The learning support department is well led and managed. The line management arrangements are effective and the manager of learning support regularly attends meetings of the senior management team to report progress and to advise on development needs. Systems and procedures for the management of provision for students with special educational needs and the meeting of statutory requirements, are thorough and rigorous. The quality of provision is kept under on-going review. The learning support manager works closely with subject teachers advising them on strategies and materials and taking a leading part in training for example, for literacy. Contacts are mainly informal and are not systematic enough to ensure consistency of provision in all subjects, especially through clearly focused planning.
78. The school's managers are very sincere about their commitment to equal opportunities for boys and are highly sensitive to issues connected with this area of the school's life. Many measures were instituted following the last report, including a great deal of training for staff which has been very effective in creating teaching strategies which promote and expect equal responses and achievement for both genders. Several school-wide arrangements such as seating boys and girls in pairs have been successful in creating better relationships and behaviour than described in the last report. This inspection revealed no signs of the "under-achieving minority of boys" described last time.
79. Monitoring and review of performance procedures are well established in the school. This key issue of the last inspection has been addressed very effectively. Senior managers have a very good understanding of the school's results, the quality of teaching and of other aspects of school provision. At team leader level, there is a good understanding of what is taking place and what needs to be done next. A clear system of line management is securely in place but whilst meetings are held regularly between the senior managers and team leaders, some of these are informal and not recorded. Actions results from these meetings but progress over time cannot always be monitored reliably because of the lack of recorded information.
80. The school monitors and evaluates its examination and test results very critically. There is a good understanding of national and standardized test information and this information is shared with the governing body and all staff. Departments make use of assessment information in different ways and because of this there is inconsistency in how well students' progress is monitored against base-line data or in identifying underachievement. The school has recognized assessment as a priority area in the current school improvement plan.
81. The school functions very efficiently on a daily basis because it has clear and good procedures. The school's administration is fully computerized although an intra-net service is not installed. A very effective school support services manager leads her team of administrative staff very well relieving teaching staff of some of the bureaucratic activities. Other non-teaching staff such as the school site manager and his team, the technicians, the learning support assistants and the welfare officer also all work very hard and extremely well in contributing to students' welfare and to easing teachers' work load.
82. Priorities for future development of the school have been very well selected having been drawn from previous work and changes since the last inspection. The school knows what it is doing and where it is going; for example, in the development of information and communication technology facilities and current building works. The cycle of planning ensures that staff are involved and that



departmental plans link into and support the school priorities. The annual school improvement plan gives sufficient detail to ensure that intentions can be monitored and improvements can be evaluated. Subject plans are mainly good but a few do not show clearly how standards are to be raised further or drive improvements effectively.

83. The overall match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers are all qualified and sufficient in number to teach the present curriculum. However, the school has experienced some staffing difficulties in the past two years involving extended use of temporary staff in English, drama, music, modern foreign languages and religious education that have adversely affected students' standards. Learning support assistants are skilled and make a valuable contribution to the progress of students with special educational needs. Technicians, secretarial support staff and librarians are well trained, sufficient in number and effective.
84. The arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are very good. The school's provision is comprehensive, enabling staff to quickly understand the school's routines and practices, and involving subject team managers, year team leaders and senior staff in a fully co-ordinated programme. In addition to this induction, newly qualified teachers are provided with both professional and subject mentors who regularly meet with them. Newly qualified teachers also have objectives agreed for their professional development and the school provides effective help tailored to these teachers' needs, for example, through observing colleagues, additional training and visits to other institutions. The school has also established very good links with two higher education institutions to provide very effective initial teacher training. There are six students currently in the school. These students are observed and guided by both a professional and subject tutor who also provide them with effective individual support for their research assignments linked to their course.
85. The arrangements for performance management are very good. The school already had an effective appraisal programme in place prior to the introduction of performance management regulations. A full consultation with staff was undertaken and all staff have appropriate objectives set for their professional development and performance, linked closely with the school's priorities. Team leaders are trained appropriately to monitor and support their colleagues, including observing their teaching. This process, now coming to the end of its first cycle, has been very effective in helping the school to improve.
86. The arrangements for in-service training of teachers are very good and linked closely with the school and department development plans and teachers' appraisals. This is a major improvement since the last inspection. Whole staff training days, led by experts in their field, often focus on ways of improving teaching and learning. The school has benefited from good liaison with the local education authority and the uses of external advisors. Teachers are expected to disseminate and share what they have learned by attending courses. The school's co-ordinator of professional development monitors all training requests, evaluates the quality of training from courses and follows up their impact on the school at a later date to ensure the school achieves value for money.
87. Overall, the provision of resources is adequate but varies across the school. Geography, history and physical education are well resourced and there is a good provision of books in science and history. However, there is a shortage of textbooks in religious education in Key Stage 3 and of French textbooks for Year 7 students. Resources for music are unsatisfactory and do not support students' learning well. Although the ratio of computers to students is good, there is insufficient access to information and communication technology facilities in most subjects so that students' skills and learning are not supported. The improvement to resourcing in the school has been satisfactory; the school has spent money on replacing and upgrading books and equipment.
88. The learning resource centre is used well as it is open throughout the day, and after school, and is managed by a qualified librarian. She consults and meets regularly with subject heads to determine curricular needs and she has made a detailed analysis of students' book borrowing trends. The good induction programme for Year 7 students encourages them to use the library. There are further plans to introduce a study skills programme for students in Years 10 and 11.

The learning resource centre comprises the library and information and communication technology resources. Although the provision of books is good, having been increased since the last inspection, there is a shortage of computer work-stations and the selection of CD Roms is poor.

89. The overall accommodation is unsatisfactory because there are too many areas of the curriculum affected by lack of specialist facilities. The school is located on a single site and housed in a mixture of old and new different styles of buildings. The premises are well managed and organised and a committed team supports the manager. The school is clean and tidy; where the grounds are not affected by the building works they are well maintained and kept litter free. However, accommodation is inadequate for the delivery of the curriculum. The number and quality of teaching areas for mathematics, design and technology and drama are unsatisfactory and impacting in a negative way on the work and learning of students. A number of science laboratories need refurbishment and specialist accommodation for music is poor, as it limits the range of musical experiences; it has not improved since the last inspection. Rooms in many other subjects are scattered and not suited. Some entrances to the buildings and rooms are small and a number of corridors are narrow, causing congestion.
90. The school is working hard to improve the environment and facilities it needs. As a result of a successful lottery bid and additional funding, an extensive new building programme is underway and will provide a sport and leisure complex, including a refurbished swimming pool and a new humanities suite of rooms. Until the completion of the programme, it has been necessary to place temporary buildings and additional parking onsite, and the physical education department has had to adapt the curriculum with the loss of the hard courts and the use of the swimming pool.
91. Since the last inspection, the school has refurbished and equipped technology suites to a high standard, the religious education department now has access to specialist accommodation, and the physical education department benefits from a floodlit AstroTurf facility. Displays around the school are now good and have improved significantly. Displays of artwork are excellent, spiritually uplifting and celebrate students' achievements.
92. The school makes good use of the funding it receives. There are very good procedures to monitor spending and to adjust the budget to support priorities. There is a good understanding of the principles of best value and a very good understanding of bidding for additional funding. The school compares how well it does against other schools nationally and locally and consults staff and students about its work through activities such as the school council. The school manages the community budget and ensures that letting arrangements are cost effective. The finance committee keeps a careful overview of all expenditure and evaluates the school's spending regularly to ensure that money is being wisely spent and used.
93. The school has taken a very pro-active approach to embracing opportunities to extend its role within the community and has raised considerable funds through its own efforts. The funding for the additional sports facilities and teaching block has been raised through successful bids for lottery funding. The work is nearing completion with the explicit intention to create a better environment for the school's students, thus improving commitment to learning and to achievement with a consequent rise in standards. The governing body, headteacher, senior managers, staff and parents share this vision for the future and are quite passionate in their expectations for the future.
94. The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in 1996. All key issues have been addressed. The proportion of students attaining five or more A\* to G grades has risen so that the school is in the top five per cent of all schools nationally and also when compared to similar schools. The quality of teaching has shown a significant improvement and is now good with 20 per cent that is very good or excellent; this compares with seven per cent at the time of the last inspection. Relationships in the school are very good whereas previously not all staff emphasized courtesy and mutual respect in their contact with students. Very effective staff development and training now takes place. Middle managers have a good understanding of the use of data, how to monitor teaching and how to improve learning. Excellent links have been made with the community in order to enhance the school's facilities and to provide a centre for sports activities

and adult learning. The school has become outward looking and achieved success through gaining the School Curriculum Award in 2000 and Sportsmark status.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

95. To continue to raise standards in all subjects, and to increase the proportion of students attaining 5+ A\* to C GCSE grades, the school should:

- (1) Review the curriculum\* to ensure that the breadth and balance of provision is established in all year groups by:
- meeting statutory requirements for design and technology, religious education and an act of collective worship;
  - planning and implementing a whole school approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy;
  - consistently promoting opportunities for students' spiritual and cultural development in all subjects.

(See paragraphs 26, 27, 31, 35, 46, 48, 55, 56, 75, 102, 115, 192, 203 and 205.)

- (2) Improve the use and application of information and communication technology\* in all subjects by:
- developing teachers' knowledge and skills by building on the training taking place and sharing the expertise within the school;
  - ensuring that all departments have access to computers;
  - enhancing the hardware and soft ware in the learning resource centre.

(See paragraphs 87, 106, 117, 128, 133, 134, 149, 168, 172, 184 and 194.)

- (3) Use data\* and other information gained from tests more effectively to:
- ensure that students in Years 7 to 9 achieve as well as they should;
  - monitor students' progress accurately in all subjects to ensure that attainment is as high as it should be;
  - help students to understand how they need to improve their work;
  - inform curricular planning and teaching in all subjects.

(See paragraphs 25, 63, 64, 65, 76, 80, 107, 136, 144, 169, 179 and 194.)

- (4) Implement and monitor health and safety policies and procedures to ensure that:
- risk assessments are made, updated regularly and collated centrally;
  - formal health and safety reports are made to the governing body;
  - the site is a safe and secure environment.

(See paragraphs 57, 62, 75, 146 and 159.)

\* Denotes that these items are identified in the school's improvement plan.

The following more minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan; these can be found in paragraphs: opportunities for pupils to research and work more independently in science, history and modern foreign languages (paragraphs 21, 123 and 159); teachers' expectations about the amount of work students do in lessons in English, mathematics and geography (paragraphs 105, 114 and 149); improvements to resources in music and religious education (paragraphs 87, 187 and 204); and to accommodation in mathematics, science, design and technology, drama and music (paragraphs 89, 111, 117, 129, 144 and 187).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 154 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students | 58  |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 4         | 26        | 73   | 41           | 10             | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 3         | 17        | 47   | 27           | 6              | 0    | 0         |

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

### Information about the school's students

| Students on the school's roll   | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of students on the school's roll                                 | 926      |
| Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals | 98       |

| Special educational needs   | Y7 – Y11 |
|---|----------|
| Number of students with statements of special educational needs       | 3        |
| Number of students on the school's special educational needs register | 241      |

| English as an additional language                         | No of students |
|---|----------------|
| Number of students with English as an additional language | 0              |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year   | No of students |
|--|----------------|
| Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 27             |
| Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 29             |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %         |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| School data               | 7.6 (7.5) |
| National comparative data | (7.7)     |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %         |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| School data               | 0.4 (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 (Year 9)**

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2001 | 99   | 107   | 206   |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results         |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | 52      | 62          | 70      |
|   | Girls    | 79      | 74          | 81      |
|   | Total    | 131     | 136         | 151     |
| Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above | School   | 64 (58) | 67 (66)     | 74 (56) |
|   | National | 64 (63) | 67 (65)     | 66 (59) |
| Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above | School   | 27 (22) | 43 (37)     | 73 (22) |
|   | National | 31 (28) | 43 (42)     | 34 (30) |

| Teachers' Assessments                         |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above   | Boys     | 51      | 63          | 68      |
|   | Girls    | 90      | 75          | 80      |
|   | Total    | 141     | 138         | 148     |
| Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above | School   | 69 (55) | 68 (67)     | 73 (68) |
|   | National | 66 (64) | 69 (66)     | 65 (62) |
| Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above | School   | 29 (21) | 42 (35)     | 32 (27) |
|   | National | 31 (31) | 43 (42)     | 33 (29) |

*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 students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2001 | 96   | 93    | 189   |

| GCSE results  |          | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of students achieving the standard specified    | Boys     | 42                       | 96                    | 96                    |
|   | Girls    | 53                       | 92                    | 93                    |
|   | Total    | 95                       | 188                   | 189                   |
| Percentage of students achieving the standard specified | School   | 50.3 (47)                | 99.5 (93)             | 99.5 (98)             |
|   | National | (47.4)                   | (90.6)                | (95.6)                |

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

| GCSE results                  |          | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School   | 44 (41)          |
|                               | National | 39.1 (38.4)      |

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 students who achieved all those they studied | School   | (100)          |
|  | National | N/a            |

#### Ethnic background of students

|                                 | No of students |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 1              |
| Black – African heritage        | 2              |
| Black – other                   | 0              |
| Indian                          | 0              |
| Pakistani                       | 0              |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0              |
| Chinese                         | 3              |
| White                           | 914            |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 6              |

#### Exclusions in the last school year

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   | 0            | 0         |
| Black – African heritage     | 1            | 0         |
| Black – other                | 0            | 0         |
| Indian                       | 0            | 0         |
| Pakistani                    | 0            | 0         |
| Bangladeshi                  | 0            | 0         |
| Chinese                      | 0            | 0         |
| White                        | 47           | 15        |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0            | 0         |

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

#### Teachers and classes

##### Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 51.1 |
| Number of students per qualified teacher | 18   |

##### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Total number of education support staff | 20     |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 438.75 |

##### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 72 |
|---|----|

##### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 26.8 |
| Key Stage 4 | 22.4 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Financial information

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Financial year | 2000-1 |
|----------------|--------|

|  | £         |
|--|-----------|
| Total income                               | 2,349,534 |
| Total expenditure                          | 2,344,142 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2,568     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 25,435    |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 30,827    |

**Recruitment of teachers**

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 16    |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 19.86 |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 2 |
| 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 | 902 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 178 |

**Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 34             | 53            | 8                | 3                 | 2          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 31             | 56            | 7                | 1                 | 5          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 20             | 50            | 19               | 2                 | 9          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 20             | 52            | 19               | 5                 | 4          |
| The teaching is good.  | 20             | 57            | 9                | 1                 | 13         |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 18             | 47            | 23               | 6                 | 7          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 31             | 49            | 13               | 2                 | 4          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 42             | 50            | 5                | 2                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 12             | 51            | 23               | 3                 | 11         |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 27             | 42            | 13               | 2                 | 16         |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 29             | 51            | 13               | 1                 | 6          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 30             | 52            | 12               | 0                 | 6          |

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

**ENGLISH**

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

**Strengths**

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and their interest and enthusiasm for the subject, particularly in the teaching of literature motivate students well.
- Good and often very good relationships in lessons which support students' confidence and learning well.
- There is a good range of departmental procedures for assessing students' progress.

**Areas for improvement**

- The completion and full implementation of new curriculum arrangements in both key stages.
- Some teachers' expectations for the amount of work completed in lessons and a consistent approach to class management.
- More focused use of assessment information to monitor the rate of students' progress and the consistent use of sharp targets to identify the next stages of students' learning.

96. Students achieved broadly average standards in 2001 in the Year 9 national tests. Similar standards were observed in students' work during this inspection and also in the school's previous inspection. Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were similar overall, to results in 2000. Compared to similar schools, test results were well below average in 2000 and below average in 2001. There has been a fall in standards since 1999 when standards in the national tests were above average compared with all schools. The school believes the fall in standards at both key stages since 1999 is due to the high level of staff mobility experienced by the English department over the past two years.
97. Students' results in English language at GCSE levels A\* to C in 2001 show that standards were broadly average against all schools and below average compared to schools with a similar intake. In the year 2000, standards in English language were above average at grades A\* to C. In 2001, and in the year 2000, students' results at grades A\* to G were just above the national average. In comparison with their other subjects, students did less well in English language.
98. Students' results in 2001 in English literature at levels A\* to C were average when compared with all schools. In 2001, at levels A\* to G, students' results were significantly above the national average. In comparisons with their other subjects, students' results, particularly girls' results, were significantly better in English literature. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls in English language. During the week of the inspection, standards in English language and English literature were found to be average. In the school's previous inspection standards were found to be above average in both language and literature.
99. Students' listening and speaking skills are average. In all year groups, students contribute to lessons confidently and most speak clearly and answer questions appropriately. They take part in group and whole class discussions productively, contributing relevant opinions and information. Some higher attaining students offer perceptive and thoughtful observations using language precisely. Most students use their listening skills well but a small minority in both key stages, mainly boys, do not listen carefully and call out during lessons. In some cases this occurs as a result of over enthusiasm but on a few occasions as a result of less effective student management. They do not always allow others to contribute appropriately. This has an inhibiting effect on the contribution and participation of some girls in some lessons. Where students listen well it is often the result of their teachers' sensitive reading of texts which catch their imagination. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson where students listened in a hushed silence to the expressive reading of a story entitled 'Flight' which described the relationship between an old man and his daughter and granddaughter.

100. In all year groups, students are interested and involved in the books they are reading and have at least average reading standards. Most students are able to read the texts they use in lessons and have an appropriate understanding of techniques and strategies to help them read efficiently. However, some lower attaining students are not always able to make sufficient use of such techniques as skimming and scanning to help them quickly extract relevant information from texts. Students benefit from the use of a well organized school library which supports wider reading across a range of fiction and information texts.
101. Analysis of students' written work indicates that standards are average across all year groups. Students write for a generally appropriate range of purposes and make good use of links with their reading to explore different styles of writing at both key stages. In Year 9, students write personal letters, book reviews, analyses of texts, advertisements, pamphlets and diaries. In Years 10 and 11, the range of writing appropriately reflects the requirements of the GCSE examination syllabus relating to their reading, personal writing such as accounts of Work Experience and creative writing related to their reading. However there are some limitations in the range of writing which uses argumentative and persuasive language. Higher attaining students write fluently and confidently and have a good range of vocabulary. In Year 9, some of these students are beginning to use language analytically and by Years 10 and 11 they are using well focused language which often develops ideas in an interesting and perceptive style. However, these students form only a small proportion of the whole group. Some average and below average students use language in a lively way but most writing uses a familiar range of vocabulary and expression. There is sometimes variable accuracy in both spelling and punctuation. In Year 11, the use of more formal structures and language is not always fully developed. All students have drafting books but their usefulness is variable from class to class and they do not always help students to develop their skills in editing, refining and improving their work consistently.
102. Standards of literacy across the school are average. There is variation in the provision made for the teaching of literacy in subjects. The teaching of subject specific language is not consistent across the school and there is no common expectation for accuracy of spelling. Standards of literacy are above average in information and communication technology, history, design and technology and modern foreign languages because skills are specifically taught and there are consistent expectations. In some subjects, students' general level of literacy inhibits their effectiveness in meeting the demands of their GCSE syllabus. This is particularly relevant in physical education. In subjects such as art and design and music, there is evidence that while there has been a too limited focus on literacy in the past, standards are now improving with better planning and consistent expectations in the subjects. Standards of literacy are also average in science but there is too little extended writing in research and in writing about experiments and the teaching of subject specific vocabulary is too dependent on individual teachers. In both science and art and design, students are not given sufficient opportunities to talk about their work in sufficient depth or detail.
103. Students' achievement is generally satisfactory in comparison with their previous attainment. Although during the week of the inspection there were no opportunities to observe more extended speaking and speaking to other audiences, there is evidence that these opportunities are carefully planned into the curriculum. However, the planning for the progressive development of these skills is more limited and older students do not always develop their ideas and responses in good detail or significant length. One of the strengths of the provision in English is the development of students' abilities to explore how authors communicate ideas and themes, both directly and indirectly. This was seen in a good lesson in Year 8 where students were developing their understanding of how the author had provided the reader with information about the feelings and motivations of characters. Overall, students with special educational needs achieve at the same rate as other students in their lessons. When they receive additional well targeted individual support from learning support assistants their achievement is often good.
104. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory; some teaching is good but two lessons were unsatisfactory. In the school's previous inspection teaching was also satisfactory. Good teaching is characterised by a number of factors. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and some

are interested and enthusiastic particularly when teaching literature. Secure and confident subject knowledge allows teachers to select interesting activities and resources. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, lower attaining students were able to explore and analyse a short story successfully because the teacher had chosen a text that interested the students and had high expectations for their concentration and responses. However, not all teachers have these high expectations and there are occasions when not enough work is expected from students. Where questioning is good, teachers challenge and develop students' thinking such as in a Year 8 lesson where, through skilful questioning, the teacher led the students to identify specific words and phrases which expressed the emotions and feelings of the characters in the story. By the end of the lesson as a result of well focused support and good management, all students had made good progress in understanding how to read and analyse a piece of writing for both the explicit and the implicit meanings.

105. Many teachers establish good relationships and a confident, positive atmosphere for learning in the classroom. Classroom organisation and management is more variable. Where it is good, such as in a Year 11 lesson, there was a supportive atmosphere where students were able to discuss and offer their opinions and to ask questions. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, weak management of students resulted in poor attention and a slow pace to lessons that led to unsatisfactory learning. Although teachers generally mark students' work supportively with a good level of encouragement, marking does not consistently make clear to students how they might improve their work. While students generally make appropriate use of information and communication technology to present their work the opportunities for them to use the Internet and e-mail facilities within the department are limited.
106. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The hiatus caused by the recent absence, due to illness, of the manager of the English team has been minimised by the commitment and hard work of the assistant manager of the team and by the good teamwork of the department as a whole. The work of the department has been affected by this absence but more so by the high level of staff mobility over the past two years. There has been regular monitoring of both teaching and students' work and good support for new teachers and newly qualified teachers from the leadership and more well established members of the team. Resources in the subject are generally satisfactory. The department has identified the need to continue to develop resources to match the needs of the new curriculum units and also the need to develop information and communication technology resources to provide a networked system within the department and access to the Internet.
107. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Students' progress is now satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and there is no longer a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Relationships were previously described as sometimes poor; in this respect there has been very good improvement. Some good revision and development of the curriculum has begun but has not yet been fully completed and implemented. There is a good range of assessment arrangements in the subject across all years and some good analysis of the results of assessments. However, the use of the information resulting from these analyses is not sufficiently sharply used to set targets for individual students, particularly for those groups of students who have been identified as underachieving.

## **Drama**

108. Overall, standards in drama are below average at both key stages. In the school's previous inspection drama was not inspected. In 2000, students' results in their GCSE examinations at grades A\* to C were significantly below the national average. However results at grades A\* to G were above average with all students obtaining a grade. In 2001, results at grades A\* to G remain the same, as they have been for the past four years. At grades A\* to C indications are that while results have improved they are below average. The curriculum leader attributes the improvement in results to the more secure development of skills through Years 7 to 9, which is leading to better performance in Years 10 and 11.

109. Students achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. There is evidence that where students have specialist teaching their achievement is often good. While the curriculum leader has been in post for four years, there have been frequent changes of other staff who are not specialist drama teachers. The rate of students' progress has been adversely affected by the number of staff changes, which have taken place, and by the limitations of resources and accommodation. Opportunities for students to develop their technical skills and to fully explore performance skills are limited by the lack of specialist accommodation and technical equipment.
110. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall. Where students are taught by specialist staff, there is a good focus on the development of students' skills and in these lessons the quality of teaching and learning is good. Subject specific terms and vocabulary are well taught in these lessons and there are good opportunities for students to evaluate their own and each other's performances. Both teachers have a secure understanding of the requirements of the examination and give good encouragement for students to think carefully about the development of their ideas. In Years 7 to 9, teachers manage large groups effectively in the relatively small performance spaces. As a result of this good management, students enjoy their participation in role-play, and small group activities, and work with enthusiasm and interest.
111. The subject is well managed by the curriculum leader. She has a good understanding of her role and is developing a useful curriculum for Years 7 to 9 as part of a local authority project. Careful records are kept of students' learning and the coursework elements of the GCSE examination are well organised and managed. Together with music, the subject provides good additional opportunities for students to participate in whole school productions. They are currently preparing for a performance of the musical 'Smike'. Resources and accommodation in the subjects are currently unsatisfactory and restrict the breadth and depth of the subject curriculum. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- All students achieve an A\* to G grade in GCSE mathematics.
- Relationships between students and teachers are good; as a result, students have positive attitudes to learning.
- Good use is made of short, written tasks at the start of lessons; hence, students settle to work quickly and enthusiastically.
- Teachers receive useful assessment information, which enables them to track students' attainment and progress across year groups.

### Areas for improvement

- In some lessons, not enough work is expected of students.
- Not all students have regular opportunities to develop their mental calculation skills or to use information and communication technology to help them learn.
- The department knows its priorities for improvement; it is less clear how to achieve them.
- Teachers do not use the assessment information they receive consistently well; students are not clear enough of how well they are doing, what they are aiming for and what they need to do to make progress.

112. Results in the 2001 Year 9 national tests were in line with the national average for all schools and with that for schools with a similar intake. Performance matched that in English, but was somewhat lower than that in science. Results have improved in recent years, but the rate of improvement has been slower than that found nationally. There has been no consistent difference in results for boys and girls.
113. GCSE results in 2001 at grades A\* to C were also close to the national average for all schools and close to that for similar schools. However, results at A\* to G grades were significantly above average; all students attained a grade. Students did rather better in mathematics in their GCSE

examinations than in English and science; otherwise performance was neither significantly stronger, nor weaker, than that in many other subjects. Results have fluctuated in recent years; there has been no consistent trend of improvement and no consistent difference in the performance of boys and girls. Overall, results in public tests and examinations are as might be expected, given students' attainment on entry. Lower attaining students achieve well at GCSE, since all students attain a grade. Around 30 students took GCSE in statistics in 2001; they too achieved well.

114. Inspection evidence confirms that, overall, standards in Years 9 and 11 are broadly average; the proportion of students working at or above the level expected for their age is as expected nationally in each of these year groups. In general, higher, middle and lower attaining students, including those students with special educational needs, make steady gains in learning; most students have positive attitudes to work and are keen to succeed. Thus, the standards observed in Years 9 and 11 represent satisfactory achievement overall. However, there is some underachievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11, since too little is expected of students in some lessons. By Year 9, higher attaining students cope confidently with a range of mathematical techniques; they can solve simultaneous equations, enlarge shapes using fractional scale factors and describe the rotation of a shape around a given point correctly. Lower attaining students are able, with help, to draw nets to make various three-dimensional shapes. By Year 11, higher attaining students taking statistics understand the idea of correlation; they can also work out a numerical value to describe the degree of correlation between two sets of data. Lower attaining students understand simple probability and are starting to understand how to find the probability of two independent events.
115. In both Years 9 and 11, standards are broadly average, and achievement is satisfactory, in all aspects of mathematics, including numeracy. Students are confident and competent with written arithmetic; most have appropriate knowledge of tables and other number facts. Their skills of mental calculation are less secure. Students also have sound knowledge of a range of algebraic, statistical and spatial techniques. When required to do so, students can use and apply their mathematical skills; most cope reasonably well with the numerical demands of other subjects. However, as yet, there is no whole school approach to the teaching of numeracy.
116. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with examples of good and very good teaching. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, following the introduction of strategies recommended by the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy. For example, in many lessons, effective use is made of short, written 'starter' activities; hence, students settle to work quickly and enthusiastically. In almost all lessons, there are good relationships between students and teachers. As a result, students behave well; most learn in a constructive and positive atmosphere and thus gain in confidence. In general, teachers have good subject knowledge; they give clear explanations, which students can understand. Where teaching is good, students learn at a fast rate. They are given a series of tasks, with clear time targets. Lessons are structured well; teachers take time to explain the purpose of the lesson and to summarise what has been learned at the end. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, lower attaining students learnt quickly how to solve linear equations, using a flow-chart method. In a Year 7 lesson, skilful questioning and good discussion helped students to develop significantly their understanding of percentages. However, in general, there are insufficient regular opportunities for students to develop their skills in mental calculation. Students also have relatively few opportunities to use information and communication technology to help them learn. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, and in a few lessons that were satisfactory overall, students were left for too long to practise their skills by working on the same exercise from a textbook. After a while, students lost interest and motivation, so that the pace of learning was slower than it should have been. A few students produced too little work to permit satisfactory progress over time.
117. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory, allowing students to achieve broadly as they should do. Recently, the head of department has used the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy to give a firm steer to the department's work. There is a clear programme for monitoring teaching; there is also good analysis of students' attainment and progress. As a result of its monitoring, the department knows its priorities for development. However, although an action

plan to guide improvement exists, it is not clear enough to drive development effectively. Priorities are not always realised in practice. A start has been made on developing curriculum planning in Years 7 and 8 but, in general, there is little written guidance to support teaching and learning. Teachers receive useful information summarising students' attainment and progress, but this is not used consistently well to raise standards. Students are unclear of how well they are doing, what test levels or examination grades they should be aiming for, or what they need to do in order to make progress. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. One teacher is peripatetic and there is no office where informal, on-going development can take place; these factors are affecting standards adversely.

118. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall; it has been hampered to some extent by staffing difficulties caused by illness, recruitment problems and teacher turnover. The last report stated that students' ability to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems was not developed fully, nor was their ability to calculate mentally. Both issues are now being addressed through the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, but there is need for further improvement. Students' work is now marked regularly; written work indicates that, in general, higher attaining students are challenged appropriately in Years 7 and 8. The department makes less use of information and communication technology than at the time of the last inspection, but this is due largely to limited access to computers.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- The teaching of students taking the separate sciences at GCSE is good and as a result these students achieve well.
- Many students acquire a good understanding of scientific principles because teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and give clear explanations of key concepts.
- Teachers use questions well in lessons to consolidate students' learning and to develop their understanding.
- Students enjoy science and co-operate well in practical and other group activities.
- Curriculum planning, particularly in Years 7 and 8, is good.

### Areas for improvement

- Information and communication technology is seldom used in science because there are few computers and associated resources in laboratories.
- Students' skills in investigative science are not as good as their knowledge and understanding because teachers miss opportunities to reinforce them routinely in lessons.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to undertake extended writing and speaking about their learning in science.

119. Standards in the 2001 Year 9 national tests were above both the national averages and those for schools of similar intake. This is a considerable improvement over the previous year when standards were well below those of similar schools. Students also did better in science than in English or in mathematics. There have been no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in the past three years.

120. In the GCSE examinations in 2001, the proportion of students achieving A\* to C grades was below both the national average and that for similar schools. This was because some average and below average attaining students who took the double award, did less well compared with students of similar prior attainment nationally. They also did less well when compared to other subjects within the school. However, higher attaining students who took the separate sciences, achieved well, with almost all achieving A\* to C grades. The results for the separate sciences were particularly good because these students were provided with no additional time for the extra work associated with three courses. Collectively, the results in GCSE for all sciences were lower

than the previous year when standards were broadly similar to those nationally. Girls' achievements in 2001 were broadly similar to boys and almost all students achieved a grade.

121. During the inspection, evidence confirmed that standards are about average in Years 9 and 11. Overall, students' achievements are satisfactory. However, there are significant differences in these standards both within the subject and between groups of students. The majority of students in Year 10 and 11 who follow a course leading to double award GCSE are achieving expected standards. Students' knowledge and understanding of key science principles is at least average so that in Year 9, for example, students understand the principles of balanced and unbalanced turning forces in a variety of situations. Students' practical skills are average; they work safely and with due regard to those around them and almost all can plan a fair test in an investigation. They tabulate results accurately and draw conclusions from evidence.
122. Students' numeracy skills are broadly average. They successfully carry out tasks such as calculations when using a formula, measure accurately and plot graphs of experimental results. However, few students estimate likely answers to help check their calculations and many are reluctant to use mental strategies, preferring to use calculators even for simple tasks. Some lower attaining students in Years 10 and 11 do not take account of experimental error sufficiently to draw lines of best fit in their graphs.
123. Overall, achievement is satisfactory but with some aspects that are good. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9, and those higher attaining students who take the separate GCSE science examinations, achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of key science principles. However, students do not achieve as well in their enquiry skills as they do in their knowledge and understanding because teachers miss opportunities for them to practise these skills in lessons. For example, students in Year 9 measuring the pressure they apply to the ground under different conditions did not predict how the pressure might change or consider errors in their methods. Students in Year 10 investigating exothermic reactions missed the opportunity to consider variations between their results to bring out likely errors when they were collated. Students also have too few opportunities for extended writing or oral presentation to express their understanding or to provide accounts of work they have done.
124. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with much that is good and some that is very good. Very little teaching is unsatisfactory. The teaching of higher attaining students taking the separate sciences for GCSE is particularly good. Teachers' good knowledge of their subjects and clear explanations of key ideas is a major contributory factor to students' achievements. Students' good grasp of science principles is because teachers often use questions to good effect to check students' understanding and to challenge them to think and explain. In a Year 10 physics lesson about electricity transmission over long distances, the teacher led a very good discussion with students while effectively demonstrating how raising the voltage reduced energy loss through the wires. Students were challenged to explain how transformers could be used to achieve this and where to place them for efficient transmission. Students learned very well because they were all involved, interested and challenged by the teacher's questions.
125. Most teachers start lessons well by sharing clear objectives with students and using questions to recall their prior knowledge. Explanations are usually clear and often illustrated well. Students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, respond very well when challenged by demanding work. In a Year 11 lesson about genetics, the teacher introduced new technical vocabulary very well and expected students to use it accurately when speaking and when noting key points on the activity sheet provided. In the subsequent discussion about difficult ethical questions surrounding selective breeding, students showed a very good understanding of the issues and gave some mature and thoughtful responses. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, opportunities are missed to teach higher enquiry skills routinely. For example, by posing appropriate questions, predicting what may happen and explaining variations in results obtained to consider likely errors. Some teachers place too much emphasis on short answer and sentence completion tasks, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11 but where teaching is good, students develop a good understanding of scientific notation and vocabulary.



126. Frequently, teachers introduce models and theories with good illustrative demonstrations and activities. For example, as a result of the teacher's effective demonstrations, students in Year 7 described the pitch and loudness of sounds in terms of their wave properties. Year 8 students used particle theory confidently when explaining the differences between solids, liquids and gases and they applied their ideas well to explain the expansion of materials when they are heated. However, not all teachers plan to encourage students to undertake trial runs of their experiments. As a result, some students are insecure in making decisions about the best conditions to obtain good results. For example, when Year 7 students carried out an investigation into the rate of dissolving of sugar in different forms, some took too long because the sugar was slow to dissolve when cold.
127. Relationships throughout are good; students are managed well and their behaviour is good. As a result, the great majority of students like science. They enjoy practical tasks, collaborate well during group activities and often help each other as they work. Information and communication technology skills are taught through the use of data-loggers to gather and process information and the use of CD ROMs to research information and to revise. Most lessons are planned well to take account of students' different abilities but in the weaker lessons, teachers do not illustrate key ideas or choose appropriate activities that engage students directly in learning so that they lose interest and concentration. Occasionally in class discussions, boys tend to dominate questioning unless checked by their teacher. Some teachers close lessons effectively with a plenary session that summarises the key points from the lesson but this is the exception rather than the norm. Homework is generally set and is appropriate. Teachers' marking varies from good with corrections and useful guidance on how students can improve, to marking that is ticked with a few comments of praise. There are instances of incomplete work in students' books that are not followed up.
128. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. Standards and teaching are monitored and reviewed and as a consequence appropriate priorities have been identified for inclusion in the department's development plan. Targets are set for all Year 10 and 11 students based on their prior attainment and their progress is monitored regularly through standard tests; this practice is less effective in Years 7, 8 and 9. Staff are well qualified, there is an appropriate balance of expertise and teachers are deployed effectively. Technicians are sufficient in number, work hard and make an effective contribution to students' achievements. Book resources are good as a result of recent purchases and they are used well. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in science because there are too few computers available in laboratories and access to a suite is difficult to obtain. While two laboratories are new, the majority have limited access to services and are in need of refurbishment.
129. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory. Teaching has improved and it is now monitored. Curriculum plans are now much improved, especially in Years 7 and 8 and, as a result, standards have improved. Students' skills of enquiry have also improved, but further development is required.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

#### Strengths

- Some very good quality of teaching that supports good achievement.
- Students produce very good three dimensional work especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Excellent displays of imaginative art and design work around the school.
- Students have good attitudes and behaviour in most lessons and these help them to learn well.

#### Areas for improvement

- Elimination of unsatisfactory teaching in the department.
- Improvement in the quality of students' graphite drawing.
- Strengthening of the critical studies aspect of work, linked to a literacy policy.
- Quality and quantity of information and communication technology hardware and software and their creative use in the curriculum.

130. Teachers assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 showed that standards were well below expected levels. GCSE results in 2000 and 2001 at grades A\*-C results have been significantly below the national average. Both boys and girls did poorly with boys' results much lower than those of girls. The department analysis also shows very significant differences in achievement between students in different classes. This was associated with notable differences in the quality of teaching as reported at the last inspection and which are still apparent in the department. These examination results are very surprising because they contrast so markedly with the high standard and good quality vibrant, expressive, three dimensional art and design work displayed around the school.

131. Students enter the school with broadly average competences in art and design skills and understanding. Their progress and achievement in Years 7 to 9 depends very crucially on the quality of teaching in their particular classes. Some students progress well, learning very effectively about a wide variety of two and three-dimensional techniques and associating these appropriately with a range of artists and their work. Students' attainment in these classes, and in lessons seen, is often above expectations, especially in three-dimensional work. In other classes though, students' attainment is below average and achievement is unsatisfactory because the teaching is weak. Nonetheless, because most students have different teachers through the three years, overall their achievement is satisfactory. Standards by Year 9 are average. The good teaching lays very firm foundations for what is to become students' greatest strength in their GCSE work - their very imaginative use of an impressive range of three dimensional media. Year 9 masks, based on plaster bandage moulded around students' own faces, are beginning to show this very high attainment. Designs for these, often based well on art from other cultures, are good. Students starting to decorate and embellish these masks show very good realisation of their designs using a commendable range of creative ideas. Students' progress less well are in graphite pencil drawing. Where they use colour, for example with oil pastels, standards are better and students can achieve a good tonal range. Their skills are weaker in using graphite pencil to achieve similar tonal effects.

132. Students who go on to GCSE level now progress and achieve very well indeed in Years 10 and 11. Attainment seen in current students' GCSE work indicates a significantly higher potential in their grades than results in previous years. Year 11 students' large-scale three dimensional sculptures are of the same high standard as those on display. Their drawing requires improvement to match these standards but other weaknesses recognised from last year's entry are already much improved. These related to students' annotations and critical analysis of work, particularly in sketchbooks. These are now average and strengthening as students come to understand this requirement.

133. Students in Years 10 and 11 have a particularly impressive attitude to their work. They really enjoy the creative process of making their sculptures. Year 10 recognise the need to build up to these achievements through two-dimensional studies, for example in their current cubism project. Students lower down the school display very variable attitudes in lessons. Behaviour is unsatisfactory in some lessons because discipline is insufficiently firm. Here students do not learn what is planned for lessons or projects, for example the rigour of drawing for "storyboards" in

a Year 8 lesson seen. This leads to the later weaknesses described above. Most students though, enjoy their learning in art and design and it is a favourite subject for many of them.

134. Overall, teaching is good. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. It is very variable in Years 7 to 9 and still ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, as at the time of the last report. In some lessons, students' behaviour is not managed firmly enough for all to learn well and most students waste too much time to make good progress in lessons or across the year. Students' learning in Years 7 to 9 usually varies directly with the quality of teaching, although an example was seen in a Year 9 lesson where students' very good attitudes and ability to work well with little direct teacher intervention were instrumental in creating the progress they made on the task. Where teaching is very good, as in a Year 8 lesson with students working together to produce large-scale group work based on Hundertwasser's style, students were making very good progress in the evaluative aspects of the curriculum because the teacher gave them opportunities to talk about work and criticise it constructively. In a Year 7 lesson based on aboriginal art, however, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory as students had not understood sufficiently well the use of "earth colours" so important in this style of painting, so that they were not using these predominantly enough in their work. In Years 10 and 11 students and teachers work in very good harmony, sharing very good relationships. Very effective one-to-one teacher facilitation provides the major factor in students' development of an individualistic, personal interpretation of ideas, especially in their sculptures. Year 10 students are beginning to develop better drawing but Year 11 students' graphical two-dimensional work in their portfolios needs strengthening. Visual research and preparation are now strong, but lack a deeper personal annotation. Too little focus on this aspect of written work takes place in earlier years. Also, too little access to computers is available in the department for teachers to use information and communication technology effectively in their teaching.
135. Management of the department is satisfactory. However, the school's unsuccessful attempts to eliminate the unsatisfactory quality of teaching reduces the overall effectiveness of the department. The department has insufficient computer hardware or software to support the current demands of the art and design curriculum.
136. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Many aspects criticised in the last report have improved. National Curriculum criteria are now met. Critical studies aspects are much improved overall. In some teachers' lessons, more opportunities exist for students to talk about work, though this is hindered by the very unhelpful timetabling into 50 minute single periods; this is particularly disadvantageous for GCSE students. Assessment has improved.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- GCSE results in design and technology are improving.
- There is a good balance of projects across the specialist subjects within design and technology and students are given the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills.
- There are good opportunities for students to use control technology and to use computer aided design and computer aided manufacture.
- Good teaching across the subject is having a positive impact on learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work provide insufficient guidance for teaching strategies for those students with special educational needs, who are gifted and talented or for the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology within the subject.
- Different tasks and work to meet the learning needs of all students taught in mixed ability groups.
- Risk assessment procedures are not in place.
- The use of assessment data to increase achievement and raise standards could be used more effectively.

137. Teacher assessment for students at the end of Year 9 for the past two years, indicate that students are working significantly above the national average with girls outperforming boys. However, this did not match the level of work seen during the inspection, which was broadly in line with the national average. In 2000, the proportion of students achieving GCSE grades A\* to C was in line with the national average with girls attaining higher results than boys. Results in 2001, have increased with girls continuing to outperform boys. Students achieved better results in design and technology compared to most other subjects in the school. However, not all students in Year 10 and 11 study a design and technology subject.
138. In work seen during the inspection, attainment of students at the end of Year 9 was broadly in line with the standard expected of students nationally. In the lessons seen, students showed skills in developing a good range of products in food, resistant materials, graphics, electronics, systems and control. Work in textiles however, is limited by the lack of specialist accommodation and resources. When students enter the school, they have a varied range of experience of design and technology. In Years 7 to 9, students gain a good level of knowledge that underpins and increases their understanding of the products they design. Students are taught a range of two- and three-dimensional drawing skills and apply these skills well to their work in other specialist areas within technology. Students use a good range of hand and machine tools when making products in all material areas. Electronics is well embedded into the work and students in Year 9 in resistant materials showed knowledge and confidence when making their printed circuit boards for a timed lighting device. Students have fewer opportunities to analyse existing products to identify the range of materials and processes used in some specialist areas and this limits their ideas when designing their own products. Good use is made of information and communication technology control and computer aided design and computer aided manufacture. However, less effective use of information and communication technology is made to raise the standard of presentation or to process data for designing products. In all specialist areas students use numerical data well to plan and produce products and models which are often designed to scale. They present the results of surveys in the form of charts, graphs as well as calculating the nutritional value of food products.
139. In the work seen in Years 7 to 9, the achievement of all students including those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Students use the main stages of the design process and as a result they are beginning to work more independently. They are guided by the structure that teachers provide in the lessons; this is often in the form of structured worksheets that lead them through the stages of the design process. Students gain experience of assembling simple electronics circuits, and they know and understand the knowledge that underpins their work on circuits. In resistant materials in Year 9, students design a range of storage products with a good level of detail in the planning. Design portfolios show evidence of a growing standard of planning. In food technology, students use a good range of skills, involving market research and product testing.
140. In the work seen during the inspection, standards in Years 10 and 11 are above the level expected of students at these ages nationally. This is reflected in the results achieved by students in the GCSE examinations in 2000 and 2001. Teachers provide examples of good work, which show students how all aspects of the examination marking criteria are covered. Students use a wide range of investigation and research skills, and evaluate strengths and weaknesses effectively as their work progresses. They develop products of good quality, including a range of making skills that involve large-scale manufacturing processes. All students develop a range of drawing skills and work methodically through each stage of the design process.
141. In the work seen in Years 10 and 11, achievement is good. Students increase their skills in using the design process to produce good quality coursework. There is a good mix of projects that enable students to follow standard processes and at the same time give them enough opportunity to include features of their own design ideas. Folders show a good level of graphic skills in all areas of the subject. The work is well annotated with explanations and details of specific features and processes to be included in their work. Students use a good range of presentation skills including the use of information and communication technology to raise the overall standard of

their work. They also used information and communication technology well to process and present the information they collected on surveys about the products they designed. Higher attaining students produced designs well supported with accurate, well-developed plans. Folder work included the testing and modelling of ideas before producing the final product. Higher attaining students apply accuracy and show a good level of designing. Lower attaining students design products well suited to the courses and are supported by their teachers to produce work that reflects the basic requirements of the examination.

142. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Some very good lessons were seen. In lessons where teaching is good, teachers provide a good structure to lessons with clear objectives to guide and support students. Teachers plan their lessons well and have high expectation of their students. Some teachers succeed in stretching students of all levels of attainment, but this is not consistent across the department. Work is not always matched well enough to meet the needs of students of different attainment levels who are taught in mixed ability groups. Lower attaining students, and those with special educational needs, are very well supported on a one-to-one basis and they progress well in lessons. Teachers have a positive approach with all students and as a result all students are included well in all the learning activities. Students form good relationships with their teachers and work hard for them. They generally behave well because they know what standards are, and are not, acceptable.
143. Teachers use a good range of strategies to enable students to develop the technical vocabulary associated with the subject. They also prepare guidance notes that enable lower attaining students to structure their writing; this is having a positive effect on the development of the students' literacy skills. This is developed further when students are required to write in a variety of styles such as making notes, writing work in sequence, and when they give instructions of how to make their products and when preparing computer sequencing for control technology. Students use information and communication technology well to process and present data to support their examination coursework. Students in all year groups use the Internet to research information. A good example of the use of information and communication technology, and the application of accurate measurements was seen in a Year 7 resistant materials lesson. Students had designed a maze that was to be manufactured using a computer controlled milling machine. They were well guided by the teacher whilst marking out and cutting the materials to be used.
144. The general management of the department is good. The head of department has focused on raising standards across all specialist areas of the subject. The department benefits from a strong team approach with appropriate systems to monitor and support teaching and learning and to record the attainment of students. However, assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be to raise achievement further and to set short term subject specific targets for individual students. Although there were some examples of good marking, this was inconsistent in the work seen in class; teachers' comments did not always recognise the things that students did well or give sufficient guidance for improvement. Schemes of work are in place but they do not provide sufficient guidance to help teachers plan tasks for students with special educational needs or those who are gifted and talented. There is also insufficient detail in the guidance for the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology within the subject. The procedures for risk assessment are not secure and during the inspection week health and safety issues related to dust extraction were reported to the school.
145. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. Although standards of students in Years 7 to 9 remain broadly in line with national expectations, the standards of work of students in Years 10 and 11 has improved and is now above the national average. Teaching is now good overall although there is inconsistency in the marking of students' work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

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

#### Strengths

- Good teaching is leading to good achievement and rising standards in Years 10 and 11.
- Very good assessment procedures are used to monitor students' progress.
- The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive range of fieldwork opportunities.

#### Areas for improvement

- Teachers' management of some students in Years 7 to 9 and expectations of the standards of students' written and illustrative work.
- The marking and correction of work in order to improve students' grammatical accuracy, particularly spelling.
- The planning and use of information and communication technology.

146. Teacher assessments of students' attainment at the end of Year 9 show that standards are well above average. However, these judgements are insecure because the National Curriculum criteria have not been used well to identify the standards achieved. Results in the 2001 GCSE examination were significantly below the national average at grades A\* to C. Girls achieved higher than boys but both boys and girls were significantly below their respective national average. Students did less well in geography than they did in most other subjects but results show an improving trend over the last three years. The below average standards have been due to weaknesses in coursework standards, students' attitudes on entry to the course and the appropriateness of the examination to students' needs. These issues have been addressed.
147. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are close to the national average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement, as students' standards on entry to the school are broadly average. Students gain knowledge of local places through map-work and visits, such as Year 9 studies of Portsmouth, when they undertake research and write detailed answers about the changes seen. Most students possess an appropriate range of graphical skills and accurately plot data about the climate of the rain forests of Brazil; some students' work lacks because it is untidy and incomplete. In work on river valleys, students know the features and processes that shape the landscape. Year 8 students for example, know about waterfalls and how they are formed, but for many students understanding is shallow and they do not explain their answers clearly and fully. Students' written work is generally average and most use technical words in appropriate context, but weaknesses in spelling reduces the quality of the work.
148. Inspection evidence showed that students' standards in Year 11 are average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement based on their standards at the end of Year 9. Most students consolidate map skills and produce a satisfactory standard in GCSE coursework. Higher attaining students achieve good standards in projects because they use a wider range of skills and explain their findings in detail. Year 10 students understand about issues of world development. They know about the characteristics of Kenya's development and the nature of trade with more economically developed countries, but many do not use the case study enough to explain differences with more developed countries. Students in Year 11 have good understanding of weather patterns associated with depressions. They use terms like 'cold front' in the correct context and are able to describe and explain weather changes. Many students however, do not explain answers fully in writing and poor spelling further reduces the quality of work.
149. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. The aims of lessons are carefully explained and learning continuity is good because teachers regularly begin lessons by consolidating work previously covered. In lessons where students make good progress it is because teachers manage students very well and set challenging tasks for them. Year 7 pupils for example, made good progress in a lesson about different types of settlement because the tasks encouraged them to think about ideas and explain the reasons for decisions. On some occasions however, progress is unsatisfactory because of the disruptive behaviour of a few students and the strategies to control them are not effective. Students with special educational need are well catered for through appropriate work and individual support. However, tasks do not challenge higher attaining students well enough. Teachers regularly mark work and write supportive summary comments but insufficient attention is given to correcting spelling and

grammatical accuracy. As a result, improvement in writing is slower than is to be expected. Good use is made of books, film and maps to support learning and these generate interest in topics. Year 8 students for example, watched attentively a video about river valleys and were able to describe and explain features. However, the use of information and communication technology to support learning is not well developed.

150. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 10 and Year 11 is good overall. Lessons are well prepared and learning is enhanced through fieldwork and educational visits. The quality of GCSE coursework is improving because students are given better guidance and accept more responsibility for their learning. Year 11 students made very good progress in lessons about weather studies because the teachers set high standards and moved the lessons briskly forward. Students responded well, applying themselves and producing high standards of work. In Year 10, good teaching helps students to understand terms such as bilateral and multilateral trade. In a Year 10 lesson however, teaching was unsatisfactory because a minority of boys, including some with special educational needs, had poor attitudes to learning and were unco-operative. This was in spite of the regular support and encouragement given by the teacher and support assistant.
151. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department has a clear sense of direction for the subject's development and the strategies adopted since his appointment are beginning to impact well on the improvement of standards of work. This is particularly evident in the good progress students make in the improvement of their basic literacy skills. Curriculum planning is good and enhanced by fieldwork for all year groups. This has a positive influence on students' attitudes and achievement is rising as a result. The assessment of students' progress is very good. Teachers and students are better informed about how well they are doing and this has led to improved support, particularly to raise boys' achievement in GCSE examinations.
152. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards of work at the end of Year 9 have improved and are close to the national average. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 has improved from satisfactory to good and there have been significant improvements in the leadership and management of the subject.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Standards are improving.
- Good teaching. Lessons are well planned and structured to support students' learning.
- Very good procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress.
- Good leadership and management, and very good organisation.

### Areas for improvement

- Consistency of challenge and of opportunities for students to take the lead in their learning.
- Increased use of books and information and communication technology to encourage independent research.

153. The results of the National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were average; they were significantly better than the results in 2000. The work of Year 9 students reflects continued improvement with higher attaining students in particular, attaining at above average levels. GCSE results have also improved. Results were close to the average in 2000 and above average in 2001. The work of students currently in Year 11 is also above average.
154. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are improving and are above average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, but boys did slightly better than girls at GCSE in 2001, and their results were significantly better than boys' results nationally. Students' knowledge and understanding are good, and they develop a good range of historical skills. They have particular strengths in their ability to scrutinise and interpret historical evidence, to judge its

reliability and to make comparisons. This was shown clearly in Year 9 lessons where students closely examined pictorial evidence of nineteenth century living conditions; they made perceptive comparisons and used their good knowledge to pose hypotheses to explain the differences in interpretation and portrayal. These skills are developed from an early stage. For instance, Year 7 students were very sharp and perceptive in their use of sources to classify different categories of Roman gladiators.

155. By Year 11, many students and especially higher attaining students, demonstrate a mature grasp of historical trends and patterns making links, and readily making comparisons with events in the past and those in the present. This was shown very well by a group of Year 11 boys in their spontaneous discussion of comparisons and differences between World War 2 bombing and the recent terrorist attacks in the USA. Their discussion was soundly based and well informed, and included an investigation of the differences in motives and in the characters of Hitler and Bin Laden.
156. Written work develops well, albeit some, especially in Years 7 to 9, is careless in spelling, punctuation and presentation. Literacy skills overall, however, are well supported especially in the extension of students' vocabulary. This results in their confident and accurate use of historical terms. Confident use is also made of numeracy skills to calculate, analyse and present data. Information and communication technology is used very well in the presentation of work, especially GCSE course work. Less use is made of information and communication technology for independent research.
157. Students achieve well in comparison with the standards they reached earlier on entry to the school. Students are very positive towards their learning of history. Uptake to the GCSE course in Year 10 is well above average. In lessons, students show a lively interest and are keen to contribute. They concentrate well and work hard and often productively together. Classroom relationships are very good and create a very good learning atmosphere. Students respond very well to the challenge and pace in the teaching. Students with special educational needs achieve well. Their learning needs are well known and well met in lessons through teachers' guidance and the adaptation of tasks.
158. Teaching is good. It was good or better in all, apart from one lesson observed during the inspection; no teaching was less than satisfactory. Students learn well because of the clarity of teachers' introductions and explanations. Their interest is aroused by brisk purposeful approaches and the skilful sharing of the teachers' good subject knowledge. They respond well to high expectations. For instance, students in a Year 7 lesson on gladiators, worked at full stretch in response to the constant challenge of the teacher that they should 'use the power of their minds' in scrutinising evidence to identify differences in armour and weapons. Similarly, Year 11 students relished the pace and challenge, in gauging the effectiveness of propaganda in maintaining good morale during the bombing of cities in World War 2. In this lesson, and many others, students' learning, including that of those with special educational needs, was well supported by constant checking through teachers' questioning and individual support and guidance.
159. Questioning is used consistently for checking progress, but it is often insufficiently probing in challenging and extending students' thinking. Learning is very well structured and while this enables students to progress well in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills, the structure is often too tight to allow them to take the initiative of which they are well capable. For example, there are too few opportunities for students to deepen and extend their understanding through meaningful discussion in groups or the whole class.
160. Resources are planned very carefully to support learning. Work sheets and reproduced historical sources are well chosen and adapted to meet the needs of students of different abilities. However, too little use is made of the very good text books in the department, and this restricts opportunities for students to read more widely and to research independently. Video material is very well used to deepen understanding and to promote empathy. For example, video clips on the bombing of Coventry and Dresden caused students to reflect deeply on the consequences for the populations of the two cities, and strongly promoted their spiritual and moral development.



161. The good provision made for history results from good leadership and management, and very good organisation. The very experienced head of department provides good support and guidance for the work of teachers. Much effort has gone into ensuring effective planning and that the curriculum offers broad, balanced and interesting learning opportunities. Standards and provision are monitored closely and include classroom observation. These processes have strongly supported the good progress made since the last inspection in improving standards, and the quality of teaching especially. Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress are very good. Their work is marked regularly often with constructive comments to help students to improve standards. Progress over time is tracked closely against their earlier attainment and targets are set for improvement. Assessment is closely linked to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9, and to GCSE grades in Years 10 and 11.
162. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The improvement in standards is largely attributable to the improvement in teaching, and in the procedures for assessment and monitoring of students' progress and target setting.

### INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

#### Strengths

- Teachers have high expectations that pupils will achieve well.
- Students have good familiarity with using commercial software
- Students' work is close to commercial standard in terms of layout and presentation.
- The reinforcement of literacy through teachers' precise use of the language of business and commerce.

#### Areas for improvement

- Some teachers are insufficiently familiar with the monitoring and assessment procedures for the GNVQ course
- Insufficient hardware and software resources available outside computer suites
- Insufficient use of information and communication technology across the curriculum

163. At the end of Year 9, teacher assessment shows that standards are above average. GCSE results have improved significantly and in 2001 they were above average for both boys and girls. They are better than most other subjects studied in school.
164. The newly-introduced GNVQ in information and communication technology is currently taken by students in Years 8, 9 and 10 and will completely replace the GCSE information studies course in the next academic year. As the course was introduced simultaneously into each of these years there has been no gain in standards from year to year which is attributable to GNVQ work. However, standards of work seen in each year of the GNVQ course are at least equal to expected levels at this early stage and in some aspects they are well above. Using the assessment body's criteria with regard to work seen during the inspection, all students are working at least at pass level, and a good proportion are working at the level of merit or distinction.
165. By Year 9, students are able to use information and communication technology to communicate effectively in various contexts, particularly those of business and commerce. In practical sessions, they reflect on each others' progress critically and willingly, often making constructive suggestions as to improvements in data gathering and presentation. Average and lower attaining students demonstrate at least satisfactory skills of keyboarding and input, whilst higher attaining students show excellent skills of drafting, layout, presentation and data and are able to articulate alternative methods of approach suited to a variety of contexts. Most students with special educational needs are able to use effective techniques of layout and text presentation to at least satisfactory standards; some have good technical skills of accessing information from CD ROM and Internet sources.

166. By Year 11, higher attaining students are confident in using diverse sources of information and in applying concepts and techniques of information and communication technology to measure, record, automate and control events; they review their own progress critically to create action plans and improvement. Average and lower attaining students know how to make effective use of information and communication technology in order to investigate, interpret and present information, particularly in business contexts. Boys and girls perform equally in most respects.
167. Students of all levels of attainment, irrespective of gender and including those students with special educational needs, make good progress in learning and their achievement is good; they do well in relation to their initially varying abilities on entry. A Year 7 information and communication technology keyboarding course rapidly consolidates keyboarding and input skills and students become familiar with basic skills of text processing, spreadsheet construction and usage and graphic illustration. The good teaching on the GNVQ course for students in Years 8 to 10, enables all to achieve increasing familiarity with the development of techniques of communicating and sharing information with varying audiences, and to refine and adapt techniques to suit differing contexts. For this and for the GCSE course, each year shows attainment of at least expected levels, and frequently better in relation to the collection, analysis and the presentation of data. Through these, and further opportunities across the curriculum, the statutory requirements are fulfilled.
168. The good standards of work and good achievement made in the separate information and communication technology lessons are not supported well in other subjects because of lack of access to computers in subject areas. There are some exceptions such as those in Year 7 design and technology, where students further develop skills of control and design through designing a maze and using milling machines; in subsequent years they further develop CAD/CAM skills through the use of Lego tech and Robolab. In science, students use data loggers and in English, and history there are opportunities for students to use their skills of text processing, layout and presentation. In general, students have too few opportunities across the curriculum to use information and communication technology to help them to learn because of the limited access to computers in subject areas.
169. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. In all lessons, teachers use multi-media projectors and commercial standard software confidently. They use the language of business and commerce precisely and are clearly providing students with good role models. Through emulating the approach of their teachers, students produce good work. Teachers carefully offer individual support; this allows students to progress at their own pace and to learn well. All teachers are skilled in classroom management, and their vigilance and timely intervention in practical sessions also allows students who are progressing faster to undertake extension tasks. Students respond very well to the very good relationships established by teachers. Behaviour is consistently good and in all lessons, students work hard and support each other very well. They always seek to fulfil tasks and continually seek improvement.
170. Strong contributory factors to the good levels of achievement are teachers' use and presentation of software of commercial standard, the good choice of CD ROM audio-visual resource and the well-maintained computer suites. The department has produced a structured sequence of business letters and templates, memoranda and allied resources. These are regularly deployed in teaching sessions, and the exemplary layout and grammar give a strong boost not only to layout of student work but particularly to literacy. Through constant visual exposure to well-structured exemplar sentences, students are influenced to produce word-processed work of a similarly high standard.
171. The leadership and management of the department are good. The management and introduction of the GNVQ course has been very good. Effective teamwork is ensured through regular meetings where individual and class group progress is discussed and data exchanged. There is good liaison with pastoral tutors and year heads. Standards of work are closely monitored through this approach and classroom observation is frequent and supportive of sharing of good practice. The

recently-established GNVQ course is developing well, but some teachers are not yet familiar with the system of assessment and individual target setting.

172. Overall, there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. All students are now quite familiar with techniques of keyboarding and data input and with the potential of information and communication technology as a learning tool. The new GNVQ course has consolidated the earlier experiences of students and a much greater number of staff now confidently introduce students to the potential use of information and communication technology. Senior managers acknowledge that the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum requires further development and that to capitalise on training, the systematic and co-ordinated planning of use of departmental information and communication resources need to be enhanced.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

### Strengths

- Leadership is good resulting in a shared commitment to improve standards in both languages.
- Students' attitudes to language learning are positive resulting in good concentration and willingness contribute to speaking activities.
- Students show good understanding of basic grammatical concepts and can apply them when using the foreign language.
- Assessment in Year 7 to 9 is good and pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

### Areas for improvement

- The standards achieved at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE at grades A\* to C.
- Teachers' consistent use of the target language in the classroom so that students learn to respond in the language that they are learning.
- The use of information and communication technology in French and Spanish.
- The provision of opportunities for independent learning beyond the textbook, including more extended reading and speaking;
- Different tasks and work for different groups of pupils built into teaching.

173. Teachers' assessments in 2001 in French and Spanish show standards for all students to be well below national expectations, with boys performing significantly worse than girls. GCSE results in 2001 at grades A\* to C were also well below the national average for all schools in French and below the average for Spanish, with boys achieving significantly worse results than girls. Results at A\* to G are in line with the national average in both languages.

174. Standards seen in the inspection in Year 9 in both French and Spanish are in line with national expectations and no discernible differences in boys' achievement were observed. In both French and Spanish students demonstrate positive attitudes to language learning and their achievement is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs make good progress in the lower to middle ability sets. Higher attaining students in French can deal with complex reading passages, have a good understanding of grammatical concepts and can apply them in their own work. They are also able to use tenses other than the present in more extended writing in the end-of-unit tests. There is evidence of more extended listening, but extended speaking was not seen, with most responses being short sentences based on stimuli in the textbook and students often reliant on written prompts. Middle and lower attaining students are able to understand and use language in limited contexts, producing short descriptive sentences, both in speaking and writing in lessons with support. Some more extended writing was again seen in end-of-unit tests, include tenses and simple opinions. In Spanish, all students have a good understanding of grammatical concepts. Lower and middle attaining students can produce short speaking presentations, giving personal information and short writing passages. Higher attaining students can use a range of tenses and give opinions in writing, although again there is no evidence of more extended and independent speaking.

175. In Years 10 and 11, in both French and Spanish, work seen was overall in line with national expectations reflecting satisfactory achievement. In both French and Spanish, practice for the modular GCSE shows evidence of more extended speaking preparation and the ability to deal with more extended reading and listening tasks. Higher attaining students can produce accurate more extended writing in the contexts required by the modules, using different tenses and complex structures. In lessons in French, higher attaining students respond well to oral tasks and are able to ask questions confidently and with good pronunciation and intonation. Lower and middle attaining students produce short oral responses; they understand basic spoken and written language and produce simple language including past tenses with support in writing. In Spanish, in lessons observed, students demonstrated good reading skills and a very good understanding of tenses and grammatical concepts. Lower attaining students produced short pieces language in the context of weather.
176. Overall, teaching and learning is satisfactory in French and Spanish with some examples of good and very good teaching. The department suffered staffing difficulties last year and a new head of department has been in post since April 2001. Teachers have good subject knowledge in both languages providing good models of pronunciation, intonation and range of language for pupils. They provide clear explanations of grammatical concepts and structures, so that students can use the new structures themselves. They have good classroom management skills and all students are able to learn languages in a positive learning environment. Lessons are well-planned, linked to schemes of work and with clear objectives, shared with students so that they know what is expected of them. Homework is clearly linked to the learning objectives, providing opportunities to consolidate and practise new language. However, there was little evidence of planning for the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly in mixed ability groups, nor for teaching beyond the textbook to give students the opportunity to use language independently and in different contexts. Where extension activities are mentioned, they are not explicit and were rarely seen in lessons.
177. A good variety of teaching methods are used, such as games, pair-work, surveys and information gap activities to provide motivating opportunities for students to learn and consolidate language, but there are few opportunities for pupils to read or use language independently. The warm-up activities at the beginning of every lesson, give pupils the opportunities to recap previous learning and to consolidate new language. In Years 7 to 9, in both French and Spanish students are made aware of the requirements of different National Curriculum levels and skills, via their own record sheet, marking and discussion, so that they know what they have to do to improve work. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are similarly aware of the requirements of GCSE and the demands of different grade thresholds. In some lessons observed, French or Spanish was the main language of communication in the classroom with pupils responding readily in the language themselves, but in many others there was too much use of English in instructions, explanation and introduction of new language, resulting in fewer opportunities for pupils to use the language spontaneously or independently. There were also occasions when new language was introduced via a written prompt rather than orally, resulting in poor pronunciation from the students.
178. There is very little opportunity for pupils to use information and communication technology in their language learning. Although opportunities are clearly identified in the schemes of work for both languages, and information regarding appropriate French and Spanish websites is clearly displayed in classrooms, limited access to computers prevents information and communication technology being fully part of the curriculum in languages.
179. The department is well led and managed. It works as a team with a clear commitment to improve standards. Department documentation is clear, with appropriate policies covering a range of issues, such as raising attainment, teaching and learning, monitoring and assessment. The department development plan, clearly linked to the school development plan, identifies appropriate areas for development such as training opportunities, information and communication technology and resources.
180. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. GCSE results have declined in French and Spanish and two of the issues raised at the last inspection have not been

addressed: there are still few opportunities for independent learning such as more extended speaking and independent reading and English is still too often spoken by teachers rather than that of the language they are teaching. Since the appointment of the new head of department this term, a number of strategies have been put into place to raise standards. In order to try to raise standards in Years 10 and 11, the department has agreed a change of GCSE course for 2003 to one that is more flexible and does not let students fail assessment opportunities in Year 10.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Teaching is good and has a positive impact on students' learning.
- Good leadership and management has resulted in improved standards and provision.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons. These enable students to develop further their performing skills.

### Areas for improvement

- There is no provision for the use of information and communication technology due to inadequate resources.
- The accommodation is poor. Some lessons have to be taught in other areas of the school and this has an adverse affect on students' learning.
- There is a shortage of musical instruments in classrooms and a lack of books.

181. The 2001 and 2000 teacher assessments for pupils in Year 9 were above the national average. There has been some fluctuation in GCSE examination results in the past two years. The 2001 results for students gaining A\*-C grades were below the national average, with no student gaining an A grade. Girls did better than boys in this examination. In 2000, the examination was taken by more students and their results were well above the national average.
182. By Year 9, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations; this has been an improvement since the last inspection. Year 7 students show a good vocal ability. Many can sing with a good sense of pitch. They can perform well in front of the class. Students in Year 8 make-up their own rhythmic accompaniment to a song in groups. They show average attainment in adding different parts and in playing these together. They evaluate their own performances and make appropriate suggestions for their improvement. By Year 9, some students are able to locate notes on the keyboard accurately and to play a short melody fluently. There are a few students however, who have limited keyboard skills. In a Year 9 lesson, students played the opening bars of the signature tune of EastEnders. Some students were able to add a simple chordal part underneath the melody and play both parts well together. Others however, could only manage to play a few notes accurately. By Year 11, attainment is below average. Although only two lessons were seen in Years 10 and 11, analysis of students' work confirms this judgement. There is a musically less able cohort of students in the present Year 11. There have been some staff changes during this groups' GCSE course. The curriculum leader has only been in post for a short while and has not had sufficient time to improve the standard of work of these students. In Year 11, students find difficulty in using notation to record a short phrase, which is played to them. They show a limited musical knowledge and an insecure understanding of musical vocabulary. However, their skills in composition and ensemble playing are better. Students in Year 10 are confident performers. They use improvisation satisfactorily when exploring ideas for a group composition. They show a good understanding of the way different instrumental effects can be used to create an atmosphere.
183. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, students made good progress in understanding simple musical structures. They identified when a section of music was repeated and when it was different. In a Year 9 lesson, students made good progress in understanding how simple chords can be used to harmonise a melody. In Years 10 and 11, students' achievement is satisfactory; they make satisfactory progress in ensemble playing and in devising short compositions. Students with special educational needs, as well as the more

musically able, make good progress in lessons. Students who take part in extra-curricular activities achieve very well. The students in the jazz band achieve high standards of musical performance.

184. Overall, teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9; one very good lesson was seen. No secure judgement can be made about teaching in Years 10 and 11 as too few lessons were seen. However, in the two lessons seen teaching was very good. There has been an improvement in teaching since the last inspection. As a result of good teaching, students' attitudes towards the subject are good. They exhibit good behaviour in lessons and work well together in groups. They enjoy performing to each other. Students who attend extra-curricular activities show a committed approach to rehearsals. Lessons are well organised and effective support is given to individual students during tasks. Good opportunity is provided for students to compose and then to evaluate what they have done. Teachers make good provision for developing students' listening skills. For example, in a very good Year 8 lesson, students were asked the question "What makes a good ensemble performance?" They listened to short extracts of music and identified the different percussion instruments. They named which instrument was playing off the beat. As a result, students realised how the overall effect of a player playing out of time can mar an ensemble performance. This had a positive impact on their understanding of ensemble playing. There is no provision for the use of information and communication technology at present. This is due to the inadequacies of the resources. Satisfactory provision is made for developing students' literacy skills.
185. Over 110 students receive instrumental lessons provided by peripatetic staff from Hampshire Music Service. These teachers make a valuable contribution to the work of the department. The subject makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their cultural development is further enhanced by the provision of "a piece for the week", which Year 7 and Year 8 students listen to in assemblies and lessons. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities with an increasing number of students who attend these activities. At present over 150 students attend. There are a number of different groups, including a choir, a jazz band and a recorder group. Rehearsals are taking place for a performance of Smike next year.
186. The leadership and management of the subject are good. There have been some staff changes since the last inspection, but staffing is now stable. The curriculum leader joined the school one and a half terms ago. He has already made a significant contribution to improving the provision for the subject. The curriculum leader is ably supported by a part-time colleague and both work effectively together as a team. The last inspection highlighted weaknesses in the schemes of work and in assessment procedures. Schemes of work now offer a broadly based curriculum, with sufficient experiences in composing and appraising. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.
187. The accommodation for music is poor. Over a quarter of lessons have to be taught away from the department. This limits the musical experiences that can be provided for students, as it is not possible to use instruments during these lessons. There is also an insufficient number of practice rooms for both students and instrumental teachers. The school is aware of the accommodation problem and there are plans in place for its improvement. Resources are also inadequate and a shortage of percussion instruments, CDs and textbooks prevent students learning as well as they could. Although there are two computers in the department, they are not in working order and teachers are unable to use information and communication technology in their teaching.
188. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The standard of students' work in Years 7 to 9 has improved. Teaching is consistently good or better and schemes of work and assessment procedures are now in place.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Leadership and management are very good with a clear vision for implementing change.

- Students benefit from a wide range of activities in the curriculum and extra curricular activities and participation is high.
- Teachers are a knowledgeable and experienced team of specialists.
- High expectations are demanded of students in terms of behaviour, attitudes to work and standards of dress.
- Teaching and learning is good enabling students to make good progress as they move through the school.

Areas for improvement

- To raise standards in GCSE especially the attainment of boys.
- To use assessment to inform curriculum planning.

189. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2001 show that standards are above average. GCSE examination results fluctuate and in 2001 they were below the national average for grades A\* to C, but were in line for grades A\* to G. All students who were entered for the GCSE examination achieved an A\* - G grade. However in 2001, boys achieved well below the national average whereas girls' grades were broadly average. Boys do not achieve as well in the written paper as they do in the practical.
190. From work seen during the inspection, by the end of Year 9 standards are average. At the end of Year 11, attainment in the core curriculum is also average. Students' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry. Students frequently make good progress in lessons but over time, progress is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs are fully included in the physical education programme and they make good progress. In Year 9, students have a sound knowledge and understanding of games play and perform sending and receiving skills with increasing confidence and control. In a Year 8 hockey lesson, the higher attaining students placed the ball with increasing success and accuracy in competitive play. Dance has just been introduced in Year 9 and girls were seen to perform and remember a complex jazz study; however, their choreographic skills were not well developed. Observations in gymnastics were limited to Year 7. Students were able to plan and perform a sequence, but their movements lack body tension, fluency and clarity of body shape. In Year 11 in the core curriculum, students increase their knowledge, understanding and performance skills in a range of activities. In a GCSE basketball lesson, students applied a range of more advanced skills and tactics in competitive play with a number of high attaining students planning and anticipating moves in order to outwit their opponents.
191. Teaching and learning are good. All teachers are knowledgeable specialists who are confident in teaching a range of activities. Students respond well to the high expectations demanded of them. They are well managed and organised and as a result behaviour is good. Teachers make good use of questioning and demonstration improving students' observation, and performance skills, but insufficient attention is given to developing students' literacy skills by displaying key words.
192. Students enjoy their lessons, they are highly motivated and willing to be physically active, due to the enthusiasm and good role models of the physical education staff. Positive relationships are fostered and these help to develop students' confidence and self esteem. As students move through the school they develop good social and co-operative skills and in competitive team play demonstrate fair play and good sporting behaviour. In all years students are aware of their own and others' safety and use the facilities with due care and attention.
193. Students benefit from a wide range of opportunities in the curriculum and extra curricular activities. A high percentage of time is spent on games in Years 7 to 9 limiting the amount of time spent on other areas of activity. The provision for extra curricular recreational and sporting opportunities is good and students have extensive opportunities to represent the school in competitive sport with a number of students selected to play regionally and nationally.
194. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department keeps abreast of current issues, trends and initiatives and is committed to managing change. This is evident in the school receiving a Sportsmark award, the current application for Sports College status and her strong

leadership and involvement in the current building programme. The department works well together as a team and give generously of their time. Monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning is good. Procedures for assessment are good overall; however, assessment is not used fully to inform curriculum planning. In order to raise standards in examination results, GCSE students need to be made fully aware of their level of work and how they need to improve.

195. Improvements since the last inspection are good. Health related exercise is now taught as a discrete area of activity. Raising the profile of girls' physical education in Year 9 and providing a relevant curriculum has made a significant impact on the number of girls now selecting GCSE physical education. In Years 10 and 11, the popular Junior Sports Leaders Award, a vocational qualification developing leadership, management and communication skills enhances the programme.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is very good overall, and students learn well.
- Challenging and interesting homework is used to excellent effect to extend students' learning in the classroom.
- Excellent procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress help them to understand how to raise their levels of attainment.
- The new head of department designate is beginning to raise standards.

### Areas for improvement

- Religious education is not taught to students in Years 10 and 11.
- The time allocated to teaching the locally agreed syllabus in Years 7 to 9 is well below its recommendations.

196. The school has offered Year 10 and 11 students the option of pursuing a GCSE examination course in religious studies, but the numbers expressing an interest have been too low to form a viable group. No provision is made for teaching the Agreed Syllabus. Therefore no judgements could be made during the inspection week about students' attainment in Years 10 and 11.

197. There are no national standards for religious education in Year 9. However, in work seen during the inspection, students' attainments at the end of Year 9 were in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus for their age. The majority have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, of the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country, and of their origins and distinctive features. They have a satisfactory grasp of religious language, concepts and ideas. They have a basic understanding of why the beliefs of practicing members of faith communities are important to them, and how they shape their lives. Within that context, their skills in making a personal response to religious questions are particularly well developed. However, their analytical and evaluative skills are less developed than their empathetic skills and knowledge or understanding.

198. In Years 7 to 9, the majority of both boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment learn well in individual lessons. This is because of very good teaching, and the good attitudes which most bring to their work. However, their achievement by Year 9 is satisfactory rather than good, for two reasons. Firstly, the low time allocated to the subject has an adverse impact on the breadth and depth in which it can be studied, and limits how well students can achieve, despite very good teaching. Secondly, the impact of the very good teaching, which has characterised the subject since the appointment of a specialist teacher at the start of this term, has yet to become fully embedded.

199. The quality of teaching is very good overall and is never less than satisfactory. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have an excellent grasp of their subject, and very high expectations of



students. They know clearly what they wish them to learn, routinely share their aims with them, and review how far they have achieved them at the end of lessons. They plan their lessons very well to achieve their aims, and engage and hold students' interest through a variety of imaginative and challenging activities and tasks, that are well matched to their individual needs.

200. For example, Year 7 students made very good gains in understanding the significance and power of ritual and symbolism through designing and performing their own symbolic acts as members of an imaginary community of their own creation. Excellently planned homework then enabled them to apply the creative insights they had gained to an understanding of symbols and ritual in Sikhism. Again, Year 9 students made very good gains in understanding different responses to the Holocaust because the teacher made imaginative use of Chagall's disturbing painting, *White Crucifixion*, to challenge their thinking. They were led step by step through a carefully planned sequence of activities to an understanding of Chagall's didactic purpose in the painting, and were able to evaluate its validity as a response to the Holocaust compared with those represented by *Yad Vashem* and *Yom Hashoah*.
201. Teachers use very good questioning skills to extend students' understanding. For example, having previously explored the evidence for the existence of the historical Jesus, Year 8 students focused on issues relating to his identity and nature. The teacher extended their understanding of possible responses to the question, "Who was Jesus?" through skilled management of whole class discussion, based on a range of traditional and modern artistic depictions of Jesus, such as Peter Koenig's, *The Mocking*.
202. Teachers create a secure ethos in lessons in which learning is enhanced because students feel able to take risks. This was well evidenced in a Year 9 lesson, when a pupil with special needs felt able to make an extended contribution to discussion, to which his peers listened with respect. Teachers manage time very well, setting a good pace that ensures that students make a sustained intellectual effort. They set excellent homework that is well matched to the differing needs of students, and extends learning in class.
203. Excellent marking helps students to understand how to raise the level of their attainment, and promotes the development of their literacy skills through very good attention to spelling, punctuation, syntax and grammar. This very good teaching is underpinned by the very good relationships that teachers enjoy with their students, based on mutual respect and caring. Where teaching is less secure, it is because the low overall time allocation inhibits teachers from pursuing some aspects of the work in sufficient depth, or from exploring interesting issues that arise in discussion. The pressure is always on just to cover the syllabus in the time available.
204. The specialist teacher who is head of department designate was appointed at the start of term. She is already exercising excellent leadership and management within the constraints of the overall provision. In a very short space of time, she has done much to move the subject forward through developmental work in key areas, and standards have begun to rise. Prior to the start of this term, there was a lack of overall direction to the subject. Since the beginning of term, the quality of teaching has significantly improved, and with it students' attitudes towards the subject, which are now good overall. Schemes of work have been re-written, and are now very good. New and excellent procedures for assessing students' work have been put in place. Revised homework strategies are now excellent. The level of resources has been improved, and they are now satisfactory overall, although there are insufficient good quality textbooks for student research and enquiry and few opportunities to use information and communication technology.
205. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because the school has not yet addressed the issue of the previous report concerning the low time allocation in Years 7 to 9. Provision in Years 10 and 11 is now actually worse than at the previous inspection, having effectively ceased to exist. The deterioration has largely come about because of recruitment and retention difficulties. With this new appointment, the school has firm plans to ensure that that appropriate provision is made for the locally agreed syllabus to be taught to all students next academic year.